

MARANATHA BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

13 September 2020

Combined Worship Service

"Present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Colossians 1:28)

Address: 63 Cranwell Road, Singapore 509851

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Sunday School: 10 am

Sunday English / Chinese Worship Service: 10.45 am

Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 8.30 pm

**Rev Colin Wong (HP : 9665 8160); Elder Daniel Tau (HP : 9761 5415);
Elder Peter Ong (HP : 9626 7045); Elder Royce Yeo (HP : 9362 3067)**

THE POWER OF THE CLEANSING WORD (Meditation on Psalm 119:10-16)

The Word of God is not only powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12), it also has a powerful cleansing power. The Psalmist asked, "How can a young man cleanse his way? (Psalm 11:9) This is one of the questions asks by many a young man. Perhaps, this is one of the most important of all questions because it has to do with his vulnerability and susceptibility to temptations. A young man is full of hot passions and poor in knowledge and experience in life. How can he get right and keep right? How shall he become and remain practically holy? The sooner he asks this question the better he is because it will keep him from sin, sorrow and misery.

The Psalmist is concerned for the young man's way of life. Youths (adults also) are inclined to all kinds of temptations. How can he cleanse his way? The answer to his vulnerability and susceptibility to temptations is found in Psalm 119:9 - "...by taking heed thereto according to thy word."

The Bible is a Roadmap to the youths (Psalm 119:105). But sadly, this Roadmap is not taken seriously by them. Like a captain watching from his deck all night for direction without a compass, many youths are directionless and hastening on to shipwreck.

In our last meditation, we asked a pertinent question, "Who are the happy people on earth?" The happy people on earth are those who read, understand and practice the Word daily. As a result, God prosper them.

There is a need to take heed to the Word. By taking heed to the Word, the Psalmist said its power cleanses a young man's way. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to the Word.

When it comes to seeking God, how sincere are you? The Psalmist said, "With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments" (10). Sincerity is the key. The Psalmist sought God with his whole heart. His approach to God was sincere and free of hypocrisy and pretense. Sadly, many of us approach God casually and irreverently. This ought not so to be.

On one hand, the Psalmist sought God wholeheartedly; on the other hand, he feared that he might wander

from God's commandments and sin against him. So, he pleaded with God not to allow him to wander from his commandments.

We must do likewise. Yes, it is always good to seek God wholeheartedly but it is also necessary to ask God to keep us from wandering from his commandments. The point is that we may be doing well now but there is no guarantee that we will do well an hour later. Moreover, when we are not doing too good spiritually, all the more we need to seek God for spiritual vitality and awakening. We must not allow our spiritual pride to keep us away from seeking God lest we wander from his commandments.

The Psalmist hides God's Word in his heart so that he might not sin against God (11). The Word sanctifies us (John 15:3; 17:17). It is not enough to have head-knowledge or common memory of God's Word. The heart is the chest to keep God's Word in. The same Hebrew word is used in Psalm 31:19 and 20. We are told to lay up or to keep secretly God's Word in our hearts. There is no other way to keep sin out of the heart except by the sanctifying power of the Holy Scriptures.

Dearly beloved, we must do the same. We must hide the Word in our hearts to keep us from sinning against God.

The Psalmist blessed God for his bountiful blessings (12). As the hymn goes, "Count your blessings – name them one by one; Count your blessings – see what God hath done." Yes, God indeed had done wonderful things for the Psalmist. One of the things God did for him was the knowledge he received from his Word. He blessed God for the instructions received from his Word. Truly, his Word had become a lamp to his feet and a light to his path (Psalm 119:105). The Word had become the Psalmist's Roadmap.

But the Psalmist was not satisfied with what he already received and blessed with. He desired a greater measure of blessing. So, he prayed, "Teach me thy statutes." As young birds receive their food and cry for more, so the Psalmist desired a greater measure of God's blessing.

Dearly beloved, when was the last time you cried for more of God's Word? Like Job, let us esteem God's Word more than our necessary food (Job 23:12).

Having acquired God's Word, it was the desire of the Psalmist to declare it to all people (13). His heart was full of God's Word ("Thy word have I hid in my heart"). God had spoken to him and what less could he do than speak to those who need to hear it.

The Word of God is not only to be kept in our hearts. We are to declare it to others who need to hear it. Though Jeremiah's preaching ministry was not well received and appreciated by the unrepentant people of God and many times he felt like giving up, but God's Word continued to burn in his heart. He said, "But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay" (Jeremiah 20:9). Paul said, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Timothy 4:2).

We are to preach, teach or share God's Word all the time, every time and any time to people who need to hear it.

The Psalmist rejoiced over God's testimonies as much as in all riches (14). God's testimonies here are God's revealed will or promises made to his people. God's testimonies are far better than riches. Calvin said, "As wealth attracts to itself the hearts of mankind, so I have taken more exquisite delight in the progress which I make in the doctrine of godliness, than if I abounded in all manner of riches."

Dearly beloved, how would you treasure God's Word? Would you give up your favourite TV program to read God's Word? Would you sacrifice anything to read God's Word? The Psalmist said, "I take more

delight in the way of thy testimonies than in all my riches” (Green).

The Psalmist not only read, studied God’s Word, but he also gave himself to the meditation of it (15). The word “meditate” implies deep and heartfelt reflection expressed or unexpressed. Elsewhere the Psalmist says, “O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day” (Psalm 119:97).

Dearly beloved, we need to internalize God’s Word. We need God’s Word to be a part of us. And the way to do it is through meditation.

Because the Psalmist gave himself daily in the meditation of God’s Word, he had great respect to the ways of God laid down in his Word. Where do we seek counsel when we are in trouble? God’s Word or man’s philosophy?

There is no doubt that the Psalmist had truly tasted the goodness of God’s Word (16). In the course of meditating it, there comes a delight that no man can explain. Such delight from God’s Word the Psalmist would not forget – “I will not forget thy word.” Jeremiah says, “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart” (Jeremiah 15:16; Psalm 1:2; 119:24, 47, 70, 77, 174).

Dearly beloved, how often do you delight in God’s Word? Calvin said, “The commencement of a good life consists in God’s law attracting us to him by its sweetness.”

May I encourage you to read, memorize, meditate on and practice the Word because it has a powerful cleansing power for our soul. Amen.

Pastor Colin Wong

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Theme for the Quarter :
FREE IN CHRIST
(An Exposition on the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians)

Combined Worship Service :
Rev Colin Wong speaks on A Church that the Lord Delights (Matthew 16:13-19).
Interpreter : Elder Royce Yeo.