

Tuesday, July 2, 2024 - Read Psalm 119:57-64

Questions from the Scripture text: What does the psalmist call YHWH in v57a? To what does this enable him to commit himself (v57b)? What is he desiring (n.b. 'favor' is literally 'face') and how much (v58a)? What does he want God to do/be (v58b)? According to what? What has he done about what (v59a)? What did he conclude to do (v59b)? How promptly did he take action (v60)? In what circumstances (v61a) had he done what (v61b)? At what time, does he do what (v62a)? Why (v62b)? What two things must someone else be for the psalmist to choose him as a companion (v63)? How much of what does he see, where (v64a)? What does he want to learn to do (v64b)?

How does the Lord come to be our portion, and what is it like when He is? Psalm 119:57-64 looks forward to the 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 **when the Lord is our portion, certainty that we have Him and His faithfulness to His Word frees us to see His love everywhere and trustingly do our duty.**

This stanza falls fairly neatly into four couplets, with the first two connecting to one other—the second couplet (v59-60) explaining how the psalmist came into the frame of mind and life of the first couplet (v57-58). It is the story of Psalm 73 told in reverse order. In Ps 73, Asaph is brought to repentance by consideration of his ways, and realizing that the Lord is guiding him, comes to the wonderful conclusion at the end of that Psalm that the Lord is his Portion.

YHWH, our Portion, v57-58. Here, the psalmist begins with the declaration that the Lord is his Portion (v57a), which frees him to live a life of simple obedience (v57b). If you have thought that this would be an impractical way to live, then learn to live by the faith in v58. In v58a, "favor" is literally "face"; the psalmist desires the blessing of Num 6:25-26. If he has the Lord, he knows that he will have everything, because the Lord keeps His own Word (v58b). You can be sure of this, too (cf. Rom 8:32).

Earnest, Urgent Repentance, v59-60. How did the psalmist get here? Earnest consideration (a better translation for the intense word behind "thought" in v59a). Transformation comes by the renewing of the mind (cf. 12:2). God calls us to earnest, intense reflection upon our ways. And this reflection should always result in resolve to act according to His Word (v59b). Don't just think; decide. And don't just decide; act immediately (v60). The earnestness of the reflection to which we are called in v59 is matched by the urgency of the action to which we are called in v60 ("made haste" ... "did not delay").

Zealous Devotion, v61-62. Even in the most difficult situation (v61a), the one who has the Lord as his portion is free to focus upon God's instruction to him. Since God always keeps His own Word (v58b), we can focus on keeping His words to us (v61b, v57b). Even in the most inconvenient or unusual time, the psalmist gives thanks (v62a).

The Companions, Vision, and Desire of the Devoted Life, v63-64. What devotion the Lord brings us into, when He gives us repentance and gives us Himself! The last couplet zooms out, from the difficult and unusual situation, to a whole-life perspective. First, the companions that a believer should choose: v63 gives us the two qualifications someone must have to be our companion. Having the same moral values is actually second (v63b). Most important, is that someone would fear the Lord (v63a). If the Lord is their portion, if they desire His face with their whole heart, if in the most dire circumstances their great desire is to please him, and if they would gladly schedule midnight times of thanksgiving, they are the right sort of people to be our friends. Dear reader, here is the most important compatibility for a companion, and see to it that you apply it in choosing the most important earthly companion: your spouse.

If a companion doesn't "fear the Lord" in this way, then whatever similarity there seems to be in moral values is fool's gold, "fool's godliness." They and we should have the view of the world in v64a and approach to life of v64b. Everywhere we look, with the Word as frontlets between our eyes, we should see the steadfast/covenant love of God filling the earth (v64a). In everything we do, with the Word as bound to our hand, we should seek to do as God has taught us in His statutes (v64b). This is life with the Lord as our Portion.

When do you spend time earnestly considering your ways? How urgently do you act when you are convicted by Scripture? What part does seeking the Lord's face have in your worship and desires? Where do you see the steadfast love of the Lord? What desire do you have to learn the Lord's statutes?

Sample prayer: O Lord, You are our portion, and our whole hearts desire the smile of Your face. Grant us to think earnestly upon Your ways, to turn our feet to Your testimonies, and to act urgently upon Your Word. Give us, now, to remember Your law, to give thanks to You, to fear You, to see Your steadfast love, to learn Your statutes. Help us, in Your worship, that we might have You Yourself, by the help of Your Spirit, in Your Son, through Whom we ask it, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP119H "My Portion Is the LORD" or TPH119H "You, LORD, Are the Portion"

(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 57-64. These are God's words. You are my portion of Yahweh. I have said that I would keep your words, I untreat your favor with my whole heart. Be merciful to me, according to your work. I thought about my ways and turned my feet to your testimonies.

I made Haste and did not delay to keep your Commandments. The cords of the wicked have bound me. But I have not forgotten your law. At midnight, I will rise and to give, thanks to you. Because of your righteous judgments. I am in companion of all who fear you.

And of those who keep your precepts. The Earth O, Yahweh is full of your mercy. Teach me. Your statutes. And so far, the reading of gods inspired. And Aaron toward, And this stanza of Psalm 119, these eight verses of Psalm 119. We have four couplets. That hang together. The first couplet is verse 57 58.

Uh, it's kind of a It actually goes with the couplet in verse 59 and And as a whole, These four verses are kind of Like Psalm 73. Uh, in reverse order Psalm 73, he describes the way that he was thinking, he describes the worship that brought him To consider and conclude that he was being.

Unfaithful and like a beast towards God and gonna betray A generation of God's children. And, Uh, switches, he realizes the goodness of God and the goodness of God's commands to him. Uh, asking or recognizing that God takes them by the hand that God guides them by his counsel. And then you have the big conclusion in Psalm 73 where the Lord is his portion.

Uh, well here in 5758 and then 5960, he begins with The Lord is his portion. Um, Uh, my portion. Is Yahweh. He says, I have said that I would keep your words. And here, he's describing how. He offer came to be his portion. And he says, I entreated. Uh, I I sought after and this isn't just your favor.

Uh, literally in verse 58. It is your face. With my whole heart, there are words in Hebrew for God's favor and for God's grace. But this is For God himself. I entreated your face with my whole heart, be merciful to me. According to your word. And so, there's Something here, about how.

Um, when he traces back to how he came to this conclusion in the next couplet in verse 59 and 16 and he wants to keep God's words about what he should do. The psalmist's hope for that is that God will keep God will keep his own words about what he will do.

And he is going to show compassion. Or Mercy. This is not the cussed word in verse 58, where he says, be merciful to me. It's the compassion. Um, Tender. Goodness. Um, kindness. Uh, favor. Um, indeed. But So, He has come to conclude that the Lord is his portion. Uh, because his whole heart now.

Uh, as is going after the Lord himself the face, Of the Lord. Verse 58 that the Lord would be compassionate and kind. And what what reason do we have to think? That our creator, the Living God, the Glorious and Holy One. Against whom we have sinned. Would be compassionate to us.

That is not what Justice demands. It's not, what is Holiness demands? Uh, at least not apart from his plan to glorify himself. Uh, in saving us through Christ. And since, uh, at the time, the psalm was written that plan wasn't even Uh carried out yet. And although the Lord had said, much about it, Many of the details or understanding how it could be that God would show favor to us.

That he would turn his face upon us in blessing. Um, how that could be that was not apparently that was not immediately apparent. But the Lord had promised that he would And he had said that, he does. And so is the psalmist, is seeking to have God as his portion.

As each of you must seek To have the Lord himself as your portion in life. Your? Is that he will turn his face to you to be compassionate to be tender and kind to you. Just like he has said, Uh, this This is this must come before. Uh, this must be the foundation upon which is built your own obeying God, Because, although you are obligated to as his creature, and as Made In His Image, You are not able to.

Because you sinned an atom and you fell with him. Now, what brought him to this repentance where he wanted to obey God? And where he concluded that he needed God himself in order to obey God and where he found that God himself is his portion both for being able to obey God and as the reward for obeying God, Uh, what brought him to that was Consideration.

Of himself and his ways before God's word. This is one of the reasons why when we read the Bible or when we're studying it together in family worship, or when you're hearing it, preached in the public worship, you need to be bringing yourself your heart, your actions, your attitudes, your feelings, everything.

Under the scrutiny under the evaluation and correction of what the Bible says. Um, the translation thought in the first line of verse 59 is Um a little too light for this word. Uh, usually it's a word that means. Um, highly regarded or Or. Consider. Um, Uh, urgently weightily. Thoughtfully.

Uh, so he considered his ways. I thought about my ways and turned my feet to your testimonies. So we see what was governing or shaping this thinking about his ways he wasn't thinking about his ways in a vacuum God's word. Uh was shedding light upon his own thoughts, the way he was living, the way he was responding to things in his life.

Uh, the way he thought about other things or himself or other people or whatever it was. And so there is There is Earnest consideration. Uh, going on in verse 59 and this Earnest consideration. Was being conducted. Under and uh, initiated by The Lord's word. And so he turns his feet to God's testimonies now that combines well with what we had last week, in family worship, in numbers 15 in preparation for yesterday, evening's sermon.

Uh, when we heard That we need to remember God's Commandments so that we don't follow. The harlotries of our own hearts or our own eyes. And so the the mechanism by which God gives us to walk in Repentance, To walk according to the desires of his heart, not ours.

To do what is right in his eyes not our eyes, the mechanism by which he brings us to do that is through careful thinking about his word about the Bible and so that was the case in the tassels portion. Numbers, 15. Uh, 37-41 And that is, Uh, the case here another helpful or Passage that we often think about in those things is, do not be conformed to this world, okay?

It's a world that does according to the desires of its own heart, and what is right in its own eyes, but be transformed. And the idea is Be conformed to Christ to do, according to the desires of the Lord's heart, and what is right in the Lord's eyes. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by The renewing of your mind.

And this is uh this is both that first time great renewing of your mind that happens when the spirit gives you a new mind when he gives you. Repentance unto life when he when he regenerates you, it gives you that repentance but it's also an instruction there in Romans chapter 12.

Uh and verse 2. It's also an instruction there about. That's given two Christians about how the ongoing Christian Life, how the ongoing believing life Is is conducted. And that as we continually need to be, having our minds renewed, according to the Bible, I thought about my ways and turned my feet to your testimonies a little while ago, in the Sabbath school.

We did the series in the book on Christian meditation. Oh, it is an important skill, an important habit. If it's not That you are in uh ordinarily as a, a regular habit, just the way your mind and heart operate thinking about How you think, how you live, the, what you desire, and those sorts of things, then maybe it's something that you need to schedule.

But I thought about your ways and my feet, Um, and turned my feet to your testimonies and then the third couplet I think, actually Um,

Oh no, this is uh, still part of the second public I made haste and did not delay. To keep your Commandments. So you have urgency. Um, or earnestness rather in verse 59. Okay, so you have the earnestness, in verse 59, I thought about my ways, I, uh, earnestly considered my ways, but then you have the urgency in verse 60.

I made haste and did not delay. The doubling in the Poetry. Emphasizing how urgent. How quickly immediately? That when you see something that needs to change in your thinking or in your living, according to the Bible, Uh, you do not Um, you do not put off. Making that change until Whatever something has been completed or you've been able to enjoy something or until some situation, where it's going to be more comfortable to do, or if it's something that needs to change according to the Bible, it needs to change according to the Bible, it needs to change now.

Um, I made haste and did not delay. To keep your Commandments. And so, This earnestness and urgency. Earnestness and thinking about God's about his actions and God's word and then the urgency having turned the feet to to God's word in verse 59, The urgency in verse 60 to go ahead and make the change.

Do the change? This was the means by which Who was brought to seek yahweh's face with his whole heart. Uh, with his whole heart. And to find that Yahweh himself is his portion, which is very sweet. Um, Sometimes you will hear, maybe not so much anymore. Um, but if you Uh, if you read older Christian literature, you know, sometimes come across.

Uh, people saying things like virtue is its own reward. Uh, that's true to an extent. Uh, but that's not the whole truth and that's not the best truth. Virtue is not its own reward. The Lord is virtuous reward. To have him to, please him. Uh, so there is there's not this kind of virtuousness in a vacuum.

Uh, no having having the Lord himself. Is our award and his face turned towards us is the way that we even can. Come to be virtuous in the first place. And when we are virtuous, we see that it is by his work in That's something that we've been. Building upon for several weeks in the Sabbath school is we've been learning about Assurance that one of the ways that the believer comes to have Assurance of Faith Because as you pursue it by right Doctrine and by love and obedience and godliness, upright living Etc, You know that only God the Holy Spirit can produce these things in you.

Only by applying to you. The life and righteousness, only of God, the son. And that if it is God himself, it is, if it is by God turning his face towards you, as it were that this, uh, This life and this character is produced in you, then you may be sure that you have him And so that also is being worked out here.

Um, in verse 57 especially but in The first two couplets verse 57 58, and then 59 60 The next couplet shows. Uh, how Completely devoted. The believer is to the Lord. And especially to the Lord's word. Uh, in the most. Painful of circumstances. And the most unusual of circumstances verse 61, the most painful of circumstances.

Uh, the cords of the wicked have banned me. What is uh, what is he remembering? Um, maybe this is An actual situation, this almost has been in and he remembers a time in which he had been captured and was tied up. And what was he thinking about? At the time that he was tied up was How much pain he was in?

Um, Um God had confused him because here he thought he had done, what was right? And he ended up tied up. And as this really, what the righteous get was he thinking about getting away? No. He was thinking about God's word, God's law, God's instruction. Uh, he understood that events belonged to God.

Uh, and His duty was revealed to him by God that corresponds, of course, to our shorter, catechism lesson this week. Uh, what is the duty that God requires a man obedience to his revealed will? So here, he is bound with the cords of the wicked. And yet. Um he is remembering God's law.

Uh, how sweet it would be for you. Uh, my dear family for all of us, if by the work of the spirit in us, even in the most painful, most difficult situations our thoughts. Go to the Lord himself and what the Lord wants us to do knowing That the Lord is going to do whatever is good for us.

It is fine. It is good to pray to the Lord for what you want him to do. According to his word, just like he said in verse 58, be merciful to me, according to your word. It's fine to pray to him, but let our hearts also, in addition to praying and painful and difficult, circumstances for the Lord, to fulfill his word towards us.

Uh, let our hearts and Minds also by the help of his Spirit. Go to what the Lord says for us to do in such situations. The keep Of his word. Well that's the most painful or difficult situation. The other one may be difficult or it might just be uh unusual.

Uh, in the middle of the night. Um, I will rise to give, thanks to you. Um, The word midnight. There is actually translating to Hebrew words, one meaning middle. Exactly halfway and one meaning night at midnight, I will rise to give. Thanks to you because of your righteous judgments.

It's almost like he's saying the whole rest of the world doesn't have important enough stuff to do. So they sleep through the night. Our Watchmen, and they have an important job. They take the night watch, they're on the wall, in the middle of the night, if it's a walled City or whatever.

But he's got something, Uh, that is too important to take a full eight hours off of and that is giving thanks to God. And so he sets this alarm as it were, they didn't have alarms watching they sort of did there, were you could You could burn a A half a wick.

And have something supported by it and it would fall when it got to the right hour. The Ancients were much more clever than we give them credit for. Um, Uh or whatever it is but he made a point of however it was. He was able to do it to rise in the middle of the night.

Take the opportunity to give God. Thanks and go back to bed, get the rest of his sleep. Uh, often One of the things that troubles me in life, Is. My heart and mind are sluggish toward God by the time I get up. I've never actually tried this out. Um, Uh, taking time in the middle of the night.

Uh, to give thanks to God and to see if maybe my heart is a little warmer towards him. When I wake up, not necessarily suggesting that either. Uh, but verse 62 is definitely. Describing a Devotion to him. So, Verse 61 and 62, and that couplet even in the most difficult and painful circumstances for 61 his heart, and mind, go to God and his word, verse 62, even in these unusual, Circumstances, he rises and you give thanks to God because of God's righteous judgments.

And then a little more broadly, the whole of life not just Now in verse 61, the difficult circumstances, not just verse 62, the unusual circumstances, But in all of his relationships and indeed in all of his living and all of his relationships verse 63, I am a companion of This is very important to us.

Whom you choose to have as your companions. Your close friends. This doesn't just mean acquaintances and those you interact with But Those whom you are gonna have a shared life with who Uh, with whom you reflect upon Things with those with whom, you share your choice, your Joys and And into whose Joy is you most readily enter those with whom you share your griefs.

And into. Uh, whose griefs you most readily enter. Um, those that you enjoy spending time with, and Mutually reinforcing. And sharing one another's lives with I am a companion of and he gives two standards or two components and the first component is of all who fear you and the second component is and of those who keep your presets.

Uh, so yes, it's it's important. To have as friends, those who have the same. Moral rules those who have the same. Um, Values of life that you do, those who keep your precepts, but it's even more important to the first component. Is that they think of God. The way that we want to think of God, the way that the, the previous six verses have described Desiring.

God's face. Counting God as their portion. That even in difficult and painful circumstances, what they really want is to remember how to honor the Lord and live rightly before him. That they even take unusual. Opportunities, that others wouldn't take. Uh, like the psalmist did rising in the middle of the night to give, thanks to him.

Um, that people who have this fear of the Lord. Would be the ones that we choose for our companions. Just keeping a certain list of rules. Um, Is not enough. Uh in fact, if their values do not come, From this relationship of the Lord. Then their values are not actually Biblical or Christian values.

And if Relationship of the Lord doesn't produce the value of. Then it is more fantasy than reality. It is something that Uh, merely Um, thoughts and feelings in their head and their heart. Rather than Uh, coming out of genuine relationship with God. So this issue of friend Choice companion, In verse 63, and then, of course, The most important, companion, choice that any of you are ever going to have Uh, whom you marry.

It must start. With the fear of the Lord, the relationship to God that is described in the previous six verses. Resulting in the shared value of obeying God's Commandments. Those who keep your presets. Uh, and so, as as in verses, 63 and 64, Uh, we've broadened to consider. Um, Uh, our relationships of life more generally in verse 63.

So also Uh, verse 64. The. The whole of the world that we are in and how we see it and how we do it. The first half of verse 64 is as frontlets to our, uh, eyes. The second half of verse 64 is as bound upon our hands.

So this frontlets to our eyes, the Earth, Yahweh is full of your mercy. That all of the verses in in this section start with, uh, And this is the only one that starts with a form of the word Crescent. The Earth of Yahweh is full and it's actually Your cussed.

Yahweh. Fill the Earth. Uh, your confident, love the all of the Um, Displays of your unthortable covenanted. Steadfast love, fill the Earth. Uh, so that having the Lord as his portion Uh, he Lives in the world in such a way that everywhere he looks. He sees, not just the Glory of the Lord as Creator.

But the goodness of the Lord as Redeemer. These are the works of his Covenant, God. And what a blessing, it will be to you. As the spirit conforms. Uh your heart and mind to this portion of God's word into the whole of God's word. What a blessing it would be to you that everywhere you look in the whole earth.

You see the redeeming? Loving goodness of your savior. Who has desired to have you for himself and give himself to you? Um, and therefore, that's having his word bound, as the frontlets to our eyes governing, and determining how we're going to see everything that we look at. Uh, and then of course, Uh, he wants to.

To learn the Lord's statute. So his word God's word can also be bound as a word to his hand and determine what he does. And how He does. Uh, everything. So, the Lord Uh, gives himself to us to be his portion. And there's much here. About how we come to that repentance and the sort of life that we lead, the friends that we choose how we see the world.

How we determine and the manner in which we conduct all of our actions. May the Lord blessed to Uh, not just knowing about these things. But using his word to conform our hearts and our lives that we experience, Uh, the Lord as our portion. Spray.

Father, we're so grateful to you. For your word as a whole. I'm just now. For this portion of your word, and For your kind Providence, in which you have brought us to have this portion at this time, Together as a family. We pray that you would Blessed To Us by your spirit, that we would.

Um, desire your face. With our whole heart and to count you as our portion. We thank you, Lord. For granting to us, repentance by your spirit, keep giving us. We pray. Uh, to consider. Earnestly. Our ways and turn our feet. Uh, towards your testimonies. Grant that as we would be as urgent as we are Earnest.

Making course, Corrections immediately Uh, and not being Um, lazy or delaying? Give us O Lord in difficult circumstances and in unusual circumstances grant that our hearts. Our minds would go. Uh, to your word. And, Uh, give us to have companions. That know you and walk with you. Uh, in similar fashion.

Grant to us to see in all your Earth. In all your world. Your steadfast love towards us. And teach our hearts. Your statutes so that as we live in all your world, We would live with steadfast, love and faithfulness. To you. So please do this all, we pray by your spirit.

We ask through Christ. Amen.