

Stability Through the Scriptures – Psalm 119:145-152

Intro:

1) Word Picture – Ship and Ballast

- a. Ever seen a massive cargo ship out to sea, during rough weather, and wonder how it does not capsize in the waves and wind?
 - i. Waves crashing, wind howling, entire vessel tossed back and forth – yet it holds steady
- b. What most people don't realize – the ship's stability is not primarily determined by what you can see above water
 - i. Rather – it is determined by what is hidden beneath
- c. Large ships have "ballast tanks" that are designed to fill up with water, lower the center of gravity, add weight, and bring the ship stability
- d. If the ballast tanks are empty, the ship can be uneasy
 - i. Top-heavy
 - ii. Vulnerable to poor weather
 - iii. More easily overturned
- e. But – when the ship is filled properly – it can endure even the most violent of waves

2) Psalm 119:145-152 share a similar biblical principle about staying stable in the rough weathers of life

- a. The Psalmist in this section is in a storm of some sort
 - i. Enemy closing in, he is crying out to God, trouble is near
- b. Yet – the Psalmist doesn't collapse
 - i. Actually – the Psalm carries a word of hope (147)
- c. Why?
 - i. Because his ballast is full
 - ii. He stability in the storms of life do not come from an external calm, it comes from the Word of God deeply seated in his heart filling him with God's truth

3) The difference between capsizing and staying firm in the storms is not what's happening around you – its what's filling you on the inside

- a. Brandon & Gavin – preaching emphasis – trials and the Word of God
- b. Psalm 119:145-152 mesh those two ideas together and bring us an encouraging word on having stability through the Scriptures

4) Sermon: Stability through Scripture

- a. Text: Psalm 119:145-152

5) Psalm 119

a. Longest chapter in the Bible – be design, not accident

- i. 176 verses
- ii. Length isn't random – it reflects the sheer magnitude and sufficiency of God's Word
- iii. The Psalmist isn't being repetitive, he's being comprehensive
 1. Shows how every area of life is to be shaped by God's Word

b. An Acrostic Psalm

- i. 22 sections correlate to the 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet
- ii. Each section of 8 verses start with same Hebrew letter
- iii. In essence – this is an “a-z” meditation on God's Word
 1. A way of saying – from beginning to end, God's Word covers everything
- iv. Again – by design – easier to memorize

c. Nearly every verse references God's Word

- i. The Psalm uses multiple terms for God's Word
 1. Law, testimony, precept, statute, judgment, commandments, etc

d. The author is unknown

- i. Many teachers have credited it to David
 1. Follows David's deep emphasis on a personal tone toward a relationship with God
 - a. (I, me, my)
 2. Contains persecutions and problems from enemies which mirror David's life
 3. Heavy emphasis on a love for God's Word
- ii. Some have credited the recording to Ezra
 1. Strong emphasis on God's Law
 2. Ezra was a scribe dedicated to God's Word
 3. Make it a post-exile encouragement for rebuilding well

6) Psalm 119 is a great encouragement showing us how to have a passionate, right, and full-scoped relationship with God through His Word

A Fervent Cry – 145-146

- 1) The Psalmist starts this section out outlining his desperate prayer to God for help**
 - a. V145,146 are linked together here, not only by idea, but by word
 - b. Notice – both verses start with the same word – Cried

- 2) The Passion of his cry**
 - a. The word the Psalmist uses here is unique, in that, it refers to a passionate, fervent crying out with a loud voice
 - b. Cried – to call out loudly, to summons, to proclaim
 - i. This is not a word of whisper – this is a word of loud proclamation
 - ii. The word implies urgency and expectation
 - iii. It's used throughout the Bible in many different ways
 1. It can refer to a summons to court – Deut. 25:8
 2. It can refer to a mustering of an army – Judges 8:1
 3. It can refer to a call out of distress – Ps. 18:6
 4. It can refer to an invitation – Ex. 2:20, 1 Sam. 9:13 (bidden)
 5. It can refer to a calling out by name – Gen. 48:16, Joel 2:32
 - iv. Qal Perfect – indicates a simple action that has been completed
 1. IOW – here's what I've done when facing these issues
 2. This is the approach I've taken
 3. “expresses the habit of his whole life” – Alexander Kirkpatrick
 - v. Note – the repetitious use of this word
 1. Psalmist was not being redundant, he was placing emphasis
 - c. Notice how the Psalmist cries out – “With my whole heart”
 - i. Whole – all, everything
 - ii. Heart – the center, the middle, figuratively – the whole inner person
 - d. IOW – this was not simply an emotional crying out
 - i. This was not a routine prayer
 - ii. This was not a half-hearted call
 - iii. The Psalmist is giving a fervent, full-hearted, spirited, undivided calling out to God
 - e. Historical insight
 - i. In the Hebrew word – a divided heart was indicative of divided loyalties and unfaithfulness
 - ii. The idea of a “whole heart” indicates there are no competing loyalties in his life
 1. I'm calling out to You and You alone

3) The Petition of his cry

- a. The Psalmist makes 2 requests in these verses
 - i. Hear me – save me
- b. Hear me, O LORD
 - i. To hear so as to answer – WS Plumer
 - ii. To respond to me
 - iii. Denotes not just a listening, but a call to act on behalf of
 - iv. Interesting – stated as an imperative – you can feel the pressure he was under
- c. Save me – to be delivered, to rescue
 - i. Yasha – same root behind the name Yeshua (Joshua/Jesus)
 - ii. This root is believed to carried the picture of an open space
 1. Wide, open, free
 2. Opposite of the Hebrew word for “cramped”
 3. Indicates plenty of room so one feels secure, safe, and free
 - iii. This word can be applied to:
 1. Spiritual rescue
 2. Physical rescue
 3. Circumstantial rescue
 - iv. It is a call for God to act – Ps. 3:7,8
- d. These petitions are a reflection of a man who knows God is both personal (hear) and powerful (save)

4) The Promise of his cry

- a. Notice the Psalmist attaches an action that he takes in regards to his request and God’s response
- b. V145 – keep – to guard, protect, to obey, to preserve
 - i. Denotes careful observation
- c. V146 – keep – to keep safe and nurture
 - i. 1st use – Gen. 2:15
- d. Statutes – has in scope the written laws of God
 - i. Statutes refer to a fixed standard or rule
- e. Testimonies
 - i. God’s revelation of His will, what God has testified to us about
- f. Point out – this was not the Psalmist bargaining with God
 - i. He wasn’t saying – if You do this, I’ll do this
 - ii. It was an expression of covenantal faithfulness
 1. His mind was made up to live in the blessings of God’s Word
 - iii. The Psalmist was “aligning himself with covenantal faithfulness”
 - iv. In Israel – obedience was tied to blessing (Deut. 28)
- g. This was a request based on grace and dependence
 - i. Note the order:
 1. Not – I obey then God saves
 2. But – God saves then I obey

5) Interpretation – God, I’m calling out to You and You alone to step in and save, and in the meantime, I’m staying faithful

- i. Truth – much of the battle gets lost in the “meantime”

6) Application

- a. Know where to fight the battle
 - i. Eph. 6:12 – 2 Cor. 10:4
 - ii. Its clear here the Psalmist knew where to fight – the unseen reality
 1. His heart is right
 2. His prayer went out
 3. He is seeking God
- b. Prayer is vital to patient perseverance because it declares dependency
 - i. “hear me, save me” – words of humble dependance
 - ii. Write down – humbleness is the posture of deliverance
 1. 1 Pet. 5:5, James 4:6, Prov. 3:34
 - iii. This whole-hearted cry to God reveals a soul that knows its need, trusting in God for an answer, and committed to God’s ways

A Faithful Consideration – V147-149

- 1) **Not only do we see the Psalmist pray and persevere – we read he also pursued God**
 - a. We get a behind the scenes view of what the “whole-hearted” pursuit looks like
 - b. Interpretation – I rise up early and stay up late in pursuit of You, God, because I am in desperate need

- 2) **The Priority of his devotion**
 - a. Translation – God was his 1st priority, not his last resort
 - i. Before the responsibilities, before the routine of the day, before other distresses and distractions – the Psalmist set a meeting with God
 - ii. IOW – He didn’t “fit” God into his day, he built his day around God
 - b. Textual insight
 - i. Prevented – to be in front, to confront, to meet, to precede
 1. Prevent is a good translation – how do you prevent something – you go before
 - ii. Dawning of the morning – early twilight, first light breaking
 1. “before the day dawned”
 2. In essence – the Psalmist met God before the “day” began
 - iii. Cried – to cry for help and plea
 1. A stronger Hebrew word than what was used in V145,146
 - c. What this phrase tell us – there was a priority to his devotion
 - i. This priority guided and guarded his heart
 - ii. Hoped – to wait, tarry, to expect
 1. He patiently waited on God through prayer and His Word
 2. He let his expectations be formed by God’s Word
 - d. Interesting – “early” risings in the Bible are often associated with a person who knows spiritual urgency
 - i. Abraham – Gen. 22:3 – ready to obey God
 - ii. Moses – Ex. 34:4 – meeting with God over the 2nd tablets of commandments
 - iii. Hannah and family – 1 Sam. 1:19 – after the promise of life
 - iv. David – Ps. 63:1 – referencing the thirst of his soul
 - e. This was not stated as just a time of undisturbed clarity, it was a time of unchallenged priority
 - i. Depicts the Psalmist placing God 1st – Do we?

3) The Persistence in his discipline

- a. V148 notes a change of time
 - i. Goes from early to late
- b. Night watches
 - i. Imagery that he sees the night watchmen
 - 1. Watchmen stayed on guard during the night, in shifts, to stay alert for danger
 - ii. Night time in scripture was often associated with danger
 - 1. Ps. 98:5
- c. This is not given to emphasize a specific time of day, it is a literary device used in the Bible to denote consistency
 - i. Merism – stating two opposite or extreme points to express totality
 - 1. North/south, heaven/earth, Dan/Beersheba
 - ii. It implies – “everything in between”
- d. The Psalmist is not only meeting with God occasionally or sporadically
 - i. He has a habitual practice of Godly pursuit and a continual attitude of worship
 - 1. From sun up to sun down
- e. Note – the Psalmist is not just up at night “passing the time”
 - i. We see he is engaged with God’s truth
 - ii. Meditate – to ponder, to muse over, to declare
 - 1. Denotes speaking to oneself, a quiet verbal repetition
 - iii. Truth – worldly mediation focuses on “emptying your mind” whereas Biblical mediation focuses on “filling your mind”
 - iv. IOW – the Psalmist knew where to get help
- f. Important to note – the Psalmist is not up late worrying, he’s up late worshipping
 - i. Maybe he had to – the responsibilities of his day are “over” and night time is what he had
 - ii. Whatever the case – it is clear that it is not his problems that kept him up, it was his pursuit of God
 - 1. He knows – Ps. 127:1

4) The Plea of deliverance

- a. The Psalmist knew he needed God’s mercy
 - i. Notice – his request was not made based on his merit, but on God’s mercy
- b. Textual insight
 - i. Lovingkindness – faithful mercy, steadfast love, covenantal love
 - 1. Denotes a love, mercy, or act of kindness reserved for close friends or family
 - 2. This word presupposes the existence of a relationship between the parties involved
 - 3. IOW – the Psalmist is makes his requested from relationship – You are my God!

- c. What does he ask for?
 - i. Quicken – revival, restoration, to be well, sustain
 - ii. According to thy judgment – a legal term – verdict, sentence, an issuing of a formal decree
 - 1. Refers to God’s ways of governing life
 - iii. The Psalmist is calling for the Judge’s mercy!

5) Application

- a. Start your day with the right priority
 - i. Before the phone, schedule, stress of life – take time to meet with God
- b. Stay consistent in your devotion
 - i. Morning, evening – a consistency
 - ii. “Spiritual growth thrives on discipline”
 - iii. Write down – consistency over intensity
- c. Move beyond mere Bible reading to Bible meditation
 - i. Methodically, meaningfully, meditatively
 - ii. Biblical mediation transforms information to formation

A Fellowship Comfort – V150-152

1) In the closing section of this stanza, the Psalmist is concluding through contrast

- a. In essence – the threat is near, but God is nearer

2) The Pressures of opposition

- a. They draw nigh that follow after mischief
 - i. Indicates the type of trouble and opposition the Psalmist is facing
- b. Textual insight
 - i. Draw nigh – close proximity
 - 1. In the ANE – the phrase draw nigh was often used in connection with a pursuing military unit or a legal accusation
 - 2. Q – ever felt that way?
 - ii. Follow after mischief
 - 1. Follow – pursue aggressively (like a hunter)
 - 2. Mischief – wicked schemes, planned evil
 - 3. IOW – this was not accidental sin, this was a planned, calculated wickedness
 - iii. Far from thy law – there was distance between them and God
 - 1. Opposite of “lovingkindness” based on relationship

3) The Presence of the LORD

- a. V151 is the turning point
- b. The Psalmist knew what made all the difference – the presence of God
 - i. Ps. 69:16-18
- c. The enemy may be near, but God is nearer
 - i. Note the contrast:
 - 1. Enemy draws near to destroy
 - 2. God draws near to deliver
- d. Not only did the Psalmist know he needed God, he knew God was within reach
 - i. Thou art near – present, accessible, within reach, at hand
 - 1. Numb. 11:23
 - 2. Isa. 59:1,2
 - ii. I love this – “near” – translated – kin, kinsmen, kinfolk
 - 1. The enemy may draw near, but I’m in the family of God!
 - iii. Remember – draw near – military presence
 - 1. Enemy came to destroy, God came to defend

4) The Promises of God

- a. The idea conveyed here is the reliability of God’s Word
- b. Commandments are truth – cannot fail, do not mislead
- c. Founded them for ever – fixed, established, unchanging
- d. IOW – Don’t let the lies of Satan convince you that God is not near – you have God’s Word on it

5) It's no coincidence that the Psalmist closes this section boasting on God's unchanging Word

- a. I know God is near, because He said He is
- b. It might not look like it – but it's been established
- c. Notice what the Psalmist sees around him
 - i. Enemy and mischief
 - ii. God and His Word

6) Application

- a. You have a responsibility to draw near to God
 - i. Ps. 73:28
 - ii. James 4:8
 - iii. Ps. 10:4
- b. Build your life on what is fixed
 - i. Culture shifts
 - ii. Devil lies
 - iii. Heart is deceitful
 - iv. God's Word is founded
 - 1. Ps. 24:2 – same word

Closing**1) Stability through Scripture****2) Close at the cross**

- a. Enemy is near
 - i. Accuser is present
- b. God is near
 - i. Came in the flesh – Jesus
- c. God has given His word – the Gospel
- d. When you receive Him by faith
 - i. You become part of the family – John 1:12