*DAILY DEVOTIONAL*

July 10 - 15

“Put our Meditation into Practice”

**Monday, July 10 Psalm 119:113-128**

*“I am your servant”*

 Although the psalmist expresses himself confidently before people, pointing out his loyalty to God, before the Lord he appeals to God’s love. This is the safest place for us to be. We can take great confidence in “Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner.” It is good to be able to say “I have done what is just and right,” but we need to be careful not to assume that this makes us right with God. Even our most just actions and even our most righteous behavior fall short of God’s law. Our posture before God is not standing proudly in our deeds, but bowing humbly as his servant.

 Lest we should think that the position of a servant is somehow less impressive before God than that of a person recognized by others as being obviously pious, we need to remember that we follow a Savior who declared himself to be a servant: “For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). Jesus Christ fulfilled the role of a servant – what higher honor can we younger brothers and sisters of Christ desire than to become like him?

*Your love for me, Lord, encourages my love for your commands. Amen.*

**Tuesday, July 11 Psalm 119:129-136**

*“Your words are wonderful”*

 God’s word is full of wonderful revelations, commands and promises. They are wonderful in their nature, being free from error and bearing within themselves self-evidence of their truth. They are wonderful in their effects upon the people of God as they instruct, encourage, strengthen and comfort. Jesus, the eternal Word, is called Wonderful, and the words he spoke reflect the wonder of God. Those who know God’s word best, who read it and meditate on it and put it into practice, wonder at it most. It is wonderful that God should have given his word to sinful human beings, and still more wonderful that his word is “the power of salvation to all who believe” (Romans 1:16).

 “No wonder I obey them!” The wonderful character of God’s word so impressed itself upon the mind and heart of the psalmist that not only did he obey it, but found it inexplicable that anyone could receive this word and discard it. The word of God is given to us for practical use – to help us live holy lives – and that is precisely how the psalmist experienced it.

*Your word is amazing, Lord, and it is my privilege to receive it. Amen.*

**Wednesday, July 12 Psalm 119:137-152**

*“I pray with all my heart”*

 Heart-cries are the essence of prayer. The sincere, plaintive, painful, prayer of the psalmist arises not primarily out of his mind, having thoughtfully composed some pretty words in order to express himself to God, but out of his heart which is the very depth of his soul. His whole soul is pleading with God; his entire being is engaged as he comes to God. Such heart-cries may not sound pretty to those who would overhear them, but they are a sweet sound in the Lord’s ear for this is as genuine and honest as sinful human beings can be before God.

 “I will obey your word.” The psalmist could not expect the Lord to hear and answer the prayer of his heart if he were unwilling to hear what the Lord had already told him in his word. Neither could he say that he prayed with all his heart unless he labored with all his might to be obedient to the will of God. His object in seeking deliverance from that which oppressed him was that he might be free to fulfill his spiritual responsibilities before God. Freedom from worldly oppression is liberty to serve the Lord.

*My whole heart, Lord, belongs to you alone. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONAL*

July 10 - 15

“Put our Meditation into Practice”

**Thursday, July 13 Psalm 119:153-160**

 *“Look upon my suffering”*

 The psalmist has a good case, though it be a grievous one, and he is ready – even anxious – to submit it to divine consideration. His manner is that of one who feels safe at the throne of God, yet he is not impatient or impertinent. He does not ask for hasty action, but that God would consider his situation. In effect he prays, “Look into my grief, and see whether I do not need to be delivered. As you behold my sorrowful condition, I pray that you decide on a proper method and time for my rescue.”

 “For I have not forgotten your law.” In spite of all his hardship, with all its bitterness and suffering, he has not neglected the centrality of God’s will. No matter what he asks of God, he will always desire that God act only in accordance with the divine will, which is righteous and always exercised for the good of his children. So, while he presumes to tell God that his suffering is worthy of God’s attention, he is careful to withhold any sense of making a demand on how God should choose to respond to that suffering.

*However you respond to my prayer, Lord, I will accept your answer. Amen.*

**Friday, July 14 Psalm 119:161-176**

*“I have strayed like a lost sheep”*

 In times gone by, before God fully taught the psalmist God’s laws, he went astray from the practical instruction of God’s word. He lost his way, and in doing so he lost himself. Even now, though the Lord has called him back through his word, he is apt to wander. Knowing that he is incapable of finding his own way back, he asks the Lord to come and find him. While he has gone astray through his own laziness and willful disobedience, he is still one of the Lord’s sheep. The Good Shepherd will not neglect his own.

 In this psalm, the author has repeatedly defended himself against those who oppress him, declaring his faithfulness to God and his trust in God’s word. But when he comes into the presence of the Lord his God he is ready enough to confess his transgressions, to admit his wandering tendencies. Yes, he has gone astray, but God’s commandments are still in his heart and there they act as a call to return to the sheepfold, to the peace and rest of living in complete trust and obedience to the word of God.

*Whenever I stray, Lord, your word in my heart brings me back to you. Amen.*

**Saturday, July 15 Mark 2:1-12**

*“You are healed”*

 During the Middle Ages when sick people came to the church for help, French historian Jules Michelet says they got blamed for their ills. “On Sundays, after Mass, the sick came in scores crying for help – and words were all they got: ‘You have sinned and God is afflicting you. Thank him, for because of this you will suffer so much the less torment in the life to come.’” When the sick came to Jesus, he announced God’s forgiveness and manifested God’s love.

 The healings of Jesus reveal that God is for healing and therefore can work through medicine and surgery as much as faith and prayer, but faith and prayer should not be neglected. As mind and spirit can effect the onset of a disease, they can also effect healing. The healing forces of faith, hope and love are not incidental to health and medicine. Like an antibiotic, faith, hope and love enter the system quickly and do their work slowly. Medial healing is the knowledge of God manifested through science. Spiritual healing is the knowledge of God manifested through faith. It is the same source of knowledge. It is the same God.

*By faith and in prayer, Lord, I ask for physical health. Amen.*