

**Text: Ps 119.113-120**

We are using Psalm 119 as our basis for our communion services.

There are some things that are different for us from the mindset of Ps 119.

- Ps 119 has an Old Testament understanding of righteousness (somewhat different from the NT)
- Ps 119 is oriented towards the OT sacrificial system and relating to God through its services
- Ps 119 has no understanding of the indwelling Spirit

Nevertheless, Ps 119 is the testimony of a redeemed soul, one whose faith is in God, and who will stand before God in the last day based on his faith.

Consequently, it can fit with our understanding of the effect of redemption on the inner man. That's what I am trying to connect with as we work through it month by month.

The theme I'm picking up in the Samekh stanza (113-120) is separation from the world.

## I. The ways the Psalmist distances himself from the wicked

### A. His testimony (113)

Elijah to Israel at Mt Carmel: "How long will you hesitate between two opinions?"

The psalmist hates double-mindedness in the world, and in himself.

### B. His declaration (115)

"How are you and I ever going to keep on obeying God's Law in a sinfully enticing world like ours? There are several answers to that question. The psalm itself elaborates on quite a few of them. One thing is certain: We are never going to obey God's Law unless from the very beginning we determine to do it. That is our starting point. If we are to live for God, we must determine to obey him regardless of any enticing Siren calls to sin."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 107-150: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Books, 2005), 1033.

- C. His focus on God (114, 116-117)
- D. His recognition of God's judgement (118-119)

## II. The reasons redeemed people need to separate from the world

- A. The world is double-minded (untrustworthy) (113)
- B. The world practices evil (115)
- C. The world's wisdom is useless (118)

## III. The posture that manifests redemption (the fear of the Lord)

- A. Trembling
- B. Awe

My flesh trembles in fear of you;  
I stand in **awe** of your laws. (NIV)

"In a fascinating essay the English writer William Hazlitt (1778–1830) described an evening in which various literary figures of his day discussed people from the past they wished they had seen. They suggested almost everyone you might think of: Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Columbus, Caesar, Napoleon, even Jonathan Edwards. But Charles Lamb had the last word: 'There is only one other person I can ever think of after this,' he said. 'If Shakespeare was to come into the room, we should all rise up to meet him; but if that person [Jesus] was to come into it, we should all fall down and try to kiss the hem of his garment!'"<sup>2</sup>

Boice comments, "That is not nearly reverence enough," but it's headed in the right direction.

### Conclusion:

I believe in separation from the world, as much as possible. I need God's help to keep me separate from the world!

The world is heading to judgement — I have no part in it.

<sup>2</sup> William Hazlitt, "On Persons One Would Wish to Have Seen," in *The Harvard Classics, English Essays from Sir Philip Sidney to Macaulay* (Norwalk, Conn.: The Easton Press, 1994), 295. In the original form of this essay the speech is given to Leigh Hunt. - quoted in Boice, 1035.