

Message Three

How the Old Testament Seekers of God Enjoyed His Word

- I. **We must see that God's intention in the book of Exodus was to bring His people into the enjoyment of Himself by bringing them to the Mount of God that they could receive His word.**
- II. **There are two kinds of people dealing with the law—the loving seekers of God and the letter-keepers of the law—cf. Gen. 2:9; 2 Cor. 3:6, 15-16:**
 - A. The loving seekers of God are those like the psalmists who loved God (Psa. 18:1; 73:25), sought God (42:1-2; 43:4; 119:10), dwelt with God (27:4; 84:1-7; 90:1), beheld His beauty (27:4), were infused with the riches of God (52:8; 92:13-14), enjoyed the riches of His life (36:8-9), were supplied with God to keep His word (119:57), treasured the law of God (vv. 14, 72, 127), tasted the sweetness of the law (v. 103), and hoped in the Word of God and dwelt on it (v. 147).
 - B. The letter-keepers of the law are those like the legal and dogmatic Judaizers, who did not have a heart for God but for the killing letter of the law, and who sought the law apart from God—Matt. 15:8; Gal. 6:12-13.
 - C. The principle is the same whether in the Old Testament or the New Testament: the true worshippers are those who love the Lord, seek Him with their whole heart, dwell with Him, enjoy His riches and are infused with Him to live out God and thereby become persons according to what God is, corresponding to and reflecting what God is—John 4:23-24.
 - D. If we see this principle, we will never seek the knowledge of the Scriptures apart from Christ, but will pray-read the Word, that we may be in contact with the Lord as we read the Word—5:39-40; 6:63.
 - E. We need to follow the pattern of the God-seeking psalmists who enjoyed God's law as His living word, so that God's word may also become a continual source of life supply and nourishment to us—Psa. 119:2; 1 Tim. 4:6.
 - F. We need to seek God with all our heart, loving God's name and remembering it—Psa. 119:2; Mark 12:30.
 - G. We need to seek God's favor by entreating His countenance and asking for His face to shine upon us so that we may walk in His presence—Psa. 119:58, 135; Num. 6:24-26; 2 Cor. 4:6.
 - H. We need to consider God's law to be His word, which is sweeter than honey to our mouth, more precious than fine gold, and a lamp to our feet and a light to our path—Psa. 119:72, 103, 105.
 - I. Many different verbs are used to express the attitude of the God-seekers toward God's law as God's testimony and God's word:
 1. Believing it and choosing it—we must believe in its genuineness, accuracy, authority and power and we all need to make a strong decision in favor of God's word—v. 66; Matt. 4:4.
 2. Lifting up our hands unto it and loving it—we need to receive it warmly and in love—Psa. 119: 47-48.
 3. Delighting in it and tasting it—daily we need to take time to delight ourselves in God's word, receiving it as nourishment and enjoying its sweet taste—v. 103; 1 Pet. 2:2-3; Matt. 4:4.
 4. Rejoicing in it and singing of it—we need to rejoice in the Lord and His word, making a joyful noise and learning to sing the words of the Bible—Psa. 119:162; 100:1; Col. 3:16.

5. Having a sound heart in it and inclining our heart unto it—we need to be healed of all spiritual disease so that our heart may be pure, sound and healthy toward the word—Psa. 119:80, 36, 112.
6. Seeking it, longing for it, and hoping in it with prayer and trusting in it—vv. 40, 147.
7. Musing upon it, considering it, and remembering it—we need to muse on God’s word, as a cow “chews the cud,” by prayer, speaking to ourselves and praising God to enjoy God’s word as His breath and receive spiritual nourishment—vv. 15, 95; 2 Tim 3:16; Josh. 1:8.

III. The highest profession on earth is to spend time being infused with God that we may shine forth God; this accomplishes the eternal economy of God to work Himself into man that He may have His testimony, His enlarged and expanded expression.

***Focus:* We need to enjoy God’s Word according to the pattern of the God-seeking psalmists that it may become a continual source of life supply to us so that we may be infused with God and live a life that corresponds to the law as His testimony.**

Message Three Verses

Psalm 119

2 Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, who seek Him with all their heart.

11 In my heart I have treasured up Your word that I might not sin against You.

14-16 I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies as much as in all riches. I will muse upon Your precepts and regard Your ways. I will take delight in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word.

30-32 I have chosen the way of faithfulness; Your ordinances I have set before me. I cling to Your testimonies; O Jehovah, do not put me to shame. I run the way of Your commandments, for You enlarge my heart.

47-48 And I will take delight in Your commandments, which I love. And I will lift up my hand to Your commandments, which I love; and I will muse upon Your statutes.

52 I have remembered Your ordinances from long ago, O Jehovah, and have comforted myself.

54 Your statutes have become my songs of praise in the house of my pilgrimage.

58 I entreated Your favor with my whole heart; be gracious to me according to Your word.

66 Teach me proper discernment and knowledge, for I believe in Your commandments.

95 The wicked have waited for me in order to destroy me, but I consider Your testimonies.

103 How sweet are Your words to my taste! Sweeter than honey to my mouth!

132 Turn to me, and be gracious to me, as is Your custom with those who love Your name.

135 Cause Your face to shine on Your servant, and teach me Your statutes.

162 I rejoice at Your word, like one who finds great spoil.

168 I have kept Your precepts and Your testimonies, for all my ways are before You.

Message Three Reading

HOW THE OLD TESTAMENT SEEKERS OF GOD ENJOYED HIS LAW

The Bible is the word of God. But if we take the Bible only as letters in black and white and do not contact the Lord directly as we read, it will become a dead book to us. Paul said, "The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Cor. 3:6). The Greek word for letter in this verse is the same word used by Paul in 2 Timothy 3:15 in speaking of the holy Scriptures. If the Bible is taken only as letters, it will kill. However, the spirit gives life. If we contact the Lord in our spirit as we read the Bible, the Word will become spirit and life to us. In our spiritual experience, it will be God's breath. Whenever we read the Word, we need to touch the source of the Word, and this source is God Himself.

We have pointed out a number of times that through the Word, which is God-breathed (2 Tim. 3:16), we can breathe God into us. Certain faultfinders have twisted our words, quoted us out of context, and criticized us for teaching that believers can breathe God into them. They call this blasphemy and a work of the flesh. According to the Scriptures, God's word is His breath. Oh, how God desires that we breathe Him into us! We thank Him for making this real in our experience.

Believing It

Considering God's law to be His word, the psalmist believed in the word: "Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments" (Psa.119:66). According to the New Testament, the first requirement in taking the Word of God is that we believe in it. We must believe in its genuineness, its accuracy, its authority, and its power.

Choosing It

Along with the Old Testament seekers of God, we should also choose God's word. Psalm 119:30 says, "I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid before me." Verse 173 says, "Let thine hand help me: for I have chosen thy precepts." What a marvelous choice this is! We all need to make a strong decision in favor of the word of God.

Lifting up Their Hands unto It

In 119:48 we find an unusual expression: "My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments." What does it mean to lift up our hands to God's word? If we consider the way we lift

our hand to greet someone, we shall be able to understand this. To lift up our hands unto the Lord's word is to welcome it, to indicate that we receive it warmly and say "amen" to it. Many of us have spontaneously lifted up our hands when inspired by God's word. Therefore, to lift up our hands to the word of God means to receive it gladly.

Loving It

The Old Testament seekers loved God's word. Eleven times the writer of Psalm 119 speaks of loving the word of God (vv. 47, 48, 97, 113, 119, 127, 140, 159, 163, 165, 167). I also can testify that I love the Word of God. No book is as lovable as the Bible.

Delighting in It

The psalmist also delighted himself in God's word (119:16, 24, 35, 47, 70, 77, 92, 174). He enjoyed the word and found it a source of delight. There is joy to be found in the word of God. Daily we need to take time to delight ourselves in the holy Word.

Tasting It

The psalmist even tasted God's word: "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth" (v. 103). Notice that the writer does not say, "How sweet is thy law!" Instead, he declares, "How sweet is thy word!" If we regard the law as nothing more than the commandments of God, it will not be sweet to us. But if we realize that God's law is His word for our nourishment and life supply, we shall enjoy its sweet taste. According to his experience, the psalmist realized that the law was the sweet word of God. It was not just a list of commandments to regulate him; it was a word full of enjoyment and life supply, a word that, to his taste, was sweeter than honey.

Rejoicing in It

When we taste the word of God, we rejoice in it. The psalmist says, "I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies" (119:14), and "Thy testimonies...are the rejoicing of my heart" (v. 111). In verse 162 the psalmist testifies of his rejoicing in the word: "I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil".

To rejoice is more than just to be joyful. We may be joyful silently, but we must use our voice in

order to rejoice. There is a difference between making a joyful noise and having a joyful voice. When we rejoice, praising the Lord and even shouting, we make a joyful noise to Him. If you have never spontaneously rejoiced in reading the Bible, perhaps you have never been fully inspired by the Word. Whenever we are helped by the Bible, in a living way, we spontaneously rejoice in the Word.

Singing of It

The psalmist says, "Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage" (119:54). The psalmist would even sing of God's word. We do not have much experience of this. We need to learn of the psalmist to sing the words of the Bible. I encourage all the saints to sing the Word of God.

Musing upon It

To muse upon the Word is to "chew the cud," like a cow eating grass (Lev. 11:3). As we muse upon the Word of God, we should "chew the cud." If we take in the Word too quickly, we shall not have very much enjoyment. But if we "chew the cud" as we take in the Word, our enjoyment will increase.

When we muse upon the Word of God, enjoying it and even chewing it as a cow chews the cud, we shall spontaneously pray. Prayer is also included in musing upon the Word. Furthermore, we may converse with ourselves or begin to praise the Lord. We may be so inspired by the Word that we want to shout our praises to the Lord.

Usually musing upon the Word will be slower and finer than pray-reading the Word. For example, in our musing upon Exodus 20:2 we may say to ourselves, "Remember that Jehovah is your Lord. He has brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Now you are out. Amen! O Lord, I worship You for bringing me out of bondage!" In all our musing upon God's Word, talking to the Lord or conversing with ourselves, we should be spontaneous and full of enjoyment. We may bow down to worship the Lord, ponder the Word, remember, or give ourselves a rebuke. Any genuine seeker of the Lord who muses upon the Ten Commandments in a living way will enjoy the Lord, worship Him, pray, converse with himself in the Lord's presence, and also praise the Lord. Surely one who takes the law of God in such a way will not apply it as dead letters, but will take it as God's living word.

To muse upon the Word of God is to enjoy His Word as His breath. It is to contact God in the

Word and to have fellowship with Him, to worship Him, and to pray to Him through and with the Word. By musing upon the Word of God in this way, we shall be infused by God, breathe Him into us, and receive spiritual nourishment.

Concerning musing upon the Word, verse 147 says, "I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: I hoped in thy word" (Psa.119). Here we see that the psalmist rose up before dawn, cried out, and hoped in God's word. Verse 148 goes on to say, "Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might muse upon thy word." The psalmist woke up during the night to muse upon God's word. Musing upon the Word involves more than just meditating on it. We muse upon the Word by talking to God, worshipping Him, enjoying Him, receiving grace from Him, and conversing with ourselves in the Lord's presence. We cannot describe adequately the practice of musing on the Word of God and the enjoyment this affords us.

I am very fond of verse 48: "My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will muse upon thy statutes." Here we see that first the psalmist loved the Word; second, that he welcomed the Word; and third, that he enjoyed it and mused upon it. We also need to love the Word of God, receive it with warmth, and muse upon it and enjoy it. Through such an enjoyment of the Word, we shall worship God, talk to Him, pray to Him, and converse with ourselves before Him. Sometimes we may shout or cry; at other times we may delight ourselves in the Word or give ourselves a command. We shall enjoy the Word of God not only in the Lord's presence but also with His presence. We should never separate the Lord's Word from the Lord Himself. As we muse upon His Word, we enjoy the Lord and have fellowship with Him. We speak to Him and He speaks with us. Thus, there is spiritual traffic between us and the Lord.

Those who seek the Lord and become one with Him by enjoying His Word will automatically have a life that corresponds to the law, as God's testimony, for they will be infused with the Lawgiver. The one who gives the law will become their living. (*Life-study of Exodus* pp. 661-664, 670-671, 675-676)

Notes

A series of 26 horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.