

## **Psalms 19-08-29b**

And we're ready now to continue our study in Psalm 119. The big idea in this section that comes to the fore is that as pressure from people increases, so does our focus on God and his word. And the more near and imminent the darkness that these people love and dwell in and are trying to impose on us, the more firmly and intensively we look to God and await an answer from his word, looking at his statutes, looking at his testimonies, looking at the issues that he brings before us in his word and what he says, Devar and Amar.

So with that all under the auspices of the letter Koph, which talk about time, it's a perspective. These things can only take place during the time that we are on this earth, during the time that we're under the sun, this day will soon be over and looking at it in the sense of temporality and temporariness, if you will, it gives us perspective because we've already seen in the preceding section that God's righteousness is eternal, God's word is eternal, God's love is eternal. And these things are restricted to the day where people and opposers and those who forget God's law have some sort of temporary prevalence, but it's not for long.

And we keep our eyes on the eternal. And as Paul puts it later on, this momentary light affliction is working for us an eternal weight of glory. It's a momentary light affliction, it's working for us an eternal weight of glory.

Light things, heavy things. You're worried about what's light, you're worried about what lasts and can't be eaten up or stolen. So as you come to the central idea here in the chiasm, which is verse 148, where in your English, it says, "My eyes are awake through the night watches that I may meditate on your word." This is not advocating loss of sleep, although the Lord would go out by himself at night to pray and to reflect on his relationship with the father and his mission and so on.

But what this is actually talking about is making a priority. You get there ahead of time. And so, and this has been wrestled, if you get a bunch of parallel translations and look at this in English, you'll see that they've handled it all different ways.

And they generally settle on, well, I'm awake through the night and I'm rising before the dawn. This is keeping me up at night. And honestly, when you think about Peter, when they put him in prison in the book of Acts and the angel had to kick him awake to release him, the bars and chains and everything dropped away.

And he basically has to wake him up. He's sleeping soundly. He's not troubled.

He's not nervous. He's not worrying. And where before a slave girl asking him a few questions at the fire by the temple was enough to send him into a panic and he's cursing and swearing and denying the Lord.

And what a transformation there is with a man that has the power of the Holy Spirit and has the

words of Christ in his soul. He's sleeping right through it. He's untroubled.

And so this is not saying, well, I'm up all night. I'm just worrying and fretting and concerned. What it says is, I am crying out.

I am directing my appeal to God. And I am looking at the darkness that is settling in. I see that there is an impending attack.

There's an impending crisis. The sun is setting and it's gonna be the night watches, but I'm there ahead of it. I'm not waiting till I'm in the midst of it and saying, oh God save.

I see it coming and I say, Lord, prepare me. I will keep your statutes. I will keep your testimonies.

I will hope in your word. Tell me what to do and I will do it. Give me guidance and I will follow it.

I'm looking for that eternal righteousness and that everlasting goodness that I just talked about in the preceding sections. That's what I'm after. I know that this testing is for a purpose.

These people have been allowed the whole sway for a temporary space. You think about the Lord Jesus and the 40 days of testing in the wilderness. He goes out to be tested by the devil and the devil is allowed to approach him and allowed to tempt him.

And the Lord Jesus knows that this is for a purpose and there is good that will come of it. And it is only for a space of time. He's not gonna continue to test him for three and a half years.

He's got 40 days and Jesus knows it's coming. What do you think Jesus did for the first 39 days before the devil comes on the 40th day to test him? He did these things. He's thinking about the testimonies.

He's thinking about the statutes. He's thinking about God's word. And he knows that this time of testing is coming and he's preparing himself and asking for God's strength and God's guidance.

So the center of the chiasm here is my eyes are alert to the night watches that are coming. These periods of time that are gonna be dark. I started looking at this when it was still twilight.

And I got there ahead of time. I anticipated, I expected. I got there ahead of it and I'm already making my appeal.

I'm not in panic prayer mode. I'm in planning ahead and being ready mode. When you know that there is a time of stress coming, you know you're gonna be in a situation, you plan in advance.

Take the calm before the storm for preparation. Batten down the hatches. Look to God, look to his statutes, testimonies, his words, what he has made an issue of and what he has said.

That's what the psalmist says. So now as we come back out on the other side, he says, hear my voice according to your chesed. Anytime you see loving kindness in the new King James, that's chesed.

This is God's loyal love, his grace. Hear my voice according to your loving kindness. Oh Lord, revive me according to your justice.

Well, we know that every line here starts with Kof. And so Kol, Q-O-L is the word that means voice or sound in Hebrew. And so this is Koli, my voice.

My voice here. And this is Shama. And this means to heed.

This is not just to register a sound. This is to hear, it says in the lexicon, to hear with attention or interest. Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.

I'm paying attention. It's not just cacophony. And there is the idea of listening with the idea of consent or agreement.

Shama means to hear and heed, or to hear and sympathize and be of like mind with the speaker. Shama is a positive cooperation with the speaker. So he says, hear my voice, oh Lord, and hear it with sympathy.

And heed my call because I am looking to you for that aid. So my voice, hear. And then according to it, this is Kof.

Remember the hand of power, the Kof. We had Yod that was the little hand and Kof. Yod is the 10th letter, Kof is the 11th letter.

And this is the hand of strength. And it says, according to, like, or as, your grace, your loving kindness, oh Lord. And this is God's covenant name, the Tetragrammaton, Y-H-W-H, Yod-Heh-Wau-Heh, Yahweh, oh Lord.

And now we have another Kof word, another Kof conjunction. According to your Mishpat, according to your justice. And then the last word in the verse is revive me.

And this is Chai, and it literally means enliven me. It doesn't necessarily mean revive. If you say revive, it means you died and you were resuscitated.

Revive us again, it sounds like we died, we're dead, and we need new life, but this is infuse me with life. I'm not necessarily dead. It's not so much revive, but this is enliven me.

You know, you can have a conversation that's kind of dragging and isn't very interesting. And then suddenly a new topic comes up or somebody says something interesting and it enlivens the conversation, gives it energy, gives it purpose and interest and effectiveness. That's what Chai means, to energize with life.

So my voice heed, oh Lord, according to your loving kindness, according to your justice, energize me, enliven me, give me strength, courage, wherewithal to meet the challenge. Sun is setting, darkness is coming. I see it, I want to be ready for it.

And I'm looking to you for the resources. Now, once again, revive me or enliven me or energize me is another PAIL. He says, really give me the strength, give me the life force necessary to meet the challenge.

He doesn't say remove it. He doesn't even say rescue me out of it. He says, give me the life force, the energy, the strength according to your justice.

Now, how confident are we that we can pray with this particular qualifier? Hear my voice according to your grace, enliven me according to your justice. Lord, I'm depending on your grace to hear and heed my call. And I am asking for enlivenment, energy, energizing according to your justice.

Well, is it just, is God going to judge us worthy of enlivening, of energizing, of giving sustaining force and power? What has he said already in the Psalm? I will keep your statutes. I will keep your testimonies. I hope in your word.

I am getting there ahead of time, knowing that these night watches are coming so that I can reflect on your word. I want to reflect on your word even before it gets here. I want to prepare myself.

I want to be steeled and have my defenses ready and my path charted before it all gets here and hits me. And sometimes it's not so easy to think in the midst of the storm. You have to have made your preparation ahead of time.

So revive me, it says in your New King James, according to your justice. Is it going to be just? Is God going to say, this is the right thing for me to do, to help this person? We have to have positioned ourselves to receive God's grace, right? We have to be qualified. If it's going to come to us according to God's justice, you can't be apathetic, indifferent, lazy, unprepared, and then just fling out a call to God to send down a life raft.

He says, give me energy and strength to meet this according to your justice. Can we pray confidently for God to treat us according to his justice? You've got to know some things and apply some things and you have to have already availed yourself of some things to pray that, right? So this is what we want to do. We want to be prepared and have done that so that we can say, Lord, I'm appealing to your fairness, your justice.

This is the right thing for you to do for me because why? I have availed myself of your cleansing grace, right? I have my head in the right space. I have my heart in the right condition to receive your just mercy. That's verse 149.

And you'll notice that it corresponds in the chiasm to verse 147. It says, I rise before the

dawning, but I'm anticipating the twilight and I am hoping in your word. Based on that, I'm expecting you to revive me according to your justice.

Now in verse 150, he says, here's a little detail on the source of the opposition. They draw near, they approach, and this is hearing the footsteps behind you like Asahel chasing Abner. They draw near, Karvu, Karbu, the ones who follow after.

So the pursuers are getting closer. So it literally, if you look at this, it says they draw near who pursue or follow after or are close to and associated with wickedness. There's lots of different words in Hebrew that reflect wickedness.

You have Raah, which is evil, and you have others that mean destruction and things like that. This is Zimah, Z-I-M-A-H, and this is schemes. This is evil plans, just creating mischief.

It's translated evil device in some cases. It's also used for incest, adultery, idolatry, harlotry. This is covenant breaking.

This is evil that is really improper because it is a violation of statutes. It is a violation of norms. This is behavior that doesn't pass under any semblance of righteousness or justice.

So it's in chastity, incest, licentiousness, adultery, idolatry, harlotry. It's a pattern of wickedness. It is a practice of evil purpose.

These things are not just episodes. They are pattern behaviors. And so these who pursue that, who prosecute it, are drawing near.

You get the idea that it's kind of like the Pharisees and the chief priests and elders of the people who kept plotting. As early as Matthew chapter 10, they're taking counsel together how they can destroy Jesus. Remember that? You're not even halfway through the gospel of Matthew and they are figuring out how they can destroy him.

And this is a pattern. And that's why he's gonna go on to pronounce the woes, scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites, woe to you. Here's what you do.

Well, these are the ones who are drawing near to the psalmist. And he says, from your Torah, they are distant. They are removed.

They are separate. There is a gulf between them and your law. They're nowhere near it.

They're certainly not adhering to it. So they're drawing near to the psalmist. They're drawing near to God's man or God's woman here.

And the closer they get, the further they are from God's law, following after wickedness. And if you look at this, it corresponds to verse 146. I cry out to you, save me, and I will keep your testimonies.

You see that in the chiasm coming back out. This is the B and B prime section here. And so the reason he's saying, save me, and I'm crying out to you is because these pursuers, this is the darkness.

This is the twilight. This is the impending. The closer they get, the darker everything looks.

And I don't see anything impeding them. I don't see anything to stop them. So Lord, hear my voice.

Then in verse 151, remember he says they are drawing near, karav, those who follow after this evil scheming and planning. Well, you have the very same verb again. We had, I cry out to you in verse 145 and I cry out to you in verse 146.

We had, I anticipate or I am looking in advance at in verse 147 and verse 148. So now in verse 150 and in verse 151, you have the same verb again, which is this karav. But they draw near in verse 150 and in verse 151, it's you are near, oh Lord.

Near are you yourself. The ata pronoun is here. So you yourself, oh Lord, are near.

And all your commandments are truth. All of your mitzvot are emet, truth. So the psalmist has a choice.

He can look at the drawing near of the pattern evil people, or he can look at the nearness of the Lord. And this is what he chooses to turn his attention to. They are drawing near, but you are near, oh Lord.

And your commandments are truth. And again, why is he crying out in verse 145? I cry out with my whole heart. Hear me, oh Lord.

I will keep your statutes. You are near, oh Lord. And all your commandments are truth.

You put 145 and 151 together and they're complimentary. Now we have the coda in verse 152, which is gonna help to restate the theme in verse 148. My eyes anticipate the periods of time that are coming, these dark times, so that I can reflect on your word, meditate on it, make it the object of concentration.

Now in verse 152, concerning your testimonies, I have known from long ago, you founded them forever. This takes you to the past, the present, and into the future. And it starts with the, of old I have known.

They put it in the second line here in your English, but in Hebrew, it says, kedem, which is a long time ago, antiquity. It literally means the East. East is where things, it's where the sun rises.

And so he says, you know, the sun is setting, it's twilight and it's getting dark, but back when the sun was rising, that's how long I've known your testimonies. I started early. So it comes to mean from the earliest time, but from the time of the sunrise, I have known your testimonies.

You're the witness of your deeds. And this is edut, once again, with maim in front of it. And maim as a preposition means from.

So from the dawn, from the rising, from the East, from of old, I have known things from your testimonies. And then you have key, which is the preposition standing all by itself. And it normally means because.

Sometimes it can be translated surely. But you have key laolam because from old times, from forever, you have established them. And this means to lay a foundation, to fix, to establish, to put something in place where it can't be moved.

So I knew them from long ago and they haven't changed. They're going to be the same forever. Kind of like in the New Testament, where it says Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Talks about God with whom is no shadow of turning, no shifting. These are reliable. They don't change.

You can always take God's testimonies as a reliable source of strength and guidance. Well, that is the Kof section. And you can see that the darkness that comes from human opposition, evil people is getting nearer.

The picture of the sun setting and the picture of the people approaching. And what does he counter it with in every line? I'm crying out. I will keep your statutes.

I cry out. I keep your testimonies. I am anticipating this dark time that's coming.

I hope in your word. My eyes see these periods coming and I meditate on your word. Hear my voice according to your grace.

Enliven me according to your justice. And you can't pray that unless you've already availed yourself of cleansing grace, confessed your sins. You actually have and know the word of God and you're relying on it.

You come before God, as it says in Hebrews, let us come boldly before the throne of grace because of the cleansing work of Christ, because of the standing that we have in him. We have far more even than they had in the Old Testament to confidently approach God and make this kind of request. They draw near who are practitioners of vilest wickedness.

They are far from your law, nowhere near it. And this draws the contrast. Lord, who are you going to favor? Who are you going to strengthen? Who are you going to give the victory? These who are far from your law or me when I'm calling out to you and I'm relying on these things.

We want to be the kind of people who can come to God when these occasions come and boldly claim aid. And you can be sure that God is going to answer why. Concerning your testimonies, I've known them a long time and they hold true.

They've been established and fixed and they're never going to change. And I am in line for the same kind of grace to help in time of need that is reflected in those testimonies. So it's all about testing in time.

Koph, the sun on the horizon. Sometimes it's rising, but in this particular stanza here, the sun is setting and dark times are coming. But I hope in your word.

Well, that brings us to Resh. And as I said, Resh is really close to Rosh, which is the head or the first. The setting of the sun, Koph, is the least.

But remember the last shall be first. And you have Koph and now you have Resh. And what started out least is going to be first.

So first, top, beginning. It can also mean authority. If you're the head and not the tail, you're going to be in charge and not an underling.

Beginning in verse 153, consider my affliction and deliver me for I do not forget your law. You can see the continuity of the theme here. It's unbroken from the Koph section.

Consider my affliction and deliver me for I do not forget your law. Plead my cause and redeem me. Revive me according to your word.

Sound familiar? Expect we're going to have some similar vocabulary here. Revive me according to your word. Salvation is far from the wicked for they do not seek your statutes.

He just got through saying they are far from your law. They do not seek your statutes. Great are your tender mercies, O Lord.

Revive me according to your judgments. Same thing again. Chai-ni, enliven me, energize me in verse 156.

Many are my persecutors and my enemies, yet I do not turn from your testimonies. It's those testimonies that I have known of old in verse 152. These two, there's never any two stanzas more closely linked here than Koph and Resh.

The tail and the head, the setting of the sun, and the dawning of the day when dominance comes. I see the treacherous and am disgusted because they do not keep your word. They do not seek your statutes we saw earlier.

They are far from your law. Verse 159, consider how I love your precepts. Revive me, O Lord, according to your keshed, according to your loving kindness.

The entirety of your word is truth and every one of your righteous judgments is forever. Easy to see the unity of these two sections. It's an unbroken thought, very complimentary.

Well, we begin in verse 153. Of course, every one of these is going to start with the letter R,

Resh. And he says, consider my affliction.

And this is the verb that means to look at. This is ra-a. Remember I told you ra is evil when it has an ion in it.

When it has an aleph in it, it means to see or to look at. And that's what you have here. R-A-A-H, ra-a is the verb.

And this is an imperative mood. This is the psalmist telling God, look at my affliction. It says consider, but it just literally means see it, look at it, consider it, perceive it, discern it.

And this is affliction in the sense of lack. So sometimes it's translated poverty, misery. And deliver me.

This is not from shav or shua in the sense of salvation type deliverance. This verb is kalatz, C-H-A-L-A-T-Z. K-A-L-A-T-Z.

And this means to draw out, to remove from the problem. It has the idea of withdraw. So there is a time to say, get me out of here.

It can mean to pull or tear out. It can mean to rescue or deliver in the sense of separation from the problem. Now there's two ways to separate one thing from another.

You can either hold one thing still and tear the other thing away, or you can hold the second thing still and remove the first thing away. But this is withdraw in the sense of separate. So look at my problem here, my affliction, and separate me from it or separate it from me because me is the suffix here, separate me.

Get me distant from this because ki, just like we saw before, Zizkaf, Yod, ki, because your law, I do not forget. I do not ignore. Look at my situation, deliver me out of it, withdraw me from it because I am somebody who does not forget your law.

This is why you can appeal to God's justice. You're not looking to God as some sort of solution in extremis. The next verse, verse 154 says in your English, plead my cause and redeem me.

And this is the verb that means to have a court case. This is justice. The noun form of this, reave, is to have a contention.

It means strife, but this was used for a legal case. So when he says plead my cause, this is a good English translation because it's like a legal pleading. This is to contend for something on the basis of what is right and legal and just.

So reave is what it says here. Make a formal complaint, contend. And then you have the noun form right after that.

So reave, case my case, plead my pleading and go ale me. I know that my go ale lives, Job says,

and I will see him Boaz as Ruth's redeemer, kinsman, redeemer, go ale. Well, this is the same idea here.

This is the verb from which that comes. So take my case to court and plead it and redeem me. Act the part of my kinsman to or for what you have said, Amar, and it's got Lamed in front of it, to or for what you have said, according to your word or for your word, enliven me.

And once again, you had the very same thing, kai ni, kai, energize me. Take up my case and plead it and redeem me. Pull me out of this mess.

Justify me as my redeemer. According to your word, enliven me. That's verse 154.

Then you have salvation is far from the wicked for they do not seek your statutes. Well, the word that starts with R here is rachok, which means far, far from the criminals, far from the guilty. Rasha here is the Hebrew, R-A-S-H-A, and it's the evil A. And it's got Mame in front of it, which means from, far from the wicked is Yeshua.

Far from the wicked is deliverance, Yeshua. But this is almost exactly Jesus' name. His name is salvation.

His name is deliverance or deliverer. Far from the wicked is Yeshua, deliverance, because kai, your statutes, and this is chok, your statutes, they do not seek. And this means seek in the sense of rely on, resort to, look for, and rely upon.

Seek in the sense of inquiring and looking to for aid. Now, this brings us to the heart of the psalm here in verse 156. Remember the, not the psalm, but the section of the psalm here.

Three verses in, then you have the thematic statement in verse 156. Great are your tender mercies, O Lord. Revive me according to your judgments.

We're gonna see this kai request that we saw in the last section. We're gonna see it three times in this section. Energize me, enliven me, grant me life.

This verse begins with the word for tender mercies, which is racham, R-A-C-H-A-M. And it's actual meaning is the womb, the innermost part of a woman. And it comes to mean figuratively compassion.

So the kind of compassion that a mother has for her infant child, the incredible tender mercy and concern. It's emblematic, it's universal. Everybody recognizes a mother's love for her baby and her fierce defense of it in time of difficulty.

Well, that's racham. So he says, your tender mercy, your tender mercies, since it's a plural here, are great. And this is Rav, which is the Rav Shaka was the great leader, the great ruler.

So they are great, they are multiplied. Your tender mercies are multiplied, O Lord. According to your justice, with very same phrase we had before, according to your justice, revive me.

According to your justice. Remember when we had that in verse 149, it's the identical phrase, according to your justice, according to your mishpat, energize me, give me life. Many are my persecutors and my enemies, yet I do not turn from your testimonies.

And the same word we had in the preceding verb that says God's tender mercies are multiplied. Well, that word starts this verse. Ravim, multiplied, numerous, are my persecutors.

And the word here is radaf. These are the ones, earlier we said they were pursuing wickedness, here they're pursuing me. We saw those who follow after wickedness in verse 150.

Well, now they're following after me. So many are my pursuers and my enemies. And this literally means those who oppress.

It starts out meaning, Tsar, T-S-A-R, has the idea of something that is tight or narrow. So dire straits, great distress because of pressure. And so those who put pressure on me might be a good, colloquial translation here.

Those who pursue me and put pressure on me. They're coming after me and they're giving me a really hard time. Be a colloquial translation.

And there is no conjunction here. He says, many are my pursuers and those who give me a hard time from your testimonies. This is a dude again, with maim in front of it.

From your testimonies, I do not turn. And this is turn in the sense of to stretch, to stretch away. Even though they're oppressing me, I don't get stretched away from.

I'm not pulled away from your testimonies. It says I do not turn, but this is not really the word for turn. There's a really good word for turn in Hebrew.

Turn ye at my reproof, why will ye die, O house of Israel? The idea of repentance in turning. That's not the word here. This is to be stretched out or extended or perverted or bent like a bow and turned aside because you've been pulled away.

I am not pulled away from your testimonies. Remember the dedication in verse 152 concerning your testimonies. In verse 146, I keep your testimonies.

All of this concentration on God's testimonies, I'm not gonna let myself be pulled away from them. That's the idea. Well, we're right in the middle of the race section and we're out of time tonight, but what's the upshot here? We are all going to face testing and this is manifestly people testing.

This is caused by people who are faithless and in practice are godless, even if they are believers. And they are pulling us away. They are taking the light away and making things dark.

They are pursuing, they are harassing. They are trying to gain mastery over us. What is the constant resort of the believer? To the law and to the testimony.

To the law and to the testimony. I will not be pulled away. And we go to God and say, this is where my hope is.

As the darkness comes, this is where my meditation is. This is where my reflection is. And I am expecting to gain from it your answer.

When I cry out, I expect the answer to be there in those testimonies, in that word. And what is the result? Life, high, energy, strength, perseverance. Life is gonna overcome these who walk in the ways of death.

Light is gonna overcome darkness. When God looked at darkness in Genesis chapter one, he said, let there be light and there was light. That's what we're looking for.

That's our resort in times of people testing these people. But you've got to be in line for God's justice. You have to be qualified to make this appeal.

So what are our steps? When you see it coming, you get a sense that all is not well. Most of us have been in this situation. There's something people aren't telling me.

And I'm beginning to see more and more by way of hostility. What do we do? Square ourselves away, appeal to God's justice and his grace. Look to his word and wait for that strength, that high life that the psalmist appeals to four different times here.

That's where the strength comes from. The power of God comes into the life of the believer through God's spirit and God's word. That's the answer in times of people testing.

Well, we'll try to finish up this section and move into the final pair of letters next time. But let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you that we have not been left as orphans when the Lord Jesus went to your throne and took his seat at your right hand.

He sent us the Holy Spirit. We have the full revelation, the testimonies, the statutes, the ordinances, your law, what you have done and what you have said. We pray that as we reflect on this portion of your word, that God, the Holy Spirit will enliven our hearts and help us to see clearly where we can claim your promises.

We can claim the pattern of your action on behalf of your people in times past and not be victimized by those who would persecute us, those who would pursue us, those who would afflict us and torment us, but we expect victory, we expect your grace, we expect your sustaining power in times of oppression by those who are far from your law. We pray that we will be encouraged and can be those who reflect your glory even as we see the crooked and perverse generation in which we live. All of society drifts farther and farther from your standards and from your law, but we want to be those who represent it and who stand for it and who are strengthened in the struggle.

We pray all these things in Jesus' name, amen.