

Psalms 119:153–160
Reasoning with God in Prayer

Tuesday, October 1, 2024 • Read Psalm 119:153–160

Questions from the Scripture text: What does the psalmist ask God to consider (v153a)? What else does he ask God to do? Why (v153b)? What three things does he ask God to do in v154? According to what? What is far from whom (v155a)? How do we know (v155b)? What are great in v156a? What does v156b ask YHWH to do? According to what? Who are many (v157a)? Yet, what does the psalmist not do (v157b)? What does he see these many to be (v158)? With what response? Why?

With what arguments can believers plead to be revived? Psalm 119:153–160 looks forward to opening portion of morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these eight verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **believers can plead with God to be revived upon the basis of the gracious work that He has begun in them, and upon the basis of the abundance of His perfections which can never change.**

Revive me by grace. Revive me! Cause me to live! That is the repeated refrain (v154b, 156b, 159b) of this stanza. Here is the cry of the person who knows that even all of his physical life comes by God's grace, and especially any spiritual life in him must come entirely by God's grace.

Reasoning from previous grace. If we do not forget God's law (v153b), that is by God's grace. Men are already the work of His hands, but how much more the believer has claim to that title. Do you remember His law (v153b)? Do you seek His statutes (v155b)? Then surely this is because He has done this in you. This is the work of His hands. You are the work of His hands. He will not neglect or abandon you.

So, the Spirit teaches believers to pray for God's consideration ("Consider my affliction," v153a), deliverance ("deliver me"), advocacy ("plead my cause," v154a), redemption ("redeem me"), and reviving ("revive me," v154b) by reasoning from this other work of His ("for I do not forget Your law," v153b). This is what His Word has taught us to expect for those whom He has brought into righteousness ("according to Your Word").

The converse, however, is true for the wicked. As those who do not seek God's statutes (v155b), there is no "work begun" to which they can appeal in their distresses. Deliverance is far from them (v155a).

Reasoning from God's character. "Great" in v156 and "many" in v157 are translating the same word. There is a competition here between two multitudes: a multitude of YHWH's tender mercies, and a multitude of persecutors and enemies.

The believer needn't downplay how bad things are getting in his situation (or in the community, the church, the nation, etc.).

However multitudinous is the evil, it can never outnumber or outdo the Lord's compassions.

Though the wicked be loathsome (v158a), let the believer turn his attention more upon YHWH's tender mercies (v156a), judgments (v156b), and lovingkindness (v159b).

The psalmist asks the Lord to act in accordance with His own character, not because the outcome is in doubt, but precisely because the outcome is not in doubt. The head ("entirety" in NKJ, v160a) of YHWH's Word is truth, and unto eternity are the judgments of His righteousness (v160b).

When we pray, we are not attempting to "change" the outcome, but rather laying hold of God Himself, and His character, and the good that He has planned to do, even by/through response to our prayers.

What evidence is there in your life that you love God's Word? From where could this have come? What is your practice of reasoning with the Lord in your prayers? What are some attributes of God from which you could/should reason more? How are you working on improving that?

Sample prayer: Lord, how great Your love has been to us! It is by Your grace that we have come to love Your law. And that same grace gives us strength, and hope, and joy as we draw near to You now to call upon Your Name. We do not have life in ourselves; we must have life from You. And it is with great confidence that we ask for that life. For, You are abundant in compassion and faithfulness and power and justice and steadfast love. Though our troubles and enemies be many, they are not to be compared with the multitude of Your mercies. So, in Your own unchanging perfections, gather us unto Yourself and give us life to worship and serve You, we ask, through Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP119U "My Grief Regard" or TPH119T "See My Distress, and Save Me"

"(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)"

Psalm 119 verses 153 to 160. These are God's words. Consider my Affliction and deliver me. Fry, do not forget your law. Plead my cause and redeem me. Revive me, according to your word. Salvation is far from the wicked. For they do not seek your statutes. Great. Are you tender Mercies?

Oh, Yahweh Survive me. According to your judgments, many are my persecutors and my enemies. Yet, I do not turn from your testimonies. I see the treacherous and them disgusted because they do not keep your word. Consider how I love your presets, revive me o, Yahweh According to your loving kindness.

The entirety of your word is truth. And every one of your righteous judgments. Indoors. Forever. So, and this stanza. Uh, main theme is crying out to God for life, caused me to live. That's the Core meaning of the word, that's translated revive here. So, verse 154, revive me, verse 156 revive me.

Verse 159, revive me. And, Revive me according to your word revive me. According to your judgments revive me according o, Yahey, according to your loving kindness and so we are crying out to God or we're taught here to cry out to God, to revive us to give us life to renew life unto us.

Of things that are in him. According to his faithfulness, according to his Justice, according to his love, but notice, How the evidence that's given of his faithfulness as Justice and his love is in things. That we have done. So verse 153 for, I do not forget your law or verse 157.

Uh, yet I do not turn from your testimonies. Or verse 159. Consider how I love your presets? Well how can this be that the evidence of God's faithfulness and God's justice? And God's love would be an hour not forgetting his law in hour of keeping his precept, an hour not turning from his testimonies.

And the answer is that the only way that we could come to be like that, is by God, powerfully and Faithfully and lovingly graciously working in us to change us to bring us to repentance and faith and patiently and persistently. We do stumble and when we do fall to persist with us and to bring us back to restore, This.

The Lord needs to do. We need this, we need him to do this. The psalmist, feels the great need for the Lord to do, and so, He's asking, God revive me in consistency with your character and revive me in consistency with your work. In other words, you owe God in this.

A faithful word and just judgment and loving kindness, you in your perfect character, have begun a work in me. That is displayed in the difference that you have made between me and the wicked. Salvation is far from the wicked verse 155. They do not keep your word. Verse 158, they do not seek your statutes verse 155.

I see the treacherous and I'm disgusted. Verse 158. And so we see, of course, our own sin, and we're disgusted with that. But when we look at ourselves, we don't just see the remaining sin for which we're asking God, for help. We see, especially the mercy and power and faithfulness of God by which He has.

Changed us and brought him to himself by which he has begun the work. That he will surely bring to completion. And so God has made this difference and we know that

rather than salvation being far from us, it's near to us Because he has given us himself and because our Salvation is from him.

So this stanza of the psalm is teaching us this manner of of holy h-o-l-y. Um pleading with God, a right? And holy way of pleading with God in our prayers that we would learn to Give reasons and arguments as we pray, that especially are argued from his character. The Lord's Prayer teaches us, this too.

Doesn't it in the conclusion to the Lord's Prayer for thine? Is the kingdom and the glory and the power? Giving reasons to God. All of this that he has done for giving us making us to be people who are forgiving leading us as his own people for which we ask him to lead us not into temptation.

Not only does he have his character that we learned to reason from? That I hope as you are growing and praying you are learning to, to say, God, you are like this and like this and like doesn't use his attributes and your catechism can help you. If you get stuck, you get brain freeze.

You say, well what has got as a spirit infinite Eternal and changeable in his being wisdom, power, Holiness, Justice, goodness, and truth. And so, you got a handy little list. And there are, of course, many other, um, attributes or aspects of each of those that you might use in your praying but you learn to plead from who he is and what he is like, and you can give examples in the Bible of how he's shown himself to be like that.

And you can give examples in history and from your own life and from the last 24 hours, or So you plead, who he is, and what he's like, in himself, you plead the work that he's begun in you. I'm the work of your hands. I have so far to go Lord but I'm not what I was apart from Christ and that is your doing.

You started the work? Don't abandon me now. Be patient with me. Help me. Grant, that would be able to put this into that, deliver me from this situation. That that is causing me such great distress, isn't it? Your plan that at last I'll be not only perfectly holy but perfectly happy and there won't be any be any sorrow or pain and and you.

So you plead from his character you plead from his work begun. Uh, and one of the things you can do that this Psalm Of the psalm also does is show how much it would glorify him to do it. There's a contest that doesn't appear very well in verses 156 and 157 because English translation or English version here has translated the same word in two different ways but the word Isn't work.

Many is actually closer than great in 156, but it's a word that really means. Uh, multitude. And, Uh, so A multitude are your Tender Mercies a multitude. Are my persecutors, it's the

It's Word that Abram who at first? The the second part of his name is derived from a root that means exalted, exalted, father. And then you remember when he has the one kid who's actually son of Hagar not Sarah, and God changes his name before, Isaac, is even born and calls him, father of a multitude.

Uh well there are these competing multitudes. It's like this great epic battle. Where over here are the multitude of the armies of my persecutors and my enemies verse 157. But on the other side is the multitude of the mercies of God. And which multitude is is greater, which is more numerous, which of the two multitudes is, the deciding factor the deciding multitude.

And of course, it's the multitude of God's mercies Not only act according to your character, we we learned to reason in prayer and not only Continue and act. According to the work that you've already begun and intend to complete, we reason in prayer, but glorify yourself as greater Greater than what is lacking in me.

Glorify yourself as greater than what is Threatening in my circumstances. And so this is This particular stanza of the psalm teaches us, this This holy way of reasoning with God in our prayers, and may the spirit who helps us in our praying, because we do not know how to pray for what we ought.

May he apply to us, Stanza of this Psalm that he has given us. For teaching us how to pray better. Let's pray. Our Father indeed, you are faithful. And in your truthfulness and your faithfulness. You've given us this word and you've given us your spirit by whom you brought us to Faith in Christ by whom you have made us to be righteous.

With Jesus's righteousness with your own righteousness in Jesus by whom you have adopted us to be your very own children and we pray that you'd keep conforming us to the image of your son. Our Lord Jesus, that we would pray like he prays, like we that we would pray like he taught us.

To pray in, what we call the Lord's Prayer that we would pray in the way that he by his spirit is teaching us here, that you would bless us and help us and do that part of your work in us to bring us in into Conformity with the Lord Jesus.

And We asked Lord that you would be glorified as we grow in praying, we feel how cold our hearts are. We feel how dull our thoughts are? How often? Oh God, we come and we feel weighed down by all that is lacking in us and unable to pray. Well, We pray, we ask now that you would glorify yourself by overcoming That which is lacking in.

Uh, by that, which is sufficient and abundant Grant that your grace would be sufficient for us and your strength would be perfect in our weakness. We ask all of this in Jesus name. Amen.