

# Cheth | The Lord is My Portion - Part 2 of 2

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Psalm 119, 57, it says, As thou art my portion, O Lord, I have said that I would keep thy words. If the high prize in our life is knowing more about God, there's so many opportunities around us to rejoice in.

I am reminded of what Pastor Gary Ledford said here. As you know, he was battling cancer, and he said right here, and he said that there's things that you can see closely in the valley that you might not ever see from the mountain.

That's why as Christians we can call for a time of testimony, and he can start a story that seems very sad and dark, but we can rejoice in him because in every season we praise the Lord.

I'm grateful for the testimonies that God remains good at all seasons of life. He is our portion, and so we said this is a statement that Jesus is our Lord.

He is all that we need. Just like the Levites, many of the tribes had a property given to them, but they didn't have one that God would be their portion, and that is for us.

[ 1 : 0 1 ] And it's a statement of fact that we've been forgiven that we now receive him. And not only is it a statement of fact, but it was an expression of the affections and aspirations that the psalmist had, that he was going to be satisfied in him, that the Lord was his shepherd.

I shared with you how I desire many things, and all of us in here could share all the different things we'd love to see come to fruition in our lives, families and ministries and lives, but every one of us ought to be able to say that I am satisfied in him.

He has already met every need and met things that I didn't even know that I needed. He has been so good to us, and he is our portion. And we treasure his word, and we keep his words.

We delight in hearing his word despite the opposition. Verse 61 talks about the bands of the cords of the wicked. They came to rob him. No matter the circumstances, he wasn't going to forget God's law.

And then he would focus on the fact that the earth is full of mercy. God has been merciful, and we see it all around us in so many different ways. And then we can remind each other, look here, look there.

[ 2 : 0 7 ] Here's a testimony. We remind each other of God's loving kindness towards us, and we can rejoice in that. And then the Lord's thoughts are towards us, or all that should matter. I entreated, verse 58, thy favor with my whole heart.

Be merciful unto me, God, to thy word, to your promises that he has given us. And that we are thankful for that. That's made possible because of the death of Jesus in our place.

Our sin was seen on Jesus at the cross, and now his righteousness is now given to us. And so when he looks at us, he has thoughts of peace and love and purpose for us because of what he did.

And it's according to his word. It's a great place to be at. Because of justification, we know that his thoughts towards us are those of thoughts towards his son, so we can rest in this.

And then also, because his word, we are able to know him, we have something to rejoice him. Which brings us to the fourth point, which is about half the portion of scripture we're looking at, which starts in verse number 59.

[ 3 : 08 ] I thought on my ways, and I turned my feet unto thy testimonies. This time of worship, this time of recognizing God's thoughts towards us, this time of recognizing that he is our portion, this time of cherishing his words, have brought us to a place that says, God, I want my life to be conformed to your word.

I want to live out the life in the way in which you have designed for me to live. I thought on my ways. Time in the word will cause reflection on our thoughts, which leads us to change our lives.

It will change the direction of our feet. We think about the prodigal. He came to himself. It changes the direction. We think about Zacchaeus, the way he acted. We think about the fishermen. Jesus speaks to them.

It changes the course of their life. My feet will not be properly pointed to the places that they need to be for my kids, the church, my wife, community, if I do not stop and consider my ways and turn my feet towards his testimonies.

Simple question for all of us. Are we living a life that is directed towards God's word? Are we letting the word of God determine the way in which we would live out our lives?

[ 4 : 22 ] So time spent in God's word has given this psalmist here a time of sober reflection about his ways. He just thought about it. Am I living in a way that's honoring to the Lord?

In the previous church building, me and Zacchaeus were coming in the back of the building, and Miguel and Mary Angela are up on the platform. And Miguel was doing something, and then her cousin was over in the corner singing a song.

And I was like, what are you doing, Miguel? Get up. And I was yelling towards Miguel. What I didn't realize was that Miguel was proposing to Mary Angela, and I was about to mess it up real bad.

All right? And so I'm like, what are you doing? And then Zac grabbed me and kind of redirected me and said, Trent, why don't you consider doing something else besides ruining their engagement? And so Zac had knowledge that I didn't have, and I'm glad I listened to him that his word redirected my steps needed.

I had a moment, and I listened. If Zac wouldn't have walked in the church with me that day, I would have messed up everything. They would not have been Mary. They would not have... No, I'm just kidding. I'm serious. They would have just moved over a few feet and got engaged.

[ 5 : 27 ] And so that was a word and a funny little story about how it redirected my steps, and I'm glad I listened to my friend Zac that day. But when I expressed my salvation to the pastor in the church that I grew up in, and I told him what had happened in my life, what had happened on that Tuesday evening, I told him this.

And I remember it so clearly in the back of that church. When I went to it the other day, I realized it wasn't as big as I remember. Some of the kids who grew up in this church, they will come back someday and realize it's not as big as they think it is.

And so when I went there, and I remember in the back of the foyer, I told him, and my nine-year-old vocabulary, who really loved Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, so there's no telling how I expressed this to him.

As I told him, I said, I felt like I came to realize that I was standing in the middle of the road, and a truck was about to hit me, and then somebody warned me to get out of the way.

The reality of God's Word communicated to me, it was so real that I knew I had to move, that I had to. And it was. The wrath of God was abiding upon me, and if I did not find rest and safety in Jesus Christ, I would have died and perished and been eternally separated from him.

[ 6 : 44 ] But it was so real to me that the Word of God was speaking to me, that it had spoken. And so if the Word of God gave me that warning, why wouldn't I continue to want to come back to it and allow it to do for me what it did that day when I found my salvation in Christ?

Or why it would keep me from making a fool of myself as I about did that Sunday morning when Zach helped me? There is no greater companion than I have in all of the world than the Word of God that is right here before me.

So God's words would be in the thoughts, should be in our thoughts at all times. Verse 62, At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgment. At midnight.

Daylight hours didn't give him enough time. He had to be up at midnight. It is sincere. No one else was around. At the midnight hour. Much more so back then than now, right? Because they're not having electricity.

And so at midnight nothing's moving. And so he didn't have enough time in the daylight hours. At midnight, sincere. Nobody else is seeing him. He regarded time as precious and gave up sleep for this time with the Lord.

[ 7 : 49 ] He found time with God more refreshing than his sleep. He showed reverence even by rising up to give thanks. At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee.

Not all sure that's involved, but he didn't roll over. He didn't say, I just looked at the ceiling. It seems like he changed this posture. It seemed like he was willing to be very intentional and say, Right now it's midnight.

I'm going to give thanks unto you. At this season, as it was just sung about, I'm going to think about the things of God. And I'm going to give thanks for his righteous judgment.

He invited those thoughts into his mind. And he didn't push them out and let them be crowded out by something else. How many of you plan to be up at midnight tonight? Can I see your hands? Any young people?

Is that your game plan? All right. If you're up at, most of you are up here at midnight, something went wrong, right? It's not supposed to happen. I was thinking about church being on January the 1st this year and how it's going to be midnight. You know, obviously there's a midnight before every day.

[ 8 : 47 ] But it's New Year's the night before. And I'm wondering, what will that do for attendance? And I realized those who will stay up for midnight stay up for midnight all the time. A lot of times, right? It'll just be a normal night to some teenagers.

And to the rest of us, I miss a lot of New Year's now, right? And if there's something going on, I'll just watch it. Or I'll just celebrate with a different time zone, all right? That's what you can do, you know? I like London, you know?

I really like to see what they do. All these people in their jumpers just running around. And God's Word will be in our thoughts. And so here's a guy at midnight, intensely telling us the time where it wouldn't be most convenient.

He wasn't in the Bible Institute. It wasn't morning devotion time. It was a time that wasn't designated for these kinds of thoughts. He said, I'm going to ride this wave. I'm going to, these are the thoughts that are coming in.

I'm going to get up. I'm going to think about his, I'm going to give thanks unto the Lord. In a contrast to an unbeliever, Acts 24, 22. Felix is the name of the man that I'll make mention of.

[ 9 : 47 ] He puts thoughts off. And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred them and said, Well, Isaiah, the chief captain shall come down.

I will know the uttermost of the matter. I will defer these thoughts. How many times does some thought come into your mind that would ought to lead you to worship, that ought to lead you to a change in behavior, that ought to lead you to predominantly for most of us in here, at this stage of your Christian life, you're all mature Christians because it's Thursday night and you're here.

I know that. All right? And I can give you a sticker to prove it if you need it. Okay? At this stage in our life, a lot of times the behavior that needs to be changed is an attitude. Right? It is, it's an internal thing that's going on, not being seen.

We've learned how to behave. We've learned how to hide and make everything internal. How many times have I had a thought that's come into my mind about the goodness of God that I've just pushed out, that I've deferred it to another time?

That's the actions of an unbelieving person. A Christian person ought to say, I'm going to alter my sleep. I'm going to hit pause on this. I know I had a plan for this to happen right now, but this is what's going to happen.

[ 10 : 59 ] Jerry Bridges says in a book on this subject, he says, How many, on the other hand, seem to pass through the world into eternity without a serious thought on their ways?

Multitudes live for the world, forget God, and die. This is their history. Multitudes live for the world, forget God, and die. They go into eternity without a serious thought on their ways.

They work really hard at it. You put something in your ear so you can listen to music all the time, you carry a phone to amuse yourself. There's a whole multi-billion and billion-dollar industry to help you stay not thinking upon the things that you don't want to think about.

Unfortunately, for many people, the things they don't want to think about are the serious things that have to do with God. But as God's people, we should welcome those thoughts, and we should sit, and we should meditate on them.

Which is that worship, that looking that will align our hearts. Spurgeon said, While studying the Word, he was led, the psalmist, to study his own life, and he was caused a mighty revolution. He came to the Word, and then he came to himself, and this made him arise and go to the Father.

[ 12 : 04 ] That studying the Word has led him to study his own life. We're very good. I'm very good. I made a joke the other night about the chili we were having, and I said, there'll be one table where I won't be judged, and another table will be judged.

But come on, we're a church. Everything's going to be judged, right? And some of you laughed, some of you cried, because we know that's how we get. And we become very good at breaking down somebody else's life and saying, If they were just working this area, this area, I could really get them a finely tuned Christian, right?

I could just really help them be hitting on all cylinders. How often do we take the Word of God and lay it down besides our lives, and allow us to allow it to study our lives? And what we're talking about here is the lordship of Jesus and how it should affect our lives, which should lead always to discussion on worship.

Who are we worshiping? How are we worshiping him? Three looks that Solomon gives in the book of Ecclesiastes that I just recently shared with our high schoolers. And you know this. First look, he looks around.

Ecclesiastes 4.7. Then I turned and I saw vanity under the sun. Oppression, vanity, futility. The temporal nature of life was driving him crazy. That's what your eyes were set on most of the day.

[ 13 : 12 ] It's in front of you. You have to see it when you're driving, when you're working. You just see the things of this world that are around you. You have to work to live. It's part of God's plan. You have to stay focused on things that are in front of you.

And secondly, you would see he would look inwardly. The kids would say he became emo, all right? That's short for emotional. He just kind of said, I don't find anything out here. I'm just going to kind of turn inside.

I'm going to lock myself in my room, and I'm going to listen to music, and I'm just going to be with my thoughts here. Ecclesiastes 9.1. For all this I considered in my heart, even declare all this, that the righteous and the wise and their works are in the hands of God.

No man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before him. He considered in his heart. He's thinking about it. Verse Ecclesiastes 2.20. Therefore I went out about to cause my heart to despair of all the labor which I took under the sun, becoming internal.

He looked outward, now he's looking inward, which there he finds depression, and he finds emptiness, and at times he wishes he had never been born. But lastly, where we must look is he looks upward.

[ 14 : 19 ] Ecclesiastes 7.13. Consider the work of God, for who can make that straight which has been made crooked, when in Solomon's life and in his own, that the external motions are never enough to sustain worship or have a healthy life.

So in simple terms, we worship the Lord sincerely because he loved us first. And in Solomon, his idolatrous, wandering life had taken him far from God, which had given him a very formal, distant, and personal view of God.

Looking inward and looking outward had caused him to feel like God was a million miles away, and it began to change everything about his life. And so what did he do?

He needed to align his heart. How was he going to align his heart? His thoughts were going to be considering the thoughts of God. He was going to worship. He was going to go to God's Word.

He was going to think about the goodness of God. And so there's great benefits in our lives. I find this fascinating. Some of you will find this quite nerdy. I was listening to why they put iodine in salt in the early 1900s.

[ 15 : 29 ] A lot of people, and we all wanted to know that, right? And a lot of people in the Midwest had Gorders because they had a deficiency. 30% of people who applied for the military out of Michigan in World War I had a thyromegala, which means they had an iodine deficiency in their body.

And so what they did is they added iodine to table salt so that people would get that nutritional mineral. Wake up. All right. Come back to me here. I know I lost some of you there for a moment.

And so it was added into their lives because a healthy life can't be deficient of that. Your life, it will not work without worship. It will not work without a steady rhythm of worship in your life.

You are not made to look outward and inward without looking upward. You can't look outward and inward without looking upward. It's going to lead to despair, discouragement, and depression. God deserves the worship from us, but you need it.

Not being worshiped, but you need to worship Him. You need that in your life. So sincere worship, it places us, it profits us, and it will portion us. It places us in the rightful place of where we were supposed to be in this world.

[ 16 : 36 ] I am not the most important thing in all of the world. Modern day religion often attempts to make God useful to us, but that is not what's supposed to happen. Life's most significant, the stresses and anxieties come as a result of lesser lords.

And so worship places us back where it needs to be. The overburden and extended lives are not a product of God's crushing demands on us, but their own. You know what I find?

I asked this the other day on social media. Is Saturday the closest or the farthest day of the week from Sunday? It's not a riddle. It's not a math problem. But that's what I want to say is, you say, Sunday belongs to the Lord.

I'm going to go there. I'm going to worship Him. I'm going to align. I'm going to alter my life around the schedule of the church for Sunday. But Monday through Friday, you've been looking outwards.

You've been trying to find happiness in the things of this world. Many people, not God's people, Lord, I would pray, but many people would try to find it in the rat race of Monday through Friday, trying to find the significance in the things of this world and what they can buy or the value that they're adding to their businesses.

[ 17 : 41 ] And then by Saturday, they say, I'm going to try something else. That didn't work. Now I'm going to give myself the pleasure all day Saturday. I'm going to wake up early, go to bed late, and I'm just going to try everything in the world to try to meet, to fill this void in my life.

And I would encourage you that our Saturdays ought to be closest to Sundays and not to any other day of the week, meaning that if worship isn't altering your Saturdays, if setting time aside to be with the Lord and to know Him, then you're going to be very likely to come in the Sunday the same way that you went in the Saturday, which is the same way that you went in the Monday, which is looking to God to serve you.

He was supposed to serve you on Monday. You try to get Him to serve you on Saturday, and you will come in this building on Sunday with the same mentality. But you need, worship will place you. He is big and mighty and loving.

You are small and broken and need of Him to sustain you. And then it profits us. False worship in whatever form, it promises hope, but it doesn't deliver. It abuses us.

Worship forces me to consider what is really important in my life. I'll be abused by this world if I do not worship Him because I will give my attentions and affections to them, and they will always abuse me and take advantage of me.

[ 18 : 53 ] And then it portions me. It gives us the ability to be contented and delighted in what God has already given me. It frees me to enjoy my work rather than be driven by it. It frames me and filters the world around me through the goodness and the grace of God.

It allows me to see God as the source of my happiness and not as a means to it. Worship needs to be part of our lives, and it leads to movement. Verse 60, I made haste, and I delayed not to keep thy commandments.

You know, it's a dangerous thing to make haste on a wrong path, but it's a glorious thing to make haste on the right way. When you know that God has given you something to do, don't hesitate to it.

Get about it. Spurgeon said, speed in repentance and speed in obedience are two excellent things. We are too often in haste to sin, oh, that we may be in a greater hurry to obey.

That's what we should encourage each other to be. The ending of verse 63 says, you could see why you would say, a companion of those that fear the Lord and his precepts, or those that fear the Lord and keep his precepts, they are my friends.

[ 19 : 54 ] Because you need people that help you to do that. Because everything that they showed you about lining your heart in worship, it is so counterculture to this world. It is the complete other direction of where the world is going.

The world is telling you to find your value in something else. The world is trying to tell you to focus on yourself. It's not trying to tell you any of these things. So if you can find some people around you that are worshiping, then they ought to be considered your companions.

This creates a wonderful fellowship among us. This quote, it says, if then we are not ashamed to confess ourselves Christians, let us not shrink from walking in fellowship with Christians, even if they should exhibit some repulsive features that bear the image of him whom we profess to love inexpressibly and comparably above all.

This is an old English way to say, it doesn't really matter how weird I am. The fact that I love Jesus and I fear the Lord and I want to keep his precepts, I would make a pretty good friend for you.

You know? And you really should. You ought to be looking for people in your life that worship and know the Lord and all those secondary things that are keeping you from close friendship with other Christians because they don't run in the same circle or they have a different hobby than you and they're just not aligned with you.

[ 21 : 08 ] Let's say if a person fears the Lord and he keeps his precepts, then you are a good candidate to be my friend because I need anybody that I can in my life that's going to help encourage me towards worship.

And so we should speak often together. Malachi 3.16, then they that fear the Lord spake often one to another. I love that. We ought to be communicating quite often to one another as those that fear the Lord.

And so it's an incredible joy to call Jesus our portion. That's what this verse has called us to do. There may be times like Peter in Matthew 19.27 that says, Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee.

What shall we have therefore? God, I've just given up so much. Don't you understand me being a Christian has cost me so many opportunities? Don't you know that I'm missing out on so much?

What have I given up so much? What shall we have therefore? Therefore, and Jesus' answer to Peter, which is Jesus' answer to you, is what? Me. You have him.

[ 22 : 07 ] He is your portion. I mean, what do you mean you gave up something? You have me, is what Jesus would answer him. In all this world, there's nothing that you have of greater value than your relationship with the Lord.

That is our portion. Jesus is our portion. So I'm going to pray Psalm 73, verse 25 through 28 as we close tonight. If you'd like to turn that and follow along with me, we've looked at this portion of Scripture.

But here is a great portion of Scripture. I will pray and they will be dismissed. I really want to hear Ben and Kristen sing again, but hopefully we get to hear that again. All right.

That was so beautiful. But I'm going to just read this. I'm going to pray this Psalm with you and then we will be dismissed tonight. But this is a prayer of Asaph. And if you know about Asaph, he lived in Alpharetta in 2022.

He was jealous and envious at the foolish. He was just living the life that so many of us live. When he's looking outward and inward, he found nothing. But then he gets to a place where his heart would get aligned by worship.

[ 23 : 06 ] And I'll pray this tonight. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, we come and we thank you for the words that are put upon this Psalm. That I would never know, Lord. I could probably never communicate that you are my everything.

You are my all in all. But I can take the words of Scripture tonight, Lord. And I want to say this. You are my portion. You are all that I need in life. When I feel like I've given up anything, Lord, for you.

And I ask you, what have you given me? I look to the cross and I realize you have given me your all. And I'm so thankful. Without you, Lord, I would have nothing. And Lord, with you I have everything.

Lord, whom do I have in heaven but you? Lord, you're all that I need. There is none upon the earth that I desire besides you, Lord. You are all that I want. I'm grateful for a wonderful family, wonderful kids, and a wonderful church.

But Lord, I unashamedly tell you that they are nothing in comparison to your love that's been demonstrated towards me. The love that I can give to them and receive from them, Lord, it pales in comparison to what you have offered all of us.

[ 24 : 11 ] My flesh and my heart, they fail. And Lord, I am just nothing. But you are my strength and my heart. And you are my portion forever. For lo, that are far from me, Lord, they are going to perish.

They are destroyed to them that have went far from you. And I recognize that. That many people aren't going to serve you. That many people don't understand why we would live our lives the way that we do. But it is good for me, Lord.

It is good for my brothers and sisters in here to draw near to you. We put our trust in you, O Lord. And we want to declare all your works. Heavenly Father, we thank you for being our portion.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. Amen.