

Deal Bountifully With Thy Servant

Psalm 119:17-24
Charlie Brackett

In the third stanza of his poem, the psalmist pours out his longing for God's word in a prayer. The opening is a plea for blessing, but notice the reason for his request.

Deal bountifully with Thy servant,
That I may live and keep Thy word.

He finds in God's word wonderful things from His law (vs. 18); he delights in His testimonies for they are his counselors (vs. 24). He recognizes that God rebukes the arrogant and the cursed for they wander from His commandments (vs. 21). On the other hand, he realizes that God takes away reproach and contempt from the one who observes His testimonies (vs. 22). Is it any wonder that he longs for God's book? How do you feel about the Bible? Do you long for it because of what it is and what it can do for you? Can such a longing be cultivated?

The psalmist reveals in this stanza some key thoughts about himself - attitudes and practices from which his longing for the divine revelation have grown. First, his desire is that his eyes be opened to spiritual things (vs. 18). He prizes the spiritual over the material. He knows that his eyes can be clouded by things of the world, but with God's help he can see the treasures God has in store for him. And he knows full well that true riches are those in heaven, not those on earth.

Second, the writer considers himself a stranger in the earth and begs that God's commandments not be hidden from him (vs. 19). They are his guide, comforter and friend for without them he is alone and lost in a strange place. This is not his home. He is but a sojourner. As Christians we are the same. Peter refers to us as aliens and strangers (1 Peter 2:11). We are like Abraham in Hebrews 11:8-10, an alien looking for a city whose architect and builder is God.

Third, his soul is crushed with longing after God's ordinances at all times (vs. 20). He knows that he is spiritually destitute. His soul is deplete of good, of any value which it can derive from itself or on its own. There is only God's book to sustain it. Only in it can his soul be lifted up with hope.

Fourth, he observes God's testimonies (vs. 22). How hollow would be the rest: the longing, the pleading for open eyes, the realization of benefit in God's word, if he did not do what it says. We must not seek only to know His will, but to observe it.

Finally, he meditates on God's statutes (vs. 23). We are what we think about. How much time have you spent today thinking about God and His word? How much time yesterday? Can you pray with the psalmist, "Deal bountifully with Thy servant?"