

Text: Ps 119.81-88

We again come to Psalm 119 for our Communion service.

The tone of our stanza is trusting but under duress. Spurgeon said:

“This portion of the gigantic Psalm sees the Psalmist *in extremis*. His enemies have brought him to the lowest condition of anguish and depression; yet he is faithful to the law and trustful in his God. This octave is the midnight of the Psalm, and very dark and black it is. Stars, however, shine out, and the last verse gives promise of the dawn.”¹

From the first line of this section, I gave our meditation the title:

My Soul Languishes

The oppression of the soul is not that of a sinner who calls for salvation, but a believer under pressure who calls for deliverance.

Despite the low points expressed, the psalmist has a triumph of faith. He waits for God to answer, he isn't running away.

I. The word of calamity

A. Languishes (81); fail (82); destroyed (87)

B. Basic idea: “to bring to an end”

“The processes which are brought to an end may be either positive or negative. That is, something may be continually added to until it is full or complete, or something may be taken away from until there is nothing left. The English word ‘finish’ coincides very nicely with *kālâ* in that it too can have either positive or negative connotations.”²

¹ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: Psalms 111-119*, vol. 5 (London: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 304.

² John N. Oswalt, “982 כָּלָה,” in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody, 1980), 439.

II. The psalmist's condition

A. Image of a "smoked wineskin"

"The skins used for containing wine, when emptied, were hung up in the tent, and when the place reeked with smoke the skins grew black and sooty, and in the heat they became wrinkled and worn. The Psalmist's face through sorrow had become dark and dismal, furrowed and lined; indeed, his whole body had so sympathized with his sorrowing mind as to have lost its natural moisture, and to have become like a skin dried and tanned."³

B. "My soul languishes" (81)

C. "Eyes fail with longing" (82)

D. "They almost destroyed me" (87)

E. Waiting ... waiting ... waiting (81, 82, 84)

F. Enduring the arrogant (85)

III. Yet enduring confidence

A. The waiting implies trust in an ultimate outcome ("when," 82)

B. The focus is on God's word (81, 82, 83, 86, 87)

C. The final prayer: revive me (88)

"Depressed, but not defeated! For at the very end of this discussion of affliction and this anxious reflection on his enemies, he turns his attention once again to God's Word (v. 88). The ancients had a saying, *dum spiro spero* ("while I breathe I hope"). Here the child of God does better. He exclaims, *dum expiro spero* ("even while I expire I hope"). He expected to be blessed."⁴

A redeemed soul knows his redeemer has promised full redemption.

³ Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: Psalms 111-119*, 5:305.

⁴ James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 107-150: An Expositional Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Books, 2005), 1009.