

# Zain

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[ 0 : 00 ] Let me in Psalm 119, verse 49. We have, we're in our seventh section, Psalm 119, and we have not exhausted the greatness of God's Word. Each section talks about God's law, His statutes, and it shows us something, in this case, how the comfort comes from God's Word, how there's comfort in His promises.

Verse 49, Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. This is my comfort and my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me. The proud hath had me greatly in derision, yet have I not declined from thy law.

I remember thy judgments of old, O Lord, and have comforted myself. Horror hath thou taken hold upon me, because of the wicked forsake thy law.

Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage, and I have remembered thy name, O Lord, in the night I have kept thy law. This I had, because I kept thy precepts.

Charles Spurgeon is somebody that I quote often, because he wrote a great deal about different portions of the Bible, and you hear me quote him, but maybe I haven't shared much of his story.

[ 1 : 07 ] I won't have time tonight. I live from 1830 to the 1880s, very large gospel preaching church in England. And he was somebody, though, that he had a reputation of, as a pastor, he went home to home during the plague, and cared for his church.

He stood for the sufficiency of Scripture when it was being underneath attack. But one of the reasons that he so often read and quoted is because of his honesty and his struggle with depression, and with anxiety, and different fears that he would have in his life.

I recently read how, in school, he was very intelligent. And if you've read after him, you know that he read just all the time. But in school, his grades were failing. And the teacher realized that the kids in his grade were sitting near the door, and there was a draft, and they were cold.

And so they moved where he was at in the class, and his grades went up. That story kind of tells you a little bit about how he was emotionally. I don't know how many of you are affected by the weather.

I think I would, I don't know that I'm overly affected by the weather, but I'm also, don't believe that God's going to lead me to Seattle. I would be, that would be a challenge for me, that I'm affected by that.

[ 2 : 24 ] And he was somebody that was aware of it. And he had an openness about it. He said this, he said, you may be surrounded with all the comforts of life, and yet be in wretchedness more gloomy than death, if the spirits are depressed.

You may have no outward cause, whatever for sorrow, and yet if the mind is dejected, the brightest sunshine will not relieve your gloom. There are times when all our evidences get cloudy, and all our joys are fled.

Though we may still cling to the cross, yet it is with a desperate grasp. Such honesty, to say when there's times where there's this comfort in our lives, there's no real opposition, but we just find ourselves very discouraged.

Stephanie and I have looked at pictures through the years here at the church and in our family, and we'd see that we were smiling, and that everybody around us was smiling, but we would say, you know what, that was a really difficult season for us.

I remember one that shows up occasionally here, I'm wearing a bumbo seat, one of these things that kids have, and I'm wearing it on my head. And that weekend, we had a miscarriage.

[ 3 : 32 ] My grandmother passed away, and my pastor, many years, left his family in ministry. And so I look at that picture, and it brings back a lot of sorrow to me, knowing what was going on.

That makes sense, doesn't it? That when those kind of things come in your life, that you deal with the anxiety, or you deal with the depression. But I have other times in life where I had nothing that should have caused me discouraged.

That I would have been envious of the place that I was in. It was something that I prayed for. But even in those times, I might fight discouragement and depression. Spurgeon warns his students of some situations they might be in that will make them susceptible to depression.

Won't be saying that word anytime soon. All right? When you have a prolonged illness or physical problem, when you have intense mental or heart work to do, when you're lonely or isolated, when you live your life and you haven't moved around much, you're just stuck inside, wintertime, you're not getting out, and you overwork your brain.

Here's a good one. After success. Here's another good one. Before success. All right? After a heavy obstacle, through the slow pile of trouble and discouragement, in exhaustion and overworking, he was challenging them.

[ 4 : 44 ] These are seasons of life that you need to be mindful of that discouragement are going to come in. You should, as a maturing Christian, be able to identify times in your lives where the temptation is stronger for you when they're coming there.

The desperate need for comfort can find us at any time among our pilgrimage. Spurgeon would tell you, as you would say, that oppression isn't always logical. Its cause is not always clear.

There's times, he said, when the spirits, they betray us and we seek in the darkness and we need comfort. The negative results of the fall of man is fear and anxiety and depression. Adam and Eve in the garden, they hid themselves from the presence of God.

Fear comes from actual danger or maybe just perceived danger. It takes away, it wants to take away obedience and our trust in God. And rather than trust in the Creator, we remove ourselves from Him.

Just like Adam and Eve fled, so do we. And anxiety is a subset of that fear. You know, fearful or anxious people, they're great meditators. It's not on what is right.

[ 5 : 48 ] They meditate on the wrong things, right? They meditate on the what-ifs of life, what could happen, what could go wrong. This is called The Great Disaster by many people that write about it.

It's this. We have interpreted what we know about God from our experience instead of interpreting our experience in light of what is true about God from Scriptures.

It's the great disorder that we have and it leads to depression and discouragement and then it gets compounded in our lives when we look to the world for comfort. It is as being people that are thirsty on a boat out in the ocean and we drink the salt water because it's immediate and it's there but it compounds the problem.

So we must recognize that when we're desperate for comfort how vital it is that our desire is met with the Word of God. As being open as I can be in here, I know there's nothing in my life that tempts me more towards idolatry than a desire to find comfort outside of God.

See, obedience is difficult but disobedience gives the illusion that comfort is more readily accessible through sin than it is waiting upon the Lord.

[ 6 : 59 ] I'm desperate for comfort and I want to find it in anything that is available. Verse 50, For this is my comfort in my affliction for thy word hath quickened me.

My comfort is found here. My comfort is to be found, I'm supposed to be made alive. When I feel like I'm dying, I feel depressed, I feel discouraged, I feel affliction, I'm not supposed to be looking for life in anything in this world outside of finding it in the promises of God.

Verse 49, Remember the word unto thy servant upon which thou hast caused me the hope. Remember. It's not like Kyle being told to remember the right kind of cheese at the grocery store.

We don't call on God to remember us somebody that is forgetting something but it's our prayer that God would fulfill the promises that he made to us his servant. The word of promise is what caused him the hope.

Hope is not something of an uncertain wish but it's an expectation based on the promises of God. Psalm 42, 5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted in me?

[ 8 : 02 ] Hope thou in God for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance. That is something that you ought to speak to yourself. That is something that you should read out loud and say, Why are you like this?

Why are you so downtrodden and why are you so sad? Hope in God. Have your expectation in his promises. So biblical hope not only desires something good for the future but it expects it to happen.

When you need comfort, you look to God's promises, it provides hope. The Lord has given us the promise on which we may hope. The promises can be hard at times to lay hold of them but we can during these times.

I was just at this church in Indiana this weekend and knowing the story, I really wanted to go there and see it. I was grateful to get the opportunity to preach about missions but I really just wanted to see the place because going into COVID, there was about 35 people at the church, mostly older people and my friend that moved there, he knew that it was going to be a challenge.

They were in a college town and the church was beginning to die and then COVID came and everything was on lockdown and he was just most certain that he was going to be the last pastor of that church and that may be what God had brought them there for but he began to pray and he said, God, you said in John 12, 32, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me and I'm going to claim that promise and I'm going to lift up Jesus and they took all their resources, all that they had and they just plastered the name Jesus all over that town.

[ 9 : 30 ] Signs outside their church, writings on the wall, t-shirts, they just made you know that you had to be confronted with that name Jesus wherever they went and on Sunday there wasn't just about 250 people on the surface but there was people that came up to me over the last three years that accepted Christ, that their lives were being changed, families were being put back together and we had a special time of prayer with a small group of older people that were in that church where the pastor allowed them to celebrate what God had done and then said, now let's do this.

Let's pray that God would call one of us to be a missionary and they knelt at an altar and they prayed. It was so special. A church that said, we're going to claim the promises of God and we're going to live as if it's true and they did and God did a great work.

So how can we sing of the Lord's song in a strange land? How are we able to sorrow when rejoicing and grieve with hope? It's the promises of the Lord we will stand in them and by His Spirit we'll be enabled to live these out.

Verse 50, To this is my comfort and my affliction for thy worth hath quickened me. The word comfort conveys this idea of easing. Have you ever been so desperate for comfort?

Something hurt so bad? I one time grabbed a cast iron skillet from the stove. You're not supposed to do that, alright? And it burned so bad. I was just doing whatever I could. I got a stick of butter and I held it in my hand and I got on FaceTime with Eric Elrod who was a nurse, you know, and I said, Eric, this hurts so bad.

[ 10 : 59 ] He said, I wouldn't recommend putting butter on it. I'm like, I'm not. Like, what am I supposed to do? He said, don't put your under water too. I'm like, oh man, that's what I was doing. I'd done everything but even after he told me, I still didn't care.

I wanted my stick of butter under the cold water. It hurts so bad. I just was desperate for anything. The other day I was feeling sick and I told him, I said, where's mom at? And Carson said, she's not here.

And I said, I'm feeling sick and I need to tell mom I'll feel better. And Carson said, I get that. I'm like, good. And you just, you feel better, right? And if they know about it, I just needed something to ease the pain a little bit.

It's how we walk with the Lord in the midst of the trial. He's given us a promise that it should comfort us. It is in our affliction. He is dealing here with the ridicule. In verse number 51, there's a derision and limitations, which we'll get to soon, talks about this derision of his people and a song all the day long.

There's a, they were filled with bitterness there because they're being mocked at. He just got tired of being ridiculed. He got tired of being looked down upon. He just got tired of people always as causing him grief and trouble.

[ 12 : 05 ] He was tired of people problems. Jeremiah remembered and turned to God's word in the midst of affliction. Lamentations, it says in Lamentations 3, 20 and 21, my soul hath them still in remembrance and is humbled in me.

This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope. This one thought crowded out all the hopelessness that threatened to overwhelm him.

The darkness was coming, he was discouraged, but I recall in my mind, therefore I have hope. Grab a hold of the promises of God, which in this psalm it reminds us that it's eternal.

Thy judgments, verse 52, are of old. Old does not mean irrelevant and all the old people said, Amen. Okay, a few of you are owning that, okay? The old does not mean irrelevant.

When you hear the word old, it means eternal, that it's established as the heaven and earth may pass away, but the word of God is not going to pass away. It has been here. It is eternal. One of the sayings by Hubmeyer that Kristen helped me make a logo for and I have on many shirts is, truth is immortal.

[ 13 : 08 ] It's old and it will always be around. It's not going away. Remember that judgments of old. They're eternal. They're not being changed. Regardless of how discouraged I am, no matter how much I'm being ridiculed, the promises of God are not changing.

And so we fight this fleeting temptation with the eternal, never changing, all satisfying word of God by living obedience to God's word and not giving in to the temptation to find comfort in this world.

Verse 51, The proud hath made me greatly in derision, yet have I not declined from thy law that resolved the stand in the promises of God. That should be the mark of a Christian.

Yet I have not. The proud came, the derision came, yet I have not. Obedience in spite of opposition is the evidence of God's work in our lives.

Love how Matthew Henry says, Those can bear but little for Christ that cannot bear a hard word for Him. If you can't be ridiculed, if you can't be criticized, if you can't bear that for Christ, and you're not able to bear what He would like to share in His sufferings with you, our hearts should be set to defend His word, not our personal reputation.

[ 14 : 19 ] Verse 53, Where hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake the law. He has resolved here, it wasn't the personal offense, it was that the people in his life, they were criticizing God's law, that they were forsaking God's law.

That's what bothered him so much. Henry Martin, famous missionary to India, when he saw them throwing widows, women upon the graves of their husband, he said, I could not bear to go on living if I thought my Lord's law would always be so dishonored.

That they were made in the image of God, that's what bothered him. The fact that they were disobeying God's word, it bothered him. So as Christians, we're not apathetic towards the violation of God's law because our hearts are with Him.

We love God's word and we should have a hatred towards sin knowing the harm that it does towards those that He loves. And then quickly here, verse 54, that statutes have been my song in the house of pilgrimage.

In the next verse, it says that it's going to happen at night, that His promises can be our song in the night. That's what helps us reorder this great disorder in our lives.

[ 15 : 28 ] We're not going to read God's word based on our circumstances, but we're going to read God's word and His promises and then we're going to filter everything that we see in this world through it. What's a great song that many of you would know?

Standing on the promises that cannot fail, when the howling storms of doubt and fear assail, by the living word of God, I shall prevail, standing on the promises of God.

You shouldn't just sing that in this church building. You should sing it in the dark hours of your day. You should sing it when the scourgement is coming in. Joy is possible despite our circumstances as we engage our hearts and mind in the promises of God.

That's what you're supposed to pick up when it talks about singing. Sure, literally saying, but what it's telling you is make sure that this truth is going between your mind and your heart. Make sure that you're totally bringing this in to every aspect of your life.

And then lastly, so much is to be gained by trusting God to meet all of our needs including the need for comfort. When we meet again, I'll review this because it's so wonderful.

[ 16 : 31 ] But just, we think about the wonderful, this I had because I kept thy precepts. This I had is what he got to say. What is it he had? He had so much in his life.

The ability to sorrow when rejoicing, enduring the afflictions of the Christian life with comfort, an opportunity to grieve with hope. He learned the saying of the Lord's song in a strange land. All those things that he had.

So much is to be gained by living the promises of God. And so much is to be lost by turning to the world for comfort. Could you imagine the affliction, the psalmist, how intense it was?

Or David, if the story would have changed, if the story of David would have said, in an instant, he looked away. He said a prayer for the unnamed woman and he went where he should have been all along to the war.

If you're not familiar with the story, David's standing on top of his house. He looks over. He isn't where he's supposed to be. He isn't in the right frame of mind. And it led to all kinds of hurt and sorrow in his mind.

[ 17 : 33 ] Could you imagine how that story would have changed if it would have said, I will not find my comfort in the things of this world. I will stand on the promises of God. That's available for us.

And what's so wonderful is Jesus never tasted of the cup of disobedience. He never tasted it. He always did right. He did right because it was right.

But he also said, for the joy that was set before him. He did right because it is all satisfying. And before we rejoice together there's a Colossians would tell us singing with grace in our hearts.

And I hope that encourages you in the discouragement that you may just be facing from a normal day. I mean, sometimes the week is hard. Why? Because it has a Monday in it, right? Sometimes you're not even facing challenges.

It's just life begins to wear at you. I want to remind you that in the word of God are promises that you can stand in. That in the word of God you can find it all satisfying.

[ 18 : 29 ] That it will meet your need. The allure of sin is that it will gratify you in a moment but the Bible will give you something that is eternal, that is all satisfying, that will bring health to you, that will bring blessings upon you.

Why would we ever look to anything else for our comfort? I want to encourage you in here. There's all kinds of ways to fall into temptation of sin. All kinds of ways to be fallen into idolatry.

But one of them that is very strong in the world that we live in right now has to do with comfort. Everything is sold to us as a means of comfort. When you have a hard day, where do you turn? We aren't people that are going to turn to unfaithfulness.

We're not people that are going to turn to alcohol. We're not going to be people that turn towards even amusement. We're going to take those thoughts and our feelings and we're going to take them to the God of heaven and say, God, I am turning to you in my affliction.

I'm going to ask that you would quicken me and make me alive. Let us pray together. I know it's a little bit after eight, but we need to sing together at least a couple of verses. Heavenly Father, thank you for your word and the comfort that is found there.

[ 19 : 36 ] Father, you have forgiven me and I'm so grateful when I have looked to this world for your comfort, when I've looked for things of sin, Lord, when I've taken the things of this world which you meant for good and I've turned them to something that was evil and wrong because they had an elevated view of my life.

They became as God to me. I look for them for comfort. Father, help us as a group of believers, as a church, that we will decide that you, your word, is all satisfying, that in our affliction that you can quicken us from your word.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.