

Psalms 19-05-30b

Let's pick up our study now in our cough section of Psalm 119. This is Psalm 119, 83. I have become like a wineskin in smoke.

If you've ever been around fire damage, you know what smoke is like. And even in the ancient world, if you burn wool, if you burn linen, if you burn leather, the smoke of destruction is acrid. And it far out distances the actual fire damage.

It's something that doesn't have to be burned to be rendered extremely odious by smoke. And it's one thing to have wonderful smelling smoke, hickory smoke, and things of that nature, but in a context such as we have in this section of Psalm 119, where things are obviously of a negative nature, this isn't going to be wonderful, beneficial wood smoke. This is going to be, we can assume without too much of a stretch, that this is the smoke of a fire of destruction.

So you have a bottle in the smoke, and what does the smoke do to this bottle, be it a water bottle or a wineskin? It's going to be off-putting. It has been near a fire of destruction. It's going to have this acrid... If you're looking for refreshment, you want a cool drink of water, or you want a little wine for your stomach's sake, or you want a refreshing non-spoiled drink that's going to come out of this bottle, and you grab the container, and the container, although it may look okay when you get near it and and get close enough to smell it, it smells like smoke.

Well, a big part of flavor and savoring, whether it's fresh water or a nice wine, is the aroma, the, what do they call it, the savor, the bouquet. Yeah, the bouquet. It's probably like booeey Texas.

It's probably bouquet instead of bouquet. The bouquet of it, and it's hard to do when the bottle from which you're getting it is stenchy, is smoky, and if you think, well, what what other comparison could you reach for, this is a very apt way to talk about contents that are wonderful, but a package that is not. A bottle that's been in the smoke for whatever reason is not attractive.

People didn't smoke them and then sell them in the bazaar and say, well, you can have our regular wineskin, or you can have our smoked wineskin. It's, that doesn't add, it detracts. So it, it is about the negative quality of the container potentially detracting from the contents, because the bottle only exists to convey and preserve its contents.

So reading this again, my soul is finished for your salvation. I've been holding out for your salvation and the circumstances finished me in the meanwhile. I've come to an end.

I'm like a land in famine. My eyes are finished for your word. I've looked until my eyes gave out waiting for your your word.

I hoped in your word, its content, and I've been watching for your word with an emphasis on its source. I appreciate what it says, and I appreciate who said it. I've been waiting, and I've been

watching, saying, and obviously this is poetic.

If you constructed this rigorously in Hebrew, it sounds like the eyes are speaking, which doesn't make any sense, and not only can eyes not see spoken words, the Amar words, but they don't talk themselves. This is the person who has the soul, who has the eyes, saying, when will you comfort me? So what he's saying is, I have been a faithful bottle. I have the content of your word inside me, and I've not let it be compromised.

I've not let it be rendered tasteless or useless or unfit. I have been faithful to keep and guard what is inside me. That's what Jesus' parable helps us understand, that it's about old wine and new wine, talking about the content of spiritual truth.

Well, the bottle here contains something. The bottle has been spoiled by smoke. It's the smoke of fire.

It's the smoke of persecution, of affliction, of attack by enemies. But he says, my contents are still good. The bottle, you see this sometimes, somebody has a fire in their house and the cover of their Bible is all scorched, but the insides where they have all their notes and sometimes other memorabilia is okay.

Well, he's like a scorched bottle, but the contents are all right. And by the way, one of the reasons a bottle would survive damage like this is because it's got wet contents, it would keep from burning and would only smoke. It's pretty tough to set something on fire that's got a liquid content.

But he says, I'm a wineskin in smoke. I do not forget your statutes. The wineskin in smoke does not lose its contents like the wineskin that broke in Jesus' parable.

So that both the skin and the contents are lost. So that's why you want to scribble out, yet. I've become like a wineskin in smoke.

I don't lose my contents. I've not forgotten your statutes. That's the idea.

Is it kind of making sense now? I'm under this intense persecution, but I'm holding what you've given me, what you've spoken to me, what's guaranteed by your character. And everything around me is burnt down, but I've still got, and I'm faithful to it. I haven't thrown it over.

I haven't disbelieved it. I haven't lost my faith. But I've suffered a lot in guarding and holding these contents.

I'm a bottle in the smoke. I'm a wineskin in the smoke. Then in verse 84, he says, how many are the days of your servant? And the word how many is what starts with koph in verse 84.

This is kama, how many are the days of your servant? In other words, Lord, I'm only going to be here so long. If you're going to bring judgment on those who persecute me, I'd like to be around for it. How much longer am I going to be here? Will I still be here? When you do what

you said you would do, which is to vindicate my faith, vindicate my obedience.

You know, he is just and the justifier of the one who has faith as it tells us in the New Testament. So Lord, how many days have I got left here? These guys are going unpunished and unrequited, unstopped. I'm a bottle in the smoke and these people are hail and hearty and well, well, how many days have I got left? How many is the first word there? When will you execute judgment on those who persecute me? And Hebrew like Greek can sometimes move things around not only poetically but also for emphasis and the Order of the second part here is when will you execute on those who persecute me? judgment Big finish here.

When will you perpetrate? When will you fulfill? When will you make happen on those who persecute me? Mishpat Remember you put a M is another one of those we'll be getting to the main letter here pretty soon and M is another Preposition you can stick on the front of a word when you put it on front of shafat Which is the word in Hebrew that means to judge it turns the verb into a noun ma shafat mish Fought mish pot mish pot judgment When how long Oh Lord, it's just like the souls under the altar in Revelation When will you execute judgment on those who persecute me now think about this for a moment? There are three different parts To the affliction Situation there are generally three different parts to every situation and it reminds me of Redemption reconciliation and propitiation the three R's of Christ's work on the cross You know, it's like reading writing and arithmetic. Well, it's redemption reconciliation and row appreciation Three R's and those each go in a different direction propitiation goes toward God Redemption Redemption goes toward our our sin that the price is paid and reconciliation goes toward us. We are reconciled.

God is propitiated and Redemption takes care of the sin debt the sin penalty. It's like redeeming a ticket. So they each have a different direction Well in a situation you've got yourself With the Godward side of affliction and that's what he's been exercising here.

Oh Lord I'm finished there. There's the me part. This is how I feel and what I'm experiencing What are the implications between me and the Lord? What is going on with myself and what is going on with me and others? particularly others who are creating or contributing to the affliction So he began by saying Lord.

Here's my situation. I'm done. I'm finished put a fork in me You know, it's it's over Then he says He's talking to God when are you going to act I've been waiting for your word I'm relying on your character How long am I gonna last before you? make a change in this situation by judging the perpetrators and the perpetrators of the third element So you've got it I can't remember now there used to be an acronym and I've forgotten what it was It's not GOM but it's God others and myself in terms of an order of hierarchies of God others and me or God of this night Boy, no, there's some there was some acronym and I've lost it, but I remember what it was trying to communicate which is the priority of Importance is God first then others then myself and there was three letters that went with it.

Anyway, it's the same thing here God Myself and others are in view in this affliction situation So

when he says when are you going to execute judgment on them? What is what is the desire and the goal and the purpose of that judgment make them quit? Judge them so that they can no longer do harm Shut them up shut them down One of these days I'm going to give you my 15-minute discourse on the word up But not tonight Why do we shut some people up and we shut others down anyway So then verse 85 the proud and this is the same word we've seen before Zadim this this are the insolent the arrogant the impudent these people are Frustrating and Irritating because they've got such a an attitude on them. They are Just annoying in the extreme with this self-importance and their disregard of things that are part of what makes society work and makes company polite and fellowship and conversation work, you know good manners and reticence and After you and that kind of thing these people none of that their great Trinity is me myself and I and This is the Zadim They're the the arrogant the impudent the insolent. They're not just pleased with themselves they Annoy everybody else with it and he says these insolent have dug pits for me and the word here that starts the verse is to dig the digging part is what starts with cough and So this is this is the the word that means to to Move a lot of dirt to excavate to dig through And it's funny because it has a cognate meaning that means to give a feast But they have dug for me and you get the idea that the cough as a container as a basket or a Hollow of some kind of hollow hand hollow dish hollow bowl to dig is to make a hollow but instead of me Extending my my hand in need asking God to fill it These people are making a hollow for me to fall in I'm going to be the contents of their evil plan So they have dug for me the proud these the Zadim pits Which is not According to your law and According to your law, that's another cough according to Torah and According to your law begins and ends with cough its cough Torah cough because the the Possessive you or your is is cough on the end of a word.

So It's it's very emphatic here and you remember that when you've got This in the middle of the psalm is going to tend to be in the point of emphasis so they have Dug for me a pit and it's not according to the law of you cough Torah cough It's Kind of an odd saying that the proud digging pits you would think well, of course, that's not according to the law Why does he even say it? But it's got a lot of coughs in it and he says, you know This is just wrong on so many different counts then in verse 86 He says now remember the three parts of this. How does your soul feel finished? What is God like he has made promises? Davar he is a god of promise that fulfills promise. That's Amar and he is able and we saw that in the whole Yod section and so then here are the enemies the adversaries the attackers and so now in verse 86, we're back to God all your commandments are faithful and This word all starts with cough all All your mitzvot all your commandments are faithful they persecute me wrongfully Help me and you get all three of those directions in one verse.

Don't you do you see him? Your commandments are faithful Because you are faithful that's the God side they are Persecuting me and wrongfully. This is Shakira. This means deceitfully fraudulently spuriously It is partakes of falsehood.

It's not deserved. It's undeserved. It's made up.

It's spun up It's manufactured and it's just wrong and then the third part so you've got God others myself in that order help me and Remember in the days of Samuel when they They pray and God helps him win a battle and Samuel says thus far The Lord has helped us and he sets up a stone and he names the stone. You remember the name of it? It's in it's in him here. I raise my Ebenezer well Evan is stone and Etzer is help here.

I raise my stone of help. This is my monument to God's help Right. Well, that's the word here when he says help me.

This is the easier part Easier me etzer me help me God others and myself all three in verse 86 you come to 87 They almost made an end of me made an end of me. What verb do you think that is? It's the one that began our first two verses Kala they almost finished me they almost Made me like the land after famine Like any conversation that's over with and nobody's talking Like a water bottle with no water in it Almost is the word that begins the verse almost they collide me On the land almost They finished me but errits in the land in the in the circumstances in the immediate surroundings But I myself now you have the Wow and then I mean Which is emphatic because you don't need a personal preposition in Hebrew You can talk about yourself all day long and never use it. If you do use it, it's extremely emphatic.

So this should be Almost They made an end of me But errits in the land, but I myself low Asbatee I myself did not forsake your precepts and this is the Picude Picudine that we talked about Be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life. This is the Old Testament equivalent I'm still talking so they haven't killed me, but they only missed it by that much Almost they finished me some of you know To which I allude there and now verse 88 revive me According to your loving-kindness and this is once again cough used as a preposition like or according to ka kessed ka So this is ka Castica and this is kessed with a cough in the beginning and a cough at the end. Remember we had the Torah surrounded by cough and this is the cough section and So you have God's Word emphasized by being surrounded by coughs and here you have God's Kessed his loyal love his grace.

It's the word for grace in the Old Testament loyal love So often translated loving-kindness as it is here, but it's the first word in the sentence preceded by this preposition according to your loving-kindness revive me and As I've said many times your easiest way to remember the Hebrew word for life is think about the toast to life is la Chaim right la Chaim you see him do this Frequently. Well, la is two or four and then life is hi ch a y That's what you have here. You have hi with the personal Suffix give me life give life to me life me is what it literally says hi Me me is me so it means Life me give me life Enliven me might be a good English.

So according to your loving-kindness enliven me I am Dead, I'm basically dead. I'm finished. I'm over with he says Actually, it's almost But to get anywhere I need to be revived so that I May keep the testimony of your mouth so that I may keep the testimony.

This is the Adute of Your mouth and the last letter in this section is cough mouth your cough So what conclusion do we draw from this? Well, it's twofold. First of all by far the most Striking and

picturesque image in this section is the bottle in the smoke right the wineskin in the smoke and Based on that faithfulness the psalmist calls on God to fulfill the content of his word which is guaranteed by his Character and what is that content it is? Revival in the sense of I have been persecuted unto death give me life and That life has a purpose It's not because I really want to be alive and start to enjoy the finer things in life What is the purpose of that life? How does this psalm end? Revive me so that I may keep the testimony of your mouth There is a purpose This is the way to pray This is the an example of effective prayer This is the way to pray effectively tell God that you know good reasons and Good in his sight why this prayer should be answered in the affirmative Why does he say give me life? Because Lord everybody ought to have life don't I have a right to life that you know, I just feel like I ought to keep going No, why is it in God's interest to answer this prayer? because if you keep me alive my my goal my purpose is to do what I have done, which is to be a container for your word and I am going to testify to it I'm going to Glorify it I'm going to talk about it. I'm gonna make it known I am going to keep the testimony of your mouth and we're back to that dove are that started this section of the psalm.

I hope in what you've said and If you preserve me and give me life, I will be a testimony to the truth of that word I hoped in it. My hope was vindicated. I had faith in it.

My faith was vindicated I stuck to it and was obedient to it. My obedience and my endurance is vindicated and You see this all over the New Testament after you've suffered a while You have need of endurance so that you will inherit the promises the trial of your faith worketh patience ultimately hope and hope does not disappoint and that's the that's the confidence we have because God does what he says he will do and he has said things that we can rely upon so In terms of that wineskin what qualifies the psalmist to? Confidently pray this prayer. It is not enough to Receive God's Word and hide his commandments within you as it says in Proverbs chapter 2 when things start Going downhill and we start being afflicted and God does not stop it God does not put an end to it.

God does not Pluck us like a brand out of the fire and we continue to get smoked and we continue to suffer adversity We continue to be persecuted and it goes on and on and on What is the? human propensity This faith thing ain't working This I'm my trust in God is not being vindicated at all. Things are just going from bad to work The right the wicked prosper and these people that are that are persecuting me are just getting over and getting better and better I'm getting worse and worse What's up, Lord? I'm trying to be faithful here and this isn't doing me any good at all. We picture ourself as The wineskin as this fire gets closer and the smoke is accurate and a lot of stuff is getting destroyed What is the most important thing what vindicates us even being here? What is your value what is my value in divine terms what Gives us value.

It's what we contain. It's what we represent We in this age our body of Christ. We are the conveyors of his divine glory and his savior hood his Compassion his love and the love of the Father in him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, right? What was in Jesus as a container? The fullness of deity in bodily form and we are supposed to be like him.

We are supposed to Fill in for him while he's gone He was here. He left he's coming back But in the meantime, he has left us to represent him and we are containers of the word and the work and the glory and the love of Jesus Christ and Our worth is in how well we? Sustain maintain and preserve that content. We don't crack and give it up We don't destroy ourself and lose the contents We are wine skins and And this by the way, the new the new wine skins is not that as I said in the first session people have said Well, this is the church as a new structure to contain the new truth of Jesus.

I Would submit to you. It's not a new Structure for worship. It's not church instead of synagogue or church instead of temple and tabernacle.

It is People It's believers What was the problem with the Pharisees and even with the disciples of John? When Jesus came teaching and the disciples of John they were with John because he was preaching Old Testament he was the last great Old Testament prophet and he was Distilling and emphasizing and bringing forth the pinnacle of Old Testament Fidelity to the law and to the God's promises and return return come back and Old Testament people were all about that. Even the Pharisees came out and had no quarrel with John Pharisees never persecuted John did they? He they saw him as one of them Why did they have such trouble with Jesus and not with John the Baptist? Because Jesus got past the form to the content he wasn't just saying Be a good wineskin. He said you've got to be a container for this living truth and for this living truth.

That's you know, the Word of God is alive and powerful and it moves and it it's It's it's got dynamics. You need people who can flex hence my often repeated Philosophy we are nothing if not flexible got to be flexible flexibility is How you move with the plan and purpose of God if God decides to put us in a time of adversity We have to be flexible and not lose what has been entrusted to us We may think well, I thought I knew what was coming I thought I knew what life was going to be like or what my job was going to be like or my marriage was going to be like or my family or my kids or whatever circumstance my health or my retirement or my education or whatever it may be you think about anything in life and you you map it out and you've got kind of a Picture of what it's going to be and as you move toward it it changes and it flexes and it's different than we thought I'm like a wineskin in the smoke. I'm I'm doing whatever I have to do in whatever circumstance it is to keep these contents Preserved and fresh.

I will not spill these contents. I will not lose my purpose and That is The believer that God is going to vindicate Old Testament or new when we don't understand why it's happening We don't understand how long it's going to last. We don't understand the why's and the wherefores.

We don't see an outcome or a purpose What do you look to I? Have content that has been entrusted to me and I'm going to be faithful to it It's it's kind of a two-way thing You know Paul said I know whom I have believed and I am persuaded that he's able to keep that which I've committed to him against that day Well, what God is looking for is people that he can commit

Truth to that will be faithful until that day We love because he first loved us. We are faithful because he is first faithful to us We can follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ who for the joy that was set before him Endured the cross and despised the shame and is now seated at the right hand of the Father Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you in due time all of these point to the same central truth We don't necessarily understand that the psalmist never explains. Why are these people persecuting? Why are they dreaming up fraudulent claims and charges? Why are they slandering? Why are they making life so miserable? Why are they finishing him in the land? They've almost driven him clear out of the land You could imagine that this might be the days of Absalom for David or this might be the days where You know the prophets were driven out of the land for trying to deliver God's Word and you think I'm doing what I'm supposed to Do and everything is just terrible There is a time to look at Why you're here and it is for the content it is for what we have allowed God to pour into us that's the wine skin, that's the bottle and Even if the room is full of smoke, even if the area is surrounded by fire You're not a broken wine skin.

He doesn't say I've become like a cracked wine skin. I've become like a trampled wine skin I've become like an old Torn wine skin. He says I'm in the smoke But he's still got his contents and that's the reason that he can claim Audience before God and say how many days before you fulfill your word and it's a legitimate prayer and God will answer it and there will be vindication and there will be justification there will be a writing of these wrongs and a settling of scores and a Balancing of accounts by God because he's got the Yod hand.

He's got the Yod hand of power and We've got the supplicating cuff hand and if we extend our hand toward God's hand That power is going to be exercised on our behalf. That is the word that has been spoken that's its content and it has been spoken by the God who can make it come to pass and Ultimately when the horizontal starts going in an extremely negative direction we Circle the wagons and focus on the vertical and this is what Job did Though he slay me yet will I trust him and Though skin worms eat through my flesh. I know that I will stand on the last day and with my eyes I will see the Redeemer that I know lives.

I know my Redeemer lives and I will see him boils notwithstanding loss of my entire family except for my Unhelpful wife notwithstanding There is an inalienable Unchangeable truth. I have a Redeemer and he's alive and I will see him. I Know that Skin worms can eat me.

I'm still going to be there That's what the cough section is describing for the psalmist in in more fulsome words But this is what believers do the simplest way to put it is When the going gets tough spiritually the spiritually tough get going and you go to the rock Turn to the rock don't forget the rock from whence you were hewn and the pit from which you were digged you go back to the source who he is and what he says, that's our sustaining strength and The rest of it is just gonna have to go you can say Lord How long is it going to be till all the rest of this gets resolved? But I hold to your statutes look at all the affirmations. He makes in the midst of this Just as he has said in earlier sections. He says I hope in your word.

I do not forget your statutes. I Do not forsake your precepts and I will keep the testimony of your mouth that never changes for the psalmist and It can't change for us you can look at famous examples of people for whom circumstance was a death blow to their faith at least their formal faith and people have become famously former Christians former professors former Advocates Because there was one too many straws and they didn't know this truth and they didn't cling to this truth. They didn't understand It's not the strength of the wineskin it is the quality of what's inside that's what makes you great That's what keeps you whole in the fire.

It's only the smoke That touches you. Well That brings us to the Lamed section and one of the most famous Statements in all of Scripture forever. Oh Lord.

Your word is settled in heaven your faithfulness endures to all generations you establish the earth and it abides and this follows remember the strength of the Yod section and the confidence in God and it's going to be followed here in the Lamed section by an equally bright and positive theme and that's what encircles this time of questioning and time of need and time of stress and genuine extremity I'm finished But he's really not Because as much as has been done to the old bottle It's still got its contents and it's going to live to celebrate the Lamed section, which we'll see next time We'll be skipping next week because I'll be out of town, but we'll come back and pick up our study of Psalm 119 two weeks from tonight Look forward to whatever it is that we'll see as a blast from the past next week But we'll close here in a word of prayer father. Thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the power and the example of faithful believers that have gone before us who have endured adversity who have fought through affliction and persecution and Have remained faithful and have had their faith and their trust in you vindicated Over and over again.

We pray that we can be reminded of these truths in our own times of trial Which will inevitably come Jesus promised us that in this world. We would have tribulation but he encouraged us that there is Overcoming to be had by Availing ourselves of your presence and your power trusting in your word We pray that these things will be a comfort and an encouragement to each of us when the need presses on us and that we can Be a credit and a reflection of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray these things in his name.

Amen