

MARANATHA BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

14 March 2021

Combined Worship Service

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

Address: 63 Cranwell Road, Singapore 509851

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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);
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SEEKING GOD'S VINDICATION (Psalm 119:121-128)

I have done judgment and justice: leave me not to mine oppressors (121).

Here we see the Psalmist appealing to God for vindication. He had not done any thing wrong. Now David (some commentators think that David was the author of Psalm 119) was not saying that he is sinless or perfect (2 Samuel 11; Psalm 32:1-5; 51). He was saying that he had done his level best to execute judgment and justice to his people.

As king of Israel, he had done judgment and justice to his people (2 Samuel 8:15). He would do good not only to his people but also to his enemies. How many of us would weep for our enemies? For some of us, we may say, "They have done so much evil against us. Why should we weep for them?" However, it was not so with David. He said, "Fierce witnesses rise up; They ask me things that I do not know. They reward me evil for good, To the sorrow of my soul. But as for me, when they were sick, My clothing was sackcloth; I humbled myself with fasting; And my prayer would return to my own heart. I paced about as though he were my friend or brother; I bowed down [b]heavily, as one who mourns for his mother" (Psalm 35:11-14). In his sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:43-48). Paul said, "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:17a, 21). That is the Christian Attitude!

As a soldier, David appealed to King Saul that there is neither evil nor transgression in his hand (1 Samuel 24:11). He had nothing against him. Therefore, his conscience was clear before God and men (Acts

23:1; 24:16).

It's a torture to live with an unclear conscience. A person with such a conscience does not have peace of heart and mind unless his conscience is sealed (1 Timothy 4:2). He has a restless spirit. How can he come before God with an open heart? How can he freely talk to God with such a conscience? There is no fellowship between him and God (1 John 1:7). There is a blockage, and that blockage is SIN.

Is your conscience clear? Is there any thing that is preventing you from having a sweet fellowship with God and with your brother and sister in the Lord? (Acts 23:1; 24:16;

Having appealed to God's vindication, the Psalmist pleaded with God not to leave him to his oppressors. Who were his oppressors? They were the proud and the arrogant mentioned in verses 51, 69, 78, 85, 122, etc.

Be surety for thy servant for good: let not the proud oppress me (122).

The Psalmist asked for divine protection – “Guarantee or ensure your servant's well-being.” The plea was necessary because of his oppressors. David knew what oppression was. The word “oppress” means to press upon, to keep down by severe and unjust use of force or authority.

Ever since the women sang “Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands,” King Saul had been angry with David and seeking to kill him (1 Samuel 18:7, 11). Since then, David has been his greatest enemy continually (1 Samuel 18:29). Confiding to Jonathan, David said, “What have I done? What is my iniquity, and what is my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?” (1 Samuel 20:1) What was the cause of Saul's murderous intent? The answer is ANGER (1 Samuel 18:8; 1 John 3:15).

The application is aplenty. I will give you one and you ask the Holy Spirit to help you apply this truth in your own lives. Someone stops you from attending a meeting because he does not like the preacher's preaching. He said that his preaching is bad. The cause of saying it is out of anger. Anger has led this person to utter words of hate. If this person does not confess and repent from his unholy spirit, he will give himself over to the devil. He will become a partner with him oppressing God's people and destroying God's ministry.

Paul said, “Be angry, and do not sin...nor give place to the devil” (Ephesians 4:26, 27). I am afraid many of us might have given place to the devil. We have allowed the devil to play trick in our minds. That is why God's servants ought to pray for divine protection all the time – “O Lord, let not the oppressors oppress us.”

Mine eyes fail for thy salvation, and for the word of thy righteousness (123).

In the preceding verses, the Psalmist pleaded with God not to leave him to his oppressors (121, 122). He waited for an answer to his prayer. He waited and waited and waited till his eyes failed – “Mine eyes fail for thy salvation.”

Like Habakkuk, who complained to God for delaying his deliverance to Israel, said, “O Lord, how long shall I cry, And You will not hear? Even cry out to You, “Violence!” And You will not save” (Habakkuk 1:2). Why did God delay the salvation of his people? The answer is found in Ecclesiastes 3:1: “To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.”

The Psalmist not only waited for his salvation, but he also waited for the word of righteousness that would silence the unrighteous words of his oppressors till his eyes ached. He had been waiting for a word to rebuke his oppressors. He could have rebuked them with his own words, but he did not. He knew that his words have not authority. So, he waited for God to speak.

Here is a wonderful lesson. Do not engage your oppressors with human words but with the Word of God (Matthew 10:19, 20). Learn to use God's Word appropriately (Ephesians 6:17).

Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy, and teach me thy statutes (124).

Though the Psalmist had done judgment and justice (which was good), but he did not ask God to deal with him according to his own righteousness (1 Corinthians 3:12-15; Isaiah 64:6). Instead, he asked God to deal with him according to his mercy. Jeremiah said, "It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness" (Lamentations 3:22, 23). Yes, if God were to deal with us according to our sins or reward us according to our iniquities, none of us will live (Psalm 103:10; Ephesians 2:1-5).

The Psalmist not only asked God to deal with him and his stupidity according to his abundant mercy, but he also asked him to teach him the Word so that he might know what is right and wrong.

A servant of God must possess a spirit of humility and teachability. He must recognize that his call to service is out of God's mercy, not because of who he is or what he has done, and therefore, he must be willing to learn from God and others.

I am thy servant; give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies (125).

Here the Psalmist acknowledged that he was a servant of God. Being a servant, he was to serve and honour him. Whatever he was called upon to do, he did it to please him. That is the reason the Psalmist asked God for understanding to know his Word in order to do his will. The will of God is found in the Word of God, and the Word of God reveals the will of God.

Jesus said that many will say to him on that day, "Lord, didn't I do this; didn't I do that?" Then he will say to them, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:22, 23). It is not what you do for God; it is what God will do in and through you. Am I doing God's will or my own will? So, we need to read his Word in order to determine his will and do it (Acts 13:36).

It is time for thee, LORD, to work: for they have made void thy law (126).

Who have broken the law of God? The proud and the ungodly have broken it. So, the Psalmist cried, "It is time for thee, LORD, to work." Calvin translated it in this way, "It is time for thee, O Jehovah, to be doing."

Shouldn't this be our cry also? Look at the immorality of the society (Romans 1:18, 24, 26, 28), look at the spiritual condition of the church, and look at the world which is falling apart, shouldn't we ask the LORD to do something about it? Yes, it is time to be doing what the circumstances call for.

Therefore, I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold (127).

The more the Psalmist sees the Law of God violated by the ungodly, the more he loves it, and loves it

above fine gold (72). Elsewhere he said, “And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved” (47). “...which I have loved” means “I have loved and I still love.” Yes, the Psalmist loved the Word when he first got hold of it, and he still loved it. How about us? Years ago when we first got hold of our Bible, we treasured it dearly, but how about now? Do we still love it and love it above fine gold?

Therefore, I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way (128).

Because the Word is above fine gold, the Psalmist embraced it all without any exceptions. Likewise, you and I should embrace, treasure and love God’s Word with all our hearts. We mustn’t pick and choose what we want to obey and what we do not want to obey.

Hammond’s paraphrase of this verse is excellent: “And indeed I have not the least exceptions to any law of thine, but most uniformly and impartially embrace them all, and every one single.”

...and I hate every false way. No one is able to hate every false way till he embraces, treasures, saturates and loves God’s Word in his heart. How did Paul know the sin of covetousness? The answer is “The Law of God” (Romans 7:7). How can you know every false way and hate it? The answer is “The Word of God.” Read it to protect yourselves from every false way. 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 Combined Service on
Look at Your Heart (Proverbs 4:23)
Interpreter : Elder Royce Yeo