

**Text: Ps 119.33-40**

For our Communion services, I am working through Ps 119.

Surprisingly, most commentaries on the Psalms, even the best ones, give little attention to Ps 119.

Possibly, this is due to the length: how can one devote much attention to the whole teaching, especially as it can seem repetitive?

Yet if one takes the time, we can distinguish features of each stanza as we go through. Today we are in 33-40, where all verses start in Hebrew with the letter ה (hē). This letter is very significant in the Hebrew verb system, being the beginning letter of causative verbs.

That means that each of these verses are a prayer.

“In English we would translate such verbs as ‘Cause me to learn,’ ‘Cause me to have understanding,’ ‘Cause me to walk,’ and so on, which sound awkward. The verbs are better rendered as petitions, which is what the Hebrew sentences actually are. As a result, we have: ‘Teach me, O Lord, to follow your decrees’ (v. 33), ‘Give me understanding’ (v. 34), ‘Direct me in the path of your commands’ (v. 35), ‘Turn my heart toward your statutes’ (v. 36), and so on throughout the stanza. The fifth stanza of Psalm 119 is a series of prayers for acceptance, progress, assistance, and perseverance in God’s school of spiritual learning.”<sup>1</sup>

I’ve called our message “*Longing for Instruction*,” and I think you will see this is the Psalmist’s heart as we look at his words.

Read Ps 119.33-40

As I read this stanza, one verse from the Beatitudes comes to mind:

Mt 5.6 “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

**Proposition:** After redemption, if you hunger for righteousness, your spiritual life will become full.

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<sup>1</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 107-150: An Expositional Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Books, 2005), 990.

“A sense of dependence and a consciousness of extreme need pervade this section, which is all made up of prayer and plea. The former eight verses trembled with a sense of sin, quivering with a childlike sense of weakness and folly, which caused the man of God to cry out for the help by which alone his soul could be preserved from falling back into sin.”<sup>2</sup>

### **I. A longing for an enduring lifestyle (33)**

- A. The request is for teaching God’s ways
- B. The scope is “to the end”

### **II. A longing for a wholly devoted life (34-37)**

- A. A desire for a whole-hearted mind (34)
- B. A desire for a consistent walk (35)
- C. A desire for a holy love (36)
- D. A desire for a pure focus (37)

“Verse 37 occurs in *Pilgrim’s Progress* at a familiar point in the narrative, when Christian and Faithful come to Vanity Fair on their way to the Celestial City. Here all the merchandise of the world is for sale, but those who are on their way to the Celestial City do not fit in with these people, and when they are asked to stop and buy, they put their hands to their ears and run away, crying, ‘Turn away mine eyes from beholding Vanity,’ and look toward heaven to show where the business of their lives is. That sentence—‘Turn away mine eyes from beholding Vanity’—is Psalm 119:37 in the version available to Bunyan. It is the Christian’s only wise response to the allurements of this world.”<sup>3</sup>

Dt 6.5 “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

### **III. A longing for a solid base of confidence (38)**

- A. Establish your word

<sup>2</sup> C. H Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: Psalms 111-119*, vol. 5 (London: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 208.

<sup>3</sup> Boice, *Psalms*, 994.

## B. The word produces reverence

The lifestyle he was after comes through the Word, so he wants a firm sense of God's unfailing and eternal word to work in his life.

## IV. A longing for ongoing faithfulness (39-40)

### A. What is the reproach he dreads?

1. Could be the shame of his own sin
2. More likely (IMO) is the reproach of sinners who mock the word

### B. The Psalmist wants stability

1. Your ordinances are good
2. I long for your precepts
3. Let them revive me through your righteousness

### Conclusion:

Overall, the stanza focuses on the desire for a spiritual life, devoted to God.

In the NT era, we would call this the "Spirit-filled life."

This life begins with redemption, but it is fulfilled by applying redemption to the life through the word of God.