

Series: Psalms

Title: A Righteous Sinner's Prayer

Text: Ps 119: 33-40

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Psalm 119: 33: HE. Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it *unto* the end. 34: Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with *my* whole heart. 35: Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight. 36: Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness. 37: Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; *and* quicken thou me in thy way. 38: Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who *is devoted* to thy fear. 39: Turn away my reproach which I fear: for thy judgments *are* good. 40: Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness.

This is a righteous sinner's prayer. This is a man in whom is no guile. Pay careful attention to each thing he asks God for. God's saints will be able to enter in to this. It is what we pray continually.

TEACH ME

Psalm 119: 33: HE. Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it *unto* the end.

David asks the Lord to teach him. He knows he needs God to teach him. When born-again of the Spirit of God, we have a new heart that desires to keep God's statutes. David had prophets and priests to teach him. He knew the law of God. Yet, David begs God to teach him the way of his statutes. David knew that only the Lord himself can teach us effectually in the heart.

Philippians 2: 13: For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

John 14: 26: But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

The Lord made us know we need the Spirit of God to teach us by the fact that we could not obey his command to believe on the Lord Jesus until he revealed Christ in our hearts. We came into this world with a sin-nature entirely ruined, spiritually dead in sins. We were opposed to God in every way. We loved sin and hated God. We had absolutely had no desire to know God.

In that state we could not, would not, agree with God's testimony in the law that we are the guilty sinner. We would not, and could not, obey God's command to confess we have transgressed God law and cannot earn a righteousness God will accept. In our natural state, we would not, could not, confess ourselves to be only sin. We could not and would not confess ourselves helpless, ruined sinners who needed Christ alone to justify us by his blood. So we know we need Christ to teach us by the Holy Spirit because we know we would not, and could not, obey God's command to believe on his Son.

But when the Spirit of God entered in and taught us, revealing Christ our Righteousness, then the Lord made us know our sin. He made us willing and we believed on the Lord Jesus as he commanded. Then we obeyed God and confessed ourselves to be the guilty sinner in need of God's mercy. It was only when we were taught of God that we began loving our brethren as God commands.

1 John 5: 20: And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, *even* in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

So knowing this was only by the power of God, by the Holy Spirit teaching us God's statutes, we know we need the Lord to teach us. Therefore, we cry--"*Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes: and I shall keep it unto the end.*" He knows God's teaching will be effectual. Davids says, "If you teach me Lord, then I shall keep the way of thy statutes unto the end."

By God teaching his child, and teaching his child, and teaching his child, God's saints keep the way of God's statutes unto the end. The end of the commandment is charity or love, which is the fulfilling of the law. None perfectly fulfilled the law except Christ Jesus our Righteousness. He is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes. But by God teaching us, in gratitude to our Redeemer, we believe him and we continue in him and we love him and we love our brethren in gratitude. All is in gratitude to Christ. We are constrained in the new heart by the love of Christ. By his love for us.

GIVE ME UNDERSTANDING

Psalm 119: 34: Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with *my* whole heart.

David not only asks God to teach him but to give him understanding. When God gives spiritual understanding of the law given at Sinai then we have discernment to understand the perfection God requires. By God giving us understanding we discern aright the purity, the holiness, which God demands.

Along with that understanding of the holiness of God, God also gives an understanding of the gospel of Christ. He gives an understanding of who Christ is, that Jesus Christ is God and Man, the Holy One who knew no sin. The Lord Jesus is that

"holy thing" from his mother's womb (Lu 1: 35). From the womb, the Lord Jesus obeyed God in perfection from a holy heart as the Head of his people with his people in him. On the cross the Holy One put away our sin entirely. In the Holy One our entire old man of sin was crucified. Christ justified God's elect. It means he made us the righteousness of God in him (2 Cor 5: 21).

When God gives us an understanding of his law and understanding of the gospel then we understand Christ is the perfection we must have. That is when we delight in God's law in our inward man. By God giving us understanding, we know the law must be fulfilled in righteousness. And now we know and understand that Christ alone is the Righteousness of God. By God giving us understanding we know and understand Christ is the Holiness of God for his people. God has given us understanding to know that it is God's will that we believe on his Son and continue believing him unto the end. Therefore, by his grace and strength, by God creating a new, holy heart within us, we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ with our whole heart that God might receive us in Christ's righteousness alone.

But why does David, the believer, keep asking God to teach him? Why does he keep asking for God to give him understanding? Why does he speak as though he has not yet obeyed? Why does he say, "*Give me understanding, and I SHALL keep thy law; yea, I SHALL observe it with my whole heart.*" It is because by God's grace, by God teaching us and giving us understanding, God's child never sees ourselves as having obeyed God as we ought or as we want. We cry, "Lord, increase our faith! Lord, grow us in love! Lord, give us a right understanding!" In the everlasting covenant of grace, God said, "I will and thou shalt." The answer of the heart made new is, "Lord if thou wilt, I shall." This is what is accomplished by God teaching us and giving us an understanding. We see we need God to teach us more and give us more understanding.

MAKE ME OBEY

Psalm 119: 35: Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight.

David asks God to make him obey. He asked the Lord to teach him. Then he asked the Lord to give him understanding. Now he asks God to God to give him a will--quicken him--and make him obey. "*MAKE me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight.*" This is the heart of faith God gives. He delights in his heart to please God. But he knows he can do nothing but by the power of God. This is a true believer. God makes us know him, and by making us know him, God makes us know ourselves. He makes us know we are not sufficient of ourselves. God makes us know we depend upon the grace and power of God to make us obey.

God looks on the heart. "*As a man is in his heart, so is he!*" The heart of faith is the heart that depends upon God our Father and his Son Jesus Christ to teach and to give an understanding and make us obey. Yet, we never see ourselves as having arrived. We see our sins. And we see our total need of God to make us obey. It is the new heart created of God that desires to please God. Yet, in our new heart, we know only Christ can make us accepted in God's sight. We really want more teaching and more understanding of Christ. We want God to make us obey by giving us more faith in Christ and more love for Christ. We desire that God would make us go in the path of his commandments for therein do we delight.

SAVE ME FROM ME

Psalm 119: 36: Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness. 37: Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way.

David is asking God to save him from himself. This is a sinner that knows he is a sinner. He knows he is covetous. He knows he is prone to look to vanity, mainly by being prone to look to self rather than to Christ alone. He asks God to save him from himself. David asks God to work in his new heart, in the real David, in the new David, in the David God created and "*incline my heart unto thy testimonies.*" He asks God to subdue his flesh, the old David, the David that is of Adam when he says, "*and not to covetousness, turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity.*"

David must not understand that God does not incline men to covetousness! He must not understand that sin is all of us! No, this is a man in whom is no guile. In that holy heart created of God he knows and confesses to God that his flesh, his old man, is yet nothing but sin. He knows his old man is opposed to all God's testimonies and confesses it to God. David knows his old man is covetous and he confesses it to God. He knows if God does not turn his heart to God's testimonies then he will surely to sin and vanity. That is a heart in whom is no guile.

The desire God puts in the new heart is for God to quicken and keep the new me from my old sinful self--"*Quicken thou me in thy way*"--strengthen my inward man in thy way. Make me press towards the mark for the prize. Make me keep Christ before my eyes. Keep me running the race looking to Christ above. Keep me looking to things unseen, not things I see with these eyes. Set my affection on things above where Christ, my Life, sits at God's right hand.

The old man of sin in us will never cease this warfare; but by God's quickening grace the new man will never give up either.

ESTABLISH THY WORD UNTO ME

Psalm 119: 38: Establish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear.

David asks God to establish God's word unto him. Thereby, he is asking God to establish him with God's word. The heart established in God's word is the heart that continually begs God establish thy servant in thy word, who is devoted to thy fear.

God does it by establishing his word unto his servant. Establish me with your precious promises which are all yes and amen in Christ my Redeemer. Assure me, oh God, that you choose me freely by your grace in Christ from eternity. Assure me Christ is made righteousness and sanctification unto me. Increase my faith and purify my heart to believe I am his and he is mine. Establish my heart unblameable in holiness before your all-seeing eye, oh God. Make me to know I am complete in Christ, accepted in the Beloved, without spot or blemish, unreprouvable in Christ alone. Establish your everlasting covenant of grace in my heart that you shall never let me go. Establish my heart with grace, oh Lord!

Hebrews_13:9:...For *it is* a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

SAVE ME FROM MEN

Psalm 119: 39: Turn away my reproach which I fear: for thy judgments *are* good.

He asks God to save him from men. Some think David has reference to his sins with Uriah and Bathsheba which made men reproach him. Some men slobber like a dog on a bone to sit in the seat of the scorner and reproach God's child for his sin. To sin and bring reproach is the last thing God's child wants to do. It is the most painful and shameful think there is to him. It was too heavy for David to bear. It would cause overmuch sorrow were it not for God's grace turning away his reproach.

But he asks this because he agrees with God that God's judgments are good. It is God good judgment to send men to reproach me. He asks for mercy. But at the same time says, "it is good for me that I have been afflicted that I might learn thy statutes." That is what he is saying by saying, "*thy judgments are good, Lord.*"

2 Samuel 16: 7: And thus said Shimei when he cursed, Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial: 8: The LORD hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the LORD hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son: and, behold, thou *art taken* in thy mischief, because thou *art* a bloody man. 9: Then said Abishai the son of Zeruiah unto the king, Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head. 10: And the king said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? so let him curse, because the LORD hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so? 11: And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now *may this* Benjamite *do it*? let him alone, and let him curse; for the LORD hath bidden him. 12: It may be that the LORD will look on mine affliction, and that the LORD will requite me good for his cursing this day.

While he vindicated God's judgments upon him, he asked God for mercy, "*Turn away my reproach which I fear: for thy judgments are good.*" That is a child of grace that has been blessed by the judgments of God through reproach.

QUICKEN ME IN THY RIGHTEOUSNESS

Psalm 119: 40: Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness.

This last request is the longing of his heart in everything else he asked. He asks to be quicken in God's righteousness. Christ is the Righteousness of God. Those taught of God understand that David is asking to be quickened in Christ. He asks that God, according to God's word of righteousness (the gospel) quicken him and make him behold Christ Jesus his Righteousness.

Colossians 2:13: And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

David asks God to quicken him again, renew him again. It is in Christ and with Christ our Righteousness that God quickens his saints. This is how our inward man is renewed day by day. While the Pharisee is praying with himself, boasting of his obedience and despising others, this is the prayer of the child of God, smiting upon his breast and asking mercy from God.

He begs God to teach him. He begs God to give him understanding. His prayer is that God will make him obey and go in the paths of God's commandments. He pleads with God to save him from himself. His prayer is for God to establish his word to him. He asks God to save him from men while he praises God's judgments for sending the reproach. In all, he begs God to quicken him in Christ his Righteousness.

This is a righteous sinner's prayer. One made to know he is a sinner who needs God to lead, guide, and direct him in the path God would have him to walk in. He gives God the glory as the only one who works in me both to will and to do of his good pleasure. He begs for the ability and the willing mind to walk therein. Lord, please give me fresh supplies of grace and spiritual strength, is his prayer. Quicken me by giving me a fresh sight of Christ my Righteousness. Make me to know I am and he is mine!

Brethren, this prayer never ends in this life! And here is the good news. The same thing Christ said of the poor publican who smote upon his breast, he said of David, and he says of his children in whose heart he puts this same prayer,

Lu 18:14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." **Amen!**