

MARANATHA BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

27 December 2020

English 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)**

FAITH IN THE WORD OF GOD

(Psalm 119:65-68, Part 1)

You and I read the Bible. We know its teaching. We thank God for it. But when it comes to living the Word, do we have faith in it? Do we believe what it says? Do we do what it says? We do not need people to tell us that knowing the Word is one thing and doing it is another thing. There is a vast difference. F.F. Bruce said, "Doctrine is never taught in the Bible simply that it may be known; it is taught in order that it may be translated into practice" (James 1:22).

Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O LORD, according unto thy word (65).

The Psalmist truly appreciated God's doings in his life. He was grateful to God for the way he dealt with him. He said, "Thou hast dealt well (i.e., dealt graciously) with thy servant, O LORD." Though it was painful at times, but he did not mind because he knows God's dealings are good for him. In Psalm 57:2 the Psalmist was confident that God would perform all things for him. Therefore, in verse 7, he said, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise."

God deals with us in a variety of ways. Jesus called it, "tribulation" (John 16:33). James called it "divers temptations" (James 1:2). Peter called it "manifold temptations" (1 Peter 1:6). The testing of our faith is good. It produces patience, endurance, perseverance and steadfastness (James 1:3). It refines your faith (1 Peter 1:7; Job 23:10).

Oftentimes, God uses crisis to teach us. Crisis is good. Someone said that crisis does not make a man; it reveals what he already is. God uses adverse circumstances to shape us. He uses people, at times unreasonable people to fashion us.

The Psalmist here was specific in his confession and acknowledgement. He not only confessed that he is a servant but he also acknowledged that he is a servant of Jehovah – "Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O LORD." The Hebrew word means "slave" or "bondman." A slave has no right, property or say. He is a living tool. He is at the disposal of his master. He listens to his master's command. He

does what his master say. Having done all that his master commanded, he does not expect a single word of appreciation from him. He does not deserve it (Luke 17:10).

The attitude of the Psalmist to God's discipline was total submission. He did not reject his chastening but submitted to it, for he knew the benefits of it. The writer of Hebrews said that discipline is good because through it we may become partakers of his holiness and produce the peaceable fruit of righteousness (Hebrews 12:10, 11).

This dealing of the LORD is according to the Word of God – "...according unto thy word" (Psalm 119:25, 28, 41, 58). "Word" here refers to the promises of God. One of his promises is those who endure trials of life will come forth as gold (Job 23:10; 1 Peter 7).

Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments (66).

The Psalmist was an ever-ready learner (Psalm 119:12). Like the people of Berea, he was ready to embrace God's Word (Acts 17:11). He received the Word not as men's words but the very Word of God (1 Thessalonians 2:13). His earnest prayer was to ask God to teach him good judgment and knowledge. Why? The reason was that possessing a good judgment, discernment and knowledge kept him from going astray. Do you believe God's Word is able to keep you from going astray? The Psalmist did - "...for I have believed thy commandments." He had heartily embraced God's Word, he did believe it to be true, important and necessary, and therefore he asked God to teach him from the Word good judgment and knowledge.

Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word (67).

The depravity of the human heart seems to be incurable except in the school of sorrow. Affliction is good and beneficial. Trials of life act as a thorn hedge to keep us in the good pasture. Oftentimes, God sends troubles to keep us from going astray. Crisis "forces" us to turn to God for help.

The church has many wandering Christians. Their hearts are prone to wander into worldly places. There is no way to bring them back to the good, greenery pasture unless God acts. And when God sends troubles for the purpose of bringing them back to himself, there is always pain and sorrow. The writer of Hebrews says, "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous" (12:11). But Christians should view these trials of life positively. As James puts it, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations" (James 2:2). Peter says, "...though now for a season, if need be" (1 Peter 1:6). Christians should welcome them as God-sent for a divine purpose (Romans 8:28).

There was a change in the heart of the Psalmist. The God-sent affliction was good for him. He was severely disciplined and as a result, he now kept his Word. Spurgeon put it beautifully – The medicine of affliction worked a change – "but"; an immediate change – "now"; a lasting change – "have I"; an inward change – "have I kept"; a change Godward – "thy word."

How should you react to God's discipline? Consider the following:

1. Do not despise it. That is to say, do not regard the discipline of the Lord lightly (Hebrews 12:5). We should be thankful for it because it shows that we are indeed children of God, not illegitimate children (Hebrews 12:6-10).
2. Do not get discouraged by it. Some people take God's discipline so seriously that they become discouraged by it (Hebrews 12:5). They become depressed and moody.
3. Do not undermine it. Discipline makes us partakers of God's holiness and it brings forth peaceable fruit of righteousness (Hebrews 12:10, 11). Therefore, let us respond positively to

God's discipline because it is good for us.

Thou art good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes (68).

Here is a confession of the Psalmist – a confession of experience. Even in affliction God is good and does good. God is unchangeably good. He is always doing good. This is his nature.

How much good God does no tongue can tell. The Psalmist said in Psalm 40:5, "Many, O LORD my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered." And in Psalm 116:12, "What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me?"

Let us be a people of gratitude. Let us bless God and not forget all his benefits even in the midst of trials of life (Psalm 103:2).

Knowing the goodness of God, the Psalmist continued to ask God to teach him his statutes (12). He knew the consequences of breaking God's Law and so he asked God to teach him his statutes. Moses said that God's statutes are good for us (Deuteronomy 10:13). Proverbs reminds us that the despising of God's Word will land us into deep trouble (Proverbs 13:13). Let us take heed to God's Word lest calamities may come upon us (Deuteronomy 28:20). Amen.

Pastor Colin Wong

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

**Rev Colin Wong speaking at the English Service on
A Bruised Reed He Will Not Break (Matthew 12:20).**