

# THE VICTORY LIFE

in

## PSALM 119

by

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### CHAPTER SIX

#### BETTER DAYS ANTICIPATED

VAU

**“Let thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD, even thy salvation, according to thy word.  
So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me: for I trust in thy word.  
And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth; for I have hoped in thy judgments.  
So shall I keep thy law continually for ever and ever.**

**And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts.  
I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed.  
And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved.**

**My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved;  
and I will meditate in thy statutes” (Psalms 119:41-48).**

**“I will walk at liberty . . . I will delight myself in thy commandments” (v. 45, 47).**

THE TURBULENCE HAS SUBSIDED. The high tide of soul distress has ebbed out to sea. Now, with a more tranquil poise, the psalmist does not want God to force him to go in the way of holy living. Neither is he now asking the Lord to bend his affections in that direction. More sober thinking always revises desperate exclamations.

As we observe him now we gain the impression that he is regathering his forces, as it were, for a new thrust against the enemy who is preventing him from rising to a higher plane of spiritual enjoyment. We have an urge to tell him that he is his own worst enemy. Perhaps we would tell him, but for one reason — we ourselves resent being told the same needful truth.

**“Let thy mercies come also unto me, O Lord” (v. 41), he appeals.**

Does this not remind us of the pleas of the limping church today as revival is sought?

Everywhere among Christians, we hear the cry, “We are desperately in need of revival!” Almost every religious periodical of a strong biblical emphasis takes up the cry.

Even our national leaders, surprisingly enough, are sounding the same imperative. Thinking people throughout Christendom are aware of a spiritual deterioration. “Bless us! Bless us!” we plead individually and collectively. More and more we stand at the *wailing wall*.

What are these “**mercies**” for which the psalmist is entreating?

Does the “**also**” in his petition indicate a demand for what others have received? He had been indiscreet earlier in demanding that God force him to be victorious in his spiritual endeavors. Perhaps he does not realize that he is still rather indefinite. How simple it is to be specific in our prayers and in our confessions. Yet we seldom are. If we were more childlike in our faith, we would be more pointed in our prayers. When a youngster desires a cookie, he asks for it. If he wants bread and jam, that is what he requests.

“I don’t know how to pray. What I have been doing is not prayer,” a man bluntly confessed following a midweek meeting.

“What have you been doing?” we inquired sympathetically.

“Well, it amounts to this,” he replied rather shamefully. “I have been saying, in effect, ‘O Lord, here is my calling card. On it you will find my name and address. Please send me your blessings.’”

This is an indicting confession, and may be representative of the meaningless supplications of great numbers of people. We know of those who, in later years, thanked God for not granting some of their foolish earlier requests.

But that was not all to this particular appeal of the psalmist. He added, “**even thy salvation.**”

The word “*even*,” being in italics, was supplied by the translators. If this is the correct word, then the blessings which he desires and requests have to do with salvation. However, it seems evident that this second part is not used in apposition, but rather as an additional petition, for the word “**salvation**” here means *deliverance*.

The mercies or blessings which he desires are those which accompany true victory, the kind enjoyed by the triumphant examples about which he had previously heard.

The deliverance, on the other hand, which he seeks is perhaps the same which he requested in verses 22 and 39 — freedom from the reproach and contempt heaped upon those who steadfastly pursue the path of faithful dedication.

Anyone would delight in the blessings; few are willing to accept the reproach.

Must I be carried to the skies  
On flowery beds of ease,  
While others fought to win the prize  
And sailed through bloody seas?

Three times in our generation, we have seen sturdy young men leaving their homes, their loved ones and all cherished interests to engage in gruesome war. They slept in ditches, crawled in mud, suffered with the cold, saw arms and limbs torn with shrapnel and shell, and languished as captives in the hands of heartless enemies.

Is there not comparable bravery among the soldiers of Jesus Christ? If men can suffer for their country, cannot men suffer, if need be, for Christ? Their valor has been proved to us in the secular realm; has our valor been proved to them in the sacred realm? Young people have waited long, dreadfully long, and with such pathetic disappointment, for adults to be examples of the godly challenge.

*The desire for a holy life began in the heart of the young psalmist when he saw others walking in the way of the undefiled.*

At the moment, however, he finds no defense when his critics speak against him (v. 42). His situation, he reasons, would be more favorable were he free of reproach. He thinks he could then better refute the taunts of his persecutors. If all were well, in his opinion, his testimony would carry more weight — it would be more convincing that God was with him.

The Lord Jesus has prepared His followers in this regard:

**“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven . . . take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: For the Holy Spirit shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.”**

These are lessons to learn well.

**“Take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth”** (v. 43), he begs of the Lord.

It is clear that he wants to maintain a witness. He wants to speak for the Lord. But his effectual witnessing is limited due to his lack of spiritual development. How far can a weakling get in attempting to prove to another the manifold grace of God? What success would such a one have in bombarding the ramparts of Satan?

We have a friend who expended much energy in defending his right as a Christian to smoke cigarettes. He argued often when nobody was even disposed to question his habit. One day, he testified “The cigarettes are gone. I guess they wouldn’t have kept me out of Heaven, but they surely were closing my lips here. I couldn’t witness.”

*The psalmist must know that God does not close the lips of a witness; it is the personal conduct which curtails testimony.*

Now comes a new attempt on his part to assure the Lord that he means business. Here is an impressive series of promises. It does not seem clear that God exacts or expects promises from His people. He does not say in His dealings, "Will you first promise Me?" But it is common for Christians to volunteer such pledges as: "If you will raise me up from this affliction or sickness, I will go where you want me to go and do what you want me to do."

**"I will walk at liberty"** (v. 45), he tells the Lord.

Here is an impressive promise to witness widely, for in the next verse he adds, **"I will speak thy testimonies also before kings."**

This is a noble attitude. There are times when others of us feel that nothing is too difficult to undertake for our blessed Saviour. But good intentions frequently fail to reach the point of fulfillment. Time after time, throngs of wholesome young people have responded to the missionary challenge in our Bible school chapels, in church missionary conventions, at Bible conferences and Christian camps. Yet reliable statistics give us this grim account. Only twelve out of one hundred apply for training; five out of one hundred complete their Bible training; three out of one hundred qualify for service: and only one out of one hundred returns to the field for the second term.

Any reasonable person must readily admit that some fearful force militates against these volunteers. Were they only pretending when, with moistened eyes, they walked the aisle as an awed and sympathetic congregation sang, "Where He leads me, I will follow"? Of course, it was not mere pretense! Perhaps, without exception, they were never more serious in their lives. What happened to the vast majority of them? They simply did not make the grade. Why?

Only a few days ago a man; who, at an earlier age, felt definitely called to the Christian ministry, said, "A red herring crossed my path somewhere along the line." By this, of course, he meant that his attention had been diverted. But why should a red herring hinder a person from obeying orders from Heaven?

First, this young psalmist said, **"I will mount,"** but his soul cleaving to the dust prevented him from mounting. Then, he assured himself, **"I will run,"** but he could not quicken his pace. Now, he declares, **"I will walk"** (v. 45). It may not have been a red herring in his case. It may have been, rather, the **"little foxes which spoil the vine."**

One thing is sure, at this particular juncture he is not making much progress. The future tense in his statements proves this. He is still deferring obedience and action. There is also another hint which might explain his lack of progress. In promising to speak before kings, he adds, **"I will not be ashamed"** (v. 46). Is this indirectly a confession that he has been ashamed to speak?

**"I will delight myself in thy commandments"** (v. 47), he continues.

If this promise is fulfilled in his life, he should quickly escape from his disturbing disappointment.

You will recall that this young man had testified about former joys when he said, “**I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies**” (v. 14).

*Thus, we have his former record and his future plan.*

Rejoicing in the divine testimonies is not sufficient; he must delight in the commandments as well. God tells us what He has done, and what a wonderful revelation it is. He also tells us what He wants us to do. If we love the account of His goodness, we should have the same affection for His wise directives.

The very last glimpse of the psalmist in this stanza is rather dramatic. “**My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments**” (v. 48), he pledges with solemn heart.

As a rule, lifted hands have to do with prayer of the most serious nature. For instance, “**I rose up from my heaviness and having rent my garments and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the Lord my God**” (Ezra 9:5).

Solomon employed the same gesture in his famous prayer at the dedication of the temple (II Chronicles 6:12).

Perhaps the outstretched hands of the psalmist carry an added suggestion. They are the outreach of willingness, the symbol of readiness. With Samuel he is saying, “**Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.**” With Isaiah, he is volunteering, “**Here am I, send me.**”

~ end of chapter 6 ~

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