

Righteous are you, O LORD, and right are your rules. You have appointed your testimonies in righteousness and in all faithfulness. My zeal consumes me, because my foes forget your words. Your promise is well tried, and your servant loves it. I am small and despised, yet I do not forget your precepts. Your righteousness is righteous forever, and your law is true. Trouble and anguish have found me out, but your commandments are my delight. Your testimonies are righteous forever; give me understanding that I may live.

(Psalms 119:137–144)

Introduction

I feel quite confident in assuming that everyone reading this owns a mirror of some description. We use a mirror to see what we look like, to shave the right portion of our beard, or to make sure our hair lies in the right direction. It's all about the reflection we see. In Psalm 119:137–144, the psalmist looks into the word, using it as a mirror to see God's righteous character. Looking into the mirror of the word, seeing God's righteous character, he naturally sees his own reflection and considers his own life and how God's righteous character effects his life.

Let's consider three truths from these verses as we consider the mirror of God's word.

Acknowledging God's Righteousness

The psalmist begins by acknowledging God's righteousness: "Righteous are you, O LORD, and right are your rules. You have appointed your testimonies in righteousness and in all faithfulness" (vv. 137–138).

The psalmist here sings the Lord's praises because the Lord is without fault, blameless, honest, sinless, just and always right. It's because he is righteous, that his rules and the way he judges is right.

The Psalmist continues by acknowledging that, because the Lord is righteous, the witness of his righteousness—the proof that God gave us to show us that he is without any defect—is clothed in truth and steadfastness. The word of God—the revelation, the mirror revealing who he is—can be trusted because the one without fault spoke it himself. The word of God is God's own words, and that is why we can trust it: because God never changes. He is forever righteous and faithful and the word mirrors who he is.

Our acknowledgement of who God is forms our worship of him. The second commandment says forbids us from making idols (Exodus 20:4–6). There is no place for just going through rituals, unless we want to simply accommodate pagan standards and practices. It's idol worship when we give glory to anyone other than God. God the Son freed us through his righteousness. When we give thanks and glory to anyone or anything else with the freedom we received from him, we are worshipping idols.

It would be something like a regift, which I'm sure we all do. How would you feel if you attend a birthday party and saw someone giving the birthday person the present you gave them on their birthday? I'm sure that would sting. And that is what we do when we don't affirm God for who he is

and for what he did for us. Because God is the source of your freedom, it is appropriate for you to dedicate all your freedom to him alone. Acknowledging, and so worshipping, God must not be an end in itself. True worship must give God his proper place and cannot be self-serving. That goes for individuals, but also as we gather corporately.

Appreciating God's Righteousness

Acknowledging God's righteousness flows into appreciating his righteousness. The psalmist writes, "My zeal consumes me, because my foes forget your words. Your promise is well tried, and your servant loves it. I am small and despised, yet I do not forget your precepts" (Psalm 119:139–141).

The conviction in the psalmist's heart of the Lord's righteousness and faithfulness produces a response of ceaseless devotion. As the difficulties increase, so his zeal increases. He knows that God's word is righteous. The knowledge that he gets from the Word drives him and takes over his life. It consumes him. He is saying, when the opposition increases my zeal increases for truth.

Verse 140 is beautiful. The psalmist says speaks of God's word "promise ... well tried," which has stood the test of time. The NKJV reads, "Your word is very pure." Even though there are hindrances, persecution or opposition to the truth, it doesn't make the writer doubt, but drives him to another level of love and zeal. The word is pure, tried and proven to be right. It's like a diamond put under pressure, which becomes stronger with more pressure. It gives him more confidence. And this confidence in the word creates a love for the word. The love he talks about is a hunger for more—like a meal you simply cannot get enough of and keep going back for more. The psalmist says that the word of God has this effect on him. Because of the righteousness, the nature, and the strength of God's word, he can't get enough of it, especially during difficult times, because it reflects who he is. The word gives him confidence because it secures him through the truth.

It's the mirror, the Bible, that shows us God's character and truth. The word will change people. It's through the honest study of the Bible that we will start appreciating God for who he is. Keep looking to increase your knowledge of God. Know him, and as your knowledge increases, your love and zeal for God will increase. As the writer says, it consumes him. Think of this: If the word of God totally consumes you and your love for him increases, there will be no place for sin, fear, or anxiety. Only the truth that brings strength and comfort will stay. Appreciate the word because it helps us fight sin, helps us with our fears, and directs us. The mirror has been reflecting God up to now.

In v. 141, we see the mirror reflecting who the psalmist is. Through his appreciation of who God is—the righteous Creator of heaven and earth—he realises how small he is. Isaiah wrote similarly of how big God is compared to him:

Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? Who has measured the Spirit of the LORD, or what man shows him his counsel? Whom did he consult, and who made him understand? Who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding? Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as the dust on the scales; behold, he takes up the coastlands like fine dust.

(Isaiah 40:12–15)

But this thought doesn't make the psalmist shrink away. He appreciates the fact that, even though he was small and worthless, he has the Almighty's law and regulations to help him with his relationship with God. Through God's word, he finds his identity not in the world or himself, but in God. He might be unimportant, but he can stand strong by knowing that he is known by the only true God. The reason that he can sing about God's law, acknowledge and appreciate the Lord, is because he humbled himself and see God through his word for who he is. It's because he knows truth that he feels safe and alive. The writer, seeing who God is, is driven to feel small like an ant—and that's why he loves God so much and finds comfort in him.

The word of God should humble us into submitting to him and his word. The natural outflow of submitting to his everlasting truth, is that you will be strengthened, comforted and bring glory to him.

Announcing God's Righteousness

As you acknowledge God for who he is, this knowledge will drive you to appreciate him and the appreciation will drive you to announce it: "Your righteousness is righteous forever, and your law is true. Trouble and anguish have found me out, but your commandments are my delight. Your testimonies are righteous forever; give me understanding that I may live" (vv. 142–144).

The psalmist closes by announcing God's righteousness as he started. "I acknowledged your righteousness in the beginning, but I can't help it, I have to announce it and say: You are righteous and you have stood the test of time and you will stay righteous forever. Because of this, your law is righteous, true and never-ending."

Now, in v. 143, we find the reason why he can find delight during affliction and rejoice in hard times: It's because he is finding his rest in the Almighty, the one that controls all things in righteousness. Even though he finds himself in trouble, the trouble doesn't make him fall away, but pushes him towards truth even more.

Though he doesn't yet see the outcome of his present troubles, the psalmist knows the Lord God is righteous, his Word is righteous and faithful, and his promises have been tested repeatedly in the redemptive history so that they still stand as the same truth (v. 144). He knows the one in whom he puts his trust. He doesn't challenge the Lord's integrity but prays humbly that he may understand more of his righteous word. He is saying, "Because the word is righteous forever, I want you to help me understand more of your word, so that I can live forever." He knows that understanding the Lord's testimonies will give him life and courage. It will revive him when he feels dead. This will enable him to stand strong in these challenging times.

We know God and his testimonies are righteous forever. We know we can ask him to increase in us. He will never fail us. When he increases in our lives, our joy increases.

So, when you are confronted to live righteously, there's only one source that stood the test of time: the word of God, which can help. It's the only trustworthy source that reveals righteous living and it's the only trustworthy source that brings comfort, relief and freedom from your sin. On the flipside, it also reveals the unrighteous living—a side with which we are sadly we are more familiar. We know we can't live righteous lives because of our sin. We can only find the insight of righteous living because of Jesus. Jesus, the God man is the true reflection of God. If you don't have the living Word (Jesus

Christ) in you, you are wasting away. Without the honest, healthy relationship with Jesus you can't live a righteous life. You need to look to the word, to Jesus, to convert you into a righteous being. This only happens because Jesus lived a perfect life, died a perfect death and was, and still is, victorious over the eternal death. That's why, just like the psalmist, we can strive for a holy and righteous life: because Jesus is righteous. We can therefore put our faith in Him. It's because of God the Holy Spirit helping us that we can grow in the knowledge of him and live forever.

Conclusion

As we draw to a close, let me encourage you: It's the truthful, passionate commitment to grow in knowledge of the word that stirs up the hunger for more. Look into the mirror and see our almighty Saviour, acknowledge him for who he is: the righteous one. Look into the mirror and see your need for him, because you're dead without him. Commit to growing in your appreciation of him and let that grow into announcing this wonderful comforting truth to others. And may you then "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen" (2 Peter 3:18).

AMEN