

Text: Ps 119.65-72

For our communion services lately, we are going through Psalm 119. You may remember that a major theme of the Psalm is the word of God.

The Psalmist is thinking about God's word, how he relates to God's word, and how he relates to God.

One of my motivations in selecting this text is to illustrate through these messages the kind of relationship I want you to have with God.

It is one thing to be born again. It is another thing to be an earnest disciple, growing in grace.

If we were to sit down and do a spiritual inventory of each person in our church, no doubt for every one of us, we would create a lengthy list of deficiencies.

That goes for all of us, me included.

Yet what should we think of our deficiencies?

If we are redeemed, born again by the Spirit of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we have a new nature.

However, we all tend to plateau, to become satisfied with where we are. We tend to not progress. We like being comfortable and don't push ourselves.

Our title this time is:

Teach Me Good Discernment

This is what the Psalmist wants for his spiritual life. We should want it too.

Proposition: Good discernment stabilizes spiritual life, focuses on living for the Saviour.

I. The condition that prompts the request (65)

- A. God is good to his people
- B. God keeps his word

These propositions preface the prayer for discernment and the testimony of affliction. They are true regardless of circumstances.

II. The request for growing discernment (66-68)

A. What we are asking for: discernment

1. Word root: taste

- a. We taste food, distinguish flavours, seasonings
- b. Metaphorically, we distinguish between persons, events, experiences and discern truth

2. Discernment is connected with knowledge

- a. This is knowledge gained by the senses, through experience
- b. There is a sense of discernment in knowledge as well

3. The request is based on confidence in God's commandments

- a. The standard of truth
- b. The measure by which we measure our experiences

B. We acknowledge lack of discernment (67)

1. Going astray (which leads to affliction)
2. Returning to the word (the standard)

C. The confidence of the prayer (68)

1. God is good, we can trust him
2. God will teach us if we ask

Jas 1.5 ¶ But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

III. The benefit of affliction for discernment (69-71)

A. Those who afflict contrasted with the servant who believes (69-70)

1. The arrogant lie
2. The disciple commits to observing precepts
3. The arrogant have "fat hearts" — insensitive to God's wisdom
4. The disciple delights in the law

The afflicter is insensible of the guilt he accrues from his disobedience to God's word.

The disciple is committed to God's word regardless.

B. The disciple discerns the benefit of affliction (71)

1. Affliction drives the disciple to learn

2. Already the prayer is beginning to receive its answer

You should not look at adversity as an enemy, but as a goad to drive you to God.

IV. The value of discernment (72)

A. Better than riches

"Herbert Lockyer recounts a story concerning the largest Bible in the world, a Hebrew manuscript weighing 320 pounds in the Vatican library. Long ago a group of Italian Jews asked to see this Bible and when they had seen it they told their friends in Venice about it. As a result a syndicate of Russian Jews tried to buy it, offering the church the weight of the book in gold. Julius the Second was Pope at that time, and he refused the offer, even though the value of such a large amount of gold was enormous. Wrote Lockyer, 'Thousands of gold and silver pieces are nothing in comparison with the inestimably precious Word of God.'"¹

320 lb of Gold today = \$1,019,267.20 Cdn

B. That is less than the value of discernment that comes from redemption and growth in Christ.

¹ James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 107-150: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Books, 2005), 1007.