**“THANK YOU FOR AFFLICTION! GOD IS STILL ‘SO GOOD’”**

**PSALM 119:65-96**

**Pastor Keith E. Gephart**

INTRODUCTION

This portion of Psalm 119 is full of reflections on the persecution, affliction, and suffering of the psalmist (esp. vv. 81-88). Yet, at the same time the psalmist cannot get over the fact of Yahweh’s goodness (vv. 65-72), His formation of and purpose for the psalmist (73-80), and the secure and permanent foundation of His word of Creation and Special Revelation—to which there is no limit (vv. 89-96). God even turns the affliction of the psalmist into blessing; everything that has happened to him has been appointed for him by “the God of salvation in accordance with the plan and order of salvation of His word” (v. 65; Del. p. 235). What the psalmist finds in divine revelation is settled security because of the faithfulness and loyal-love of Yahweh (cf. v. 89). Indeed, there is “an end” to all human perfection, but a very “broad” horizon for those whose lives are grounded on the sure teachings of Yahweh’s “commandment” (v. 96).

1. GOD IS SO GOOD! (vv. 65-72)

Five times inthis first stanza that begins with the letter *Teth* (j) the psalmist speaks of what or who is **“good.**” This psalmist has experienced much “bad” in his life, but Yahweh Himself is “good” (68) and “does good” (v. 68), has “dealt well” with the psalmist (v. 65), teaches him about what is good (66) and what is in fact better than the best this world has to offer (v. 72), and even turns his afflictions into what is good for him (71).

1. God has dealt goodness with His “servant”—in accord with His Word of promises (65)
2. I need God to teach me goodness of discernment (“taste”) and also knowledge (66).
3. Affliction is even good for me—before it “I was going astray,” but now I have “learned” and “I keep” His “Word” (67, 71).
4. God “does good” because He is good (68).
5. Arrogant/ungodly persons have **plastered over** me with falsehood/lies.
6. I respond with keeping God’s precepts with all my heart (69).
7. They have a heart covered with fat­—literally “become **gross** with **fat** (70; insensitive to God’s truth).
8. God’s revealed law is better (i.e. “good from”) to me than “thousands of gold and silver.”
9. GOD HAS MADE ME AND WILL FULFILL HIS PURPOSE FOR ME (73-80).

Stanza 10 has eight verses each beginning with the Hebrew letter *Yodh* (y). The psalmist’s focus in this stanza is upon the relationship of others with him: first of Yahweh himself and of the special attributes of Yahweh in relationship with him (vv. 73, 75-77), then of those who fear Yahweh (vv. 74 and 79), and lastly the arrogant opposition toward him (v. 78). The stanza begins with how Yahweh has “made” and “fashioned” him (73) and then ends with the completion of the psalmist’s spiritual formation so that the psalmist might “be blameless” (80). Note the concentric structure of this stanza in that vv. 73&80, 74&79, 75&78, 76&77 relate to each other.

1. God’s formation of me needs perfecting in blameless understanding, full integrity/completion (73, 80).
2. Others who fear God will see me, be joyful, and turn to me—since “I wait/hope for God’s word (74, 79).
3. Yahweh in His righteous judgments has disciplined me and will punish the arrogant (75, 78).
4. He afflicts me in “faithfulness” (75); I still meditate on His precepts (78).
5. Those who “subvert me”—deprive me of justice with falsehood—He will make ashamed.
6. Still, I need Yahweh’s attributes to help me in my affliction (76, 77).
7. Comfort from His loyal-love according to Yahweh’s word/promises (76).
8. Coming to me of His compassion, that I may really live (77).
9. His law is my real delight! (77)
10. MY END SEEMED NEAR (81-88).
11. My soul “comes to an end/wastes away/languishes waiting for God’s “salvation—I wait expectantly (81).
12. My eyes “come to an end”/nearly run out of tears & bloodshot in longing for relief (82).
13. Such was promised in His Word.
14. I say a word also: “When will you comfort me?”
15. My condition is as bad as a wineskin bottle in the smoke—shriveled and dried up (83).
16. My condition is very bad; it is as though I am useless and forgotten and near to being discarded.
17. Yet, I don’t forget your statutes (83), and have not forsaken Your precepts (87).
18. My days of life are limited; will you carry out justice on my persecutors before I die? (84).
19. They have done serious things against me—“dug pits” (85).
20. They are not “in accord with Your law.”
21. They have persecuted me with falsehood—many lies and deception (86).
22. I have almost come to an end, been destroyed, in the land/on earth (87).
23. Still, Your commandments are faithful; therefore, You are faithful (86); also Your loyal-love (88).
24. You will relieve and help me! (86)
25. You will revive me (88).
26. I will keep the testimonies coming from Your mouth—divine inspiration (88).
27. THE LIFE FOUNDED ON YAHWEH’S WORD HAS NO LIMIT (89-96)
28. You have established Your creation, and the Word of your General Revelation stands firm in Heaven (89).
29. God’s faithfulness lasts and continues through every generation (90).
30. The earth he established/settled firmly, and it continues to stand (90b).
31. Everything God has created in the universe continues to stand according to His just judgments (91).
32. Everything He has made is His servant (91).
33. My Life would never have endured without God’s Law (92)
34. The wicked “lie in wait for me in order to destroy me”—**cause me to perish** (95).
35. Apart from You I **would have perished** in my affliction (92; same verb as v. 95).
36. I am Yours; I belong to You; therefore “save me! (94)
37. There is only One who is without limits—Yahweh, and therefore His commandments/His Word (96).
38. All other “perfection” has limits and has an “end.”
* The noun” perfection” is from the same verb meaning “come to an end” used in vv. 81, 82, and 87.
* Thus, the basic idea is “completion, limit, end”; but “perfection” of every human endeavor correctly gives the meaning.
* “This verse could well be a summary of Ecclesiastes, where every earthly enterprise has its day and comes to nothing, and where only in God and His commandments do we get beyond these frustrating limits” (Del., pp. 426-27). Leupold states, “All things that are apart from the Word, no matter how excellent or nearly perfect they may be, are temporal and ephemeral” (843).
1. God’s commandment/His Word is **very broad**—unlimited, measureless, because God is so!
2. Therefore, this psalmist chooses the way of permanence that is without limit:
* “I will show myself very attentive/consider diligently Your testimonies” (95).
* “I will never forget Your precepts” (93).
* “I have sought Your precepts (94).
1. God has revived him, caused him to live (93b).

CONCLUSION

The answer is clear! I will live for what is permanent and has no limit (96); I will seek the life of integrity/blamelessness. (80).