

# Ain | Prayer of a Weary Servant

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[ 0 : 00 ] Psalm 119, verse 121 is where we will read tonight. This is the prayer of a weary servant. It would be our theme for the night. And looking at the references to him referring to himself as a servant, being weary and finding rest through his prayer unto the Lord.

Some of you noticed last week, but I don't think you made mention of it to me, but I got out of order. And so we only have a few sections left, but we've already covered one that is ahead of this one. But I'm going to read verse 121 through 128.

Probably the most important assignment that I have tonight is to read God's word to you. When I hear people saying that such a beautiful song, and I think I wish that I could preach as people sing, because not just how beautiful it sounds, as I've jokingly said, come the vision for the music, stay for the preaching.

You know, we have such great music, but it's just like the words are already there, and they're just communicating. And so all you need to know the night is already given to us. He is the songwriter.

He is the psalm writer. I do not need to add to it. I just need to communicate it to you. And so as I read to you this passage, I want you to look for the four things that I'm going to draw your attention to tonight.

[ 1 : 12 ] The first one being the posture of a servant. This is how he goes to the Lord in prayer. Three times he refers to himself as a servant. Then he has a request because he is weary. And then from there we see how his clear conscience provides for confidence in his prayer.

And then lastly, it's love expressed for God's infallible word. And so it's a short portion of scripture, but we kind of take a journey with the psalmist here. Verse 121, He's saying, provide a pledge for me, Lord.

Give me some rest. Give me some assurance from that. My oppressors will have judgment. There will be justice. Mine eye fell for thy salvation and for the word of thy righteousness.

Just speaking once again as being weary. His eyes are looking for the promise of deliverance. And it hasn't come. Deal with thy servant according to thy mercy and teach me thy statutes.

Bible verse that Chase memorized the night. And we're so proud of him. All right. And hopefully some others did. But deal with my servant according to thy mercy and teach me thy statutes. I am thy servant.

[ 2 : 26 ] Give me understanding that I may know thy testimonies. It is time for thee, Lord, to work. For they have made void thy law. And then speaks to his, what really bothers him about the oppressors.

Therefore, I love thy commandments above gold. Yea, above fine gold. Therefore, I esteem all thy precepts concerning all the things to be right. And I hate every false way. So there in verse 122, 124, and 125, you have, For the servant for good.

Deal with thy servant. I am thy servant. He comes in prayer, taking on the posture of a servant. And it can be a challenge to keep the posture of a servant when you're under attack, which is what's happening here in this psalm.

He knows that there's an oppressor. There's people that are coming against him. And he deals with that. He speaks about what they're bringing against him. But he refers to himself, his self-given title here to God is being as a servant.

I don't want to make light of the situation, but we all know what it's like if a person has come home from war and they've had something traumatic has happened to them, that the war still continues. Even though they left the battlefield, the battle will still continue on.

[ 3 : 40 ] And in a similar fashion, it's harder to remain in the position of a servant when you're under attack. When other people are against you, when opposition against you, where does opposition in this world come from?

The accuser of the brethren, we have that in our lives. That is what Satan does. He loves to bring accusation against us. There's the battle inside of ourselves, inside of our flesh. There's misunderstandings.

There's the challenges of life. There's many different directions oppression can come to you, that things can come against you. And the more that there is, the harder it is to feel that you want to see yourself as a servant.

The less I could say like this, the less I'm in charge of my day, the more that I want to feel like I'm in charge when I go home. The more that I want to bark at the kids. The more that I want things to be in order.

Or the more I feel disrespected by people in my life, the more that I would demand respect to people around me. So here he has opposition against them, but he hasn't moved from the fact that he says, I'm a servant of the Lord.

[ 4 : 43 ] Because sometimes we fight lies with other lies. So if people disrespect us, then we will rise up in our arrogance and we'll say something that's not true. And he says, what you're saying about me is not true.

What's true about me is I'm just a servant of God. So keeping that posture. And there's freedom that's found in it. Acts 13, 36, my life verse in my college years was for David after he served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep and was laid unto his fathers and saw corruption.

And it seems to be an odd life verse because normally service doesn't sound, it sounds like bondage. It doesn't sound like freedom. But what you find in being a servant, as we've sung tonight, I forget exactly how we said it, we talked about the freedom and being a servant, that when you find your identity in being a servant of the Lord, you no longer have to worry about who you will become, but you rest in where you belong.

Whom I belong to means more than who I will become. I no longer have to worry about what I will produce, but my attention can be given to whom I should please. I am a servant of the Lord.

I will serve the Lord with my life, which now says it isn't about what I accomplish, it's about whom I'm pleasing as I live out my life. And so in this prayer with this opposition coming on, we're going to find that he draws tight to the word of God, but also he finds rest in this saying, it doesn't matter what's being said about me, my identity is a servant.

[ 6 : 10 ] And that's where he wants to be expressed in prayer. And then in verse 122 he says, Be surety for thy servant for good, let not the proud oppress me. I want to pledge that you will give me rest here.

And Jesus' greatest desire is that we will find rest we so desperately need, which is a rest that only he can give. He offers us to come unto him all that labor and are heavy laden.

He will give us rest. He tells us to take the yoke upon him, he will take our yoke upon him, and we can learn of him. He is meek and lowly at heart. We will find rest unto our souls because his yoke is easy, his burden is light.

So what precisely is that easy yoke that Jesus offers to us? Jesus provides that when he answers the question in John 6 or in John 5.

When they ask the question, they say in the hymn in John 6, 28, Then said they unto him, What shall we do that we might work the works of God? And his answer is, to believe.

[ 7 : 12 ] Or when you are to abide. That is where the yoke is found in him. What are the works of God? We no longer are working to merit something.

We're no longer working, but we have received rest. There's a type of rest that many of you need. You come here quick from work. You've put in, and I always appreciate it, the effort that you put to be here at our midweek Bible study.

And that is a rest that sleep should help you with. And God gives us rest, right? And there is that. But the weariness that we're talking about is much heavier than just being tired at the end of the day.

We're talking about carrying the burden of trying to reconcile with God. We're talking about carrying this burden, the finding rest, that I find my identity in him, that I'm abiding in him.

So here he's saying, God, give me a pledge, a surety for that servant for good, and not let the proud oppress me. I like to read on Sunday mornings on occasion a call to worship that says, To all who are spiritually weary and seek rest, to all who are mourned and long for comfort, to all who struggle and desire victory, to all who sin and need a Savior, to all who are strangers and want fellowship, to all who are hunger and thirst after righteousness, we welcome you today.

[ 8 : 26 ] We came here today with great expectation that you'll hear from God from his holy word. I am grateful that from this book and teaching about Jesus that we can offer rest unto the weary, that we don't offer just another set of challenges where everywhere people go, they're always offered another set of challenges.

At your work, what is the reward of doing your job? You get to do your co-worker's job, right? What's the reward of getting a promotion? You get more work to do. Everybody looks at you and they say, what can I get out of this person?

How can I get more out of them? So we come to church, and I think this Sunday will be one of those times on Orange Sunday where there will be a great, there will be a challenge that will be presented to you. But when we come to God's word, it is a place of rest.

So even the challenges that we have, we say, with all the energy and effort that you once gave to earning favor with God, all that's been done away with, now in its place you're looking for expressions of the rest that you have found in Him.

So it seems unusual that the psalmist would ask for a pledge, a surety on his behalf, something to say that I am in, that my relationship with you is solid, that it's there.

[ 9 : 39 ] It's not what the oppressors are saying. It'd be like my kids saying, Dad, over and over, don't leave me at church tonight, okay? Don't leave me, all right? Whatever you do, you don't leave me here at church, all right?

We've only done that a handful of times, you know? So it seems like they shouldn't be too worried about us doing that. And so for the psalmist to tell the creator of the universe, would you give me something here that I can rest in, it doesn't seem right to me.

It doesn't seem appropriate to me. You might have heard the story, a sad one, about kids, I believe, that are in Russia, in an orphanage that couldn't sleep at night because their meals weren't as regular as they needed to be.

And so they would give them a piece of bread to hold on to so that they could go to bed at night because they would know where their next meal was going to come from. Something to hold on to. Not disrespectful, not irreverent for him to say, God, I am not at peace and I need you to give me something to hold on to.

It's only right that God would champion the cause of the righteous and not allow the arrogant unbelievers to gain an upper hand. Verse 122, Let not the proud oppress me, was the prayer of the psalmist here.

[ 10 : 46 ] And then we get to verse 123 where he's lamenting, My eyes fell for thy salvation, and what is he looking for is for his salvation and for the word of righteousness.

This idea that he is longing for something to the point of just exhaustion and weakness here. Not referring to salvation as we would speak about redeeming us, but just I'm waiting for deliverance from this problem that I have.

I'm looking for the promise to come. And so his eyes fell. He's looking at it. He's waiting for it. His eyes fell for thy word. It says in Psalm 119.82, It says, Mine eyes fell for thy word, saying, When wilt thou comfort me?

This idea of longing to the point of just weakness. God, when are you going to comfort me? When are you going to help me? I'm just so weary. And so he's looking for salvation away from this problem.

When is this going to go away? And there's times in life when you have something that you're dealing with and you realize this circumstance or this problem, the loss of my parent or whatever is never going away.

[ 11 : 54 ] It's always going to be a tension to manage. It's always going to be a sorrow. But that doesn't mean that comfort isn't available for you. And we go and we should do like the psalmist and find it in him.

So simply, he has obeyed God's word. His enemies have it. Therefore, he prays that God will keep his word. And that gets us to verse 121 where he says, I have done judgment and judgment. Leave me not to mine oppressors, but give me a sign here, a surety.

He's not saying here that he's perfect or incapable of sinning. He's innocent regarding the slander of those who desire to oppress him. He says, God, you know in this thing that I'm dealing with, you know that I am innocent.

Those who trust in the Lord and obey his word may pray with confidence from deliverance from his oppressors. He can go there. And that's wonderful. A clear conscience and knowledge that God knows you and not what the accusers say about you is a far greater value than being vindicated by all the people and all the courts of the world.

That conscience to go to God in prayer with confidence and say that. Say, God, I thank you that the things that they are saying about me aren't true because I'm not perfect. But God, in this regard, would you make this stop?

[ 13 : 11 ] I am weary. It's such a contrast to Adam and Eve, right? In the garden in Genesis 1, they do wrong. And then here comes God in the cool of the day. They walk with them and they go and they try to hide themselves.

But that's not what's happening here. He is telling God, I'm here in the open. I'm asking for your help. In verse 121, it says, Leave me not to mine oppressors.

And Adam and Eve, they're hiding from God. Here, the psalmist is saying, God, I'm here in front of you. I'm innocent. My conscience is clear. Would you not leave me alone with my oppressors?

Leave me not. God, come here. I'm not hiding from you. I want to be in your presence. Appeal to God is based on mercy and not merit. But lest you think that this psalmist is trying to negotiate with God, which I'm sure all of you in here, all of us have been guilty of before.

God, if you get me out of this, then this is what I have offered for you. And it's foolish that we'd ever think in those terms that that's what, that we have something that God needs and we can negotiate with him.

[14:12] But don't think that about him. When he's saying, God, I'm going to honor you with my days. I want you to deliver me from these oppressors. Verse 124, he says, Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy and teach me thy statutes.

He's saying, God, even though I'm innocent in this area, I'm not asking you to deliver me based on merit. I'm asking you to help me based on your mercy, that you would teach me and that you would guide me, and that the way you would guide me would be by teaching me your word.

And then the personal offense to him takes a back seat. It's secondary. Verse 126, It is time for thee, O Lord, to work, for they have made void thy law.

Probably middle school or high school, back in the day when kids fought. I think it's out of debt. I don't think people do that anymore, all right? I don't think teenagers fight as much anymore. Yeah, that could be good and bad.

That's for another day, all right? But when you get into a fight and some kid would come over and say, Are you going to let them say that about you? Can you believe he said that about you? And that kid was just wanting to see a fight, right?

[15:12] They didn't care about you. They just wanted you to get about it. This psalmist here says, God, they have ignored your law. God, this is a problem because they've ignored your law.

That was of greater concern. God's fame, his reputation, his glory was of greater concern than his personal offense. And that's not a small thing. On a personal level, we can move from anger that we've been offended to a concern for God's glory, and it will transform your response.

Whatever the oppression's coming from you, wherever the opposition's coming to you, you in life, in the workplace, and family dealings, or whatever it's like, when you go from saying, That person has personally offended me, and they are doing wrong, change that and say, Well, if they are doing wrong, then God's not receiving the glory that he deserves, and these people aren't living to what God would have for them, and let that be your greatest concern.

And that is no small change, and that will change your response of being a person who feels like you're under a personal attack to being a person who takes the position of a servant who cries out to God and say, God, for your name's sake, would this change?

Therefore, I love thy word. Psalm 127, there's two sets of therefore's. Therefore, I love thy commandments above God. The next one is, Therefore, I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right.

[16:33] So as a result, I love thy word and your commandments. Therefore, as a result of this thing that I've went through, I have a greater love for your commandments. Greg and I, when he was in high school, used to go to McDonald's over here, and we had a ritual of our breakfast at McDonald's.

You had to eat the pancakes in a certain order, and then when you got done at a certain order, then you drank the little carton of milk, all right? You couldn't do it in a different order.

And that's what the whole meal was about. It was about that one little sample-sized milk carton at McDonald's. And there's something much deeper than that. I've said it to you before. The opposition in our lives and the things that are going on caused the reading of God's word to be sweeter and better than our 2% milk illustration that I have of me and Greg here.

But exactly how does that happen? I didn't just want to tell you that story and tell you it happens. I want to give you two ways real briefly how that happens. How does the trials in our lives give a greater appreciation for God's commandments?

How does the trials of our lives cause us to say, this is better than gold? Of all the things that could be available to me, of all the wisdom that could have, of the time machine that I wish I could have, of all the resources I wish I could have in this problem, God's word is of greater value to me than any of those things.

[ 17 : 52 ] One, Psalm 119.67 says, Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now I have kept thy word. Affliction draws us to the things of God because we realize the things of this world are broken.

Affliction causes us to not get this illusion with the things of this world and realize all it is is brokenness. A friend Brutte Frederick said years ago, outside of Jesus, there's only brokenness.

And I think about that often. So sometimes when I'm dealing with something, I realize it's broken, it's not satisfying. Well, even the things in my life that don't appear to be broken are not of eternal value that I hold on to them.

You know, my car, when it's broken down, gives me a problem. But even when it's not broken down, it's not getting me to heaven. You know, it just can't be that good. It's only limited. The things on earth are limited in nature.

And so trials help me evaluate the things of this world and keep them where they belong. Affliction makes us aware of our sin by bringing our buried struggles to surface. That's where in 2 Corinthians 12, it says, Our grace is sufficient, for my strength is made perfect in weakness, and most gladly, therefore, our glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

[ 19 : 02 ] In affliction, God does a deep work in our heart and exposes areas that weren't going to be addressed otherwise. And when he does, we say, thank you.

So God has purposes in our affliction, but we also know that Satan does. It says in Psalm 34, he says, Evil shall slay the wicked, and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate. How does evil slay the wicked?

It's about the suffering will turn people from a place of faith and convince them that God is indifferent to their deepest struggles. Just like God has a plan, and it was sung tonight by the Cook sisters, that God, in the midst of the fire and all the trials, he is still sovereign over us, and we can draw closer to him.

Satan has a plan where he wants to end those afflictions for you to turn away from him, for you to doubt him, for you to deconstruct, and ultimately it will destroy us.

And so in closing here in 128, I will esteem all thy precepts concerning all the things to be right, and I'll hate every false way. The weary servant clings on to the God's word and encourages others.

[ 20 : 06 ] Esteeming is to speak well of them to other people. That's what esteeming is. It's not just to simply value it yourself, but it is to hold it up high. When people come to you and they say, how did you make it during that time?

Don't point to anything else. Just hold your Bible up and say, this is what has allowed me to do that. A pastor that I listen to sometimes, after he reads the Bible, he says, after reading, he says, and thus ends the reading of God's wholly inspired, inerrant, and authoritative word.

May he write its eternal truth upon our hearts. And I like that a whole lot. You may hear me say that sometime, and I won't tell you that. I didn't come up with it myself. But thus ends the reading of God's wholly inspired, inerrant, and authoritative word.

May he write his eternal truth upon our hearts. That's what I pray that he does tonight, that he will take his truth and write it upon our hearts. So I invite you to pray with me here.

And before I do, I want you to consider the New Testament, how it confirms this idea of the fervent prayer. Confess your faults once another. Pray for one another, James 5, 16, that you may be healed. The fictual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

[ 21 : 17 ] It's commonly understood like this. Be righteous and your prayers will work. But in the context here, that's not what it's pointing to. His concern is not about how the prayer is made effective.

It's concern that prayer is effective. In the next verse, it will say that Elias or Elijah was subject to passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth.

Prayer is effective, not because of great men who pray, but because of a great God who graciously hears his people. So the psalmist here tonight, he sees himself as a servant.

He's weary. He goes to the Lord of the posture of a servant. He's weary, and in his weariness, God does a special work in his heart. God encourages him.

God shows him that he is going to be merciful to him. And then he goes with a clear conscience and with a confident prayer, and he comes out of it expressing a great love for God's infallible word.

[ 22 : 20 ] Prayer is effective because of what? Because that we get to speak to God. It's not effective because you're good at it. It's not effective because you have a lot of great faith when you went to him.

It's effective because you are speaking to the one that made you. It's effective because it's the one that's going to set everything back in order. So we should follow an example of this weary servant.

And we should go to God in prayer. When we're tired of all the oppression, we go to him and say, my identity in you is what matters. God, in your timing, I trust you, and I'm not even upset personally about it.

I care more about your glory than I do my own. You know what? I feel so happy.