

Text: Ps 119.57-60

Psalm 119 is very much a testimony Psalm. The things the Psalmist is writing about are his inner experiences with God, meditating on God's Law, meditating on the reality of his relationship with God, meditating on his place in the world.

Our stanza for today's communion message is clearly this kind of meditation.

I've taken our title from the first phrase of the stanza:

The Lord Is My Portion

Read Ps 119.57-64

The word, "portion," comes from a verb for *division*, in the sense of "divvying up" or "distributing shares." It is used frequently in Joshua of the divisions of the land given to each tribe. Their share was their portion.

The tribe of Levi had no portion in the land. God said to Aaron, and in other passages to Levi,

Num 18.20 Then the LORD said to Aaron, "You shall have no inheritance in their land nor own any portion among them; I am your portion and your inheritance among the sons of Israel.

Even more than that, the spiritual Israelite, meditating on the Law, concluded that God gave him something more valuable than land, his most valuable "portion" was the Lord himself.

Here is David (and perhaps in our text as well)

Ps 142.5 I cried out to You, O LORD; I said, "You are my refuge, My portion in the land of the living.

The concept is so powerful that some Israelites had this name: Hilkiah, the Lord is my portion.

One of the most prominent of these was a chief priest Hilkiah who found the lost scroll of the Law and sent it to Josiah. This brought about the last revival in Judah before the Babylonian captivity.

This connects with some things I've been reading lately.

I've been reading the Torah (the Law) the last weeks in my Bible reading. One thing that struck me is this:

The Law is spiritual – think of how often God is appealing to the spirit, love me with your whole heart, fear me, submit to me — these focus on the inner man.

I have a tentative idea about this. You know that the Law has lots of externals, lots of rituals.

The external aspects of the Law are an Old Covenant anticipation of the Spirit – the externals train the internals, though not all get it.

In the same way, we train children with externals (rules), to form in them a submissive spirit to the Lord.

What we want is for them to love the Lord.

We want them to be just like the psalmist in our text: The Lord is my portion.

So what does our Psalmist tell us about how he got to that place in his life?

I. The expectant testimony of a disciple (57-58)

A. The Lord is my portion

1. The word has an expectation of production (the inherited land of Israel provided all the stuff of life: crops, income, sustenance)
2. The word has an implication of relationship: you work your land

B. The disciple testifies to his commitment

1. Promised obedience
2. Devoted seeking

C. The expectancy: be gracious to me

We don't serve God simply to get God's good things, but we expect that God will bless and give us good things.

II. The conversion testimony of the disciple (59-60)

A. I considered my ways: and I turned (59)

B. I hastened to keep your commandments (60)

There is a change of mind and life here — the psalmist's ways were not always obedient, but he decided to turn, he decided to obey.

III. The faithful testimony of the disciple (61-62)

A. The wicked entangle, I remember (61)

1. The world opposes the life of the faithful
2. The faithful disciple focuses on God's word (law)

B. Darkness offers the opportunity for worship (62)

1. Midnight — potentially a time of fear and dread
2. Psalmist makes it a time of giving thanks, because of God's righteous law

IV. The contented testimony of a disciple (63-64)

A. The disciple surrounds himself with like-minded disciples (63)

B. The disciple sees that the earth is the Lord's (64)

1. Full of revelation
2. Final prayer, teach me your statutes

Conclusion:

Proposition: For the Lord to be your portion, you have to give yourself to the Lord.

The OT saint didn't know where his sacrifices and all God's rituals pointed as they shaped his spiritual life.

But if he thought carefully about what God wanted, his spirit could follow God with his whole heart just as a NT saint can.

The NT saint has the OT explained — the laws don't enable devotion and obedience; the Spirit of Christ forms the disciple as he walks with God.

But everyone who wants to have a portion in Christ has to give all his possessions over to Christ, body, soul, and spirit.