

The Disciplines of a Godly Life: Meditation Psalm 119: "The Statutes" **Using the Divine Plans to Build the Ultimate Life. Afflictions: What, When, and Why?**

This morning we all share something in common – the painful problem of afflictions.

Affliction – Job said it was unavoidable, Paul said expect it as part of God's plan, and Jesus said don't fear I won't take it away just go with you through it!

Listen carefully and mark your Bibles with me. This one lesson you learn this morning may impact you all the rest of your life.

This morning we are looking at pains and problems, trials and troubles, and afflictions and adversities. What they are and why they come. And when they do come – how to respond.

The Christian life will sometimes be painful and full of problems. To get an idea of the scope of affliction just interview a few characters of the Bible. Does following the Lord have a price attached?

Ask Abel, his blood still cries from the earth where it splashed as a wicked brother murdered him in the first religious war. Abel was a man of simple faith and Cain the murderer was a man of human achievement.

Or you may wish to listen to Enoch about how painfully hard it was to walk all alone with God when the whole world wasn't. Again you might hear the voice of Noah rising above the hostile crowd who pressured and pestered him for 120 years as he obeyed God even when no one else in the world listened, believed or even cared. The Christian life will sometimes be painful and full of problems.

Scriptures are filled with the painful troubles that follow God's saints. Abraham had to leave all his loved ones and culture behind, to follow God. He wandered in the desert and lived in a tent awaiting a son whom it never seemed was going to come. And then he nearly had to kill that son of promise as an offering to God. Jacob wrestled and was crippled, Joseph fled sin and yet God let him get falsely accused, chained and injured. Dinah was a modest young woman yet was kidnapped and raped while in the family tree of the Messiah. Being in God's family

doesn't mean a life of leisure. The Christian life will sometimes be painful and full of problems.

Moses chose to follow God and lost everything, was hunted as a criminal, mocked by his own people, belittled by his wife and nearly stoned to death by the rebellious people of God. David, the man after God's own heart was betrayed by friends, pursued by foes, wracked with depression, attacked by his own wife, nearly murdered by his father-in-law and hunted like an animal. Later David would be chased out of town by his own son, usurped for the throne by another as life long friends deserted him for a rival kingdom led by his eldest son. All that while writing some of the sweetest portions of God's Word and singing the songs of highest worship to God. The Christian life will sometimes be painful and full of problems.

Following David come prophets who are unheeded, mocked and killed. They weep and go on without a single visible sign that anyone is listening. They are dragged off by enemy armies, thrown in wretched, muddy pits by their own people and one is eventually sawn in half by an angry king. Standing alone these mouthpieces for the Lord are faithful but by all visible signs, failures. The Christian life will sometimes be painful and full of problems.

The New Testament follows the same pattern. The greatest man ever born until Jesus is mocked, imprisoned, forgotten and then silenced by beheading in a dark dungeon as a party favor for a drunken, iniquitous go-go dancer's mother. The Owner of the Universe visits His own and they receive Him not. Instead they revile and mock Him, call Him a drunken, illegitimate, demonized fake. They try to stone Him, push Him off steep hills and interrupt His ministry. Finally after infiltrating the very inner circle of His earthly family His enemies set up a kidnapping murder plan that works and the Lamb of God is slain for the very sinful ones that killed Him. The Christian life will sometimes be painful and full of problems.

After the Crucifixion things only continue to deteriorate. The apostles are imprisoned, roughed up, beaten and harassed nearly 50 times in the book of Acts alone. And those are only the recorded incidents, doubtlessly there were many more. In the end all of the apostolic band are hunted down and either crucified, beheaded, shot through with arrows or skinned alive. Only one survives his execution attempt. John is boiled in oil and lives to go on for Jesus in exile on a barren prison colony island called Patmos. There he writes the last Word from God that promises only more of the same to the end of the world. The Christian life will sometimes be painful and full of problems.

God has written a code, a program, a set of plans that operates to guide our daily lives as humans. Remember last week we started on that 3rd word:

- **STATUTES – 22X (2706) *When His Word is filling our lives we are* Using the **Divine Plans** or specs to build the Ultimate Life. CHUKKIM, *from chak, to mark, trace out, describe, and***

ordain; because they *mark out* our way describe the line of conduct we are to pursue and *order* or *ordain* what we are to observe. "*Statutes*" is a noun derived from the trade of the stone-mason. God wants to chisel His words upon our minds. They are thus the unchangeable words of the eternal God.

- In Psalm 119 this word occurs twenty-two times: verses 5, 8, 12, 16, 23, 26, 33, 48, 54, 64, 68, 71, 80, 83, 112, 117, 118, 124, 135, 145, 155, 171. Divine Plans that contains God's specifications for life!

Remember last week in Psalm 119:71?

TEACH ME YOUR PLANS -- Psalm 119:71 It is good for me that I have been afflicted, That I may learn Your statutes. **WE ARE GOING TO SPEND A TIME LEARNING THIS ONE. GOD HAS PLANS TO WORK IN OUR LIVES THROUGH AFFLICTION.**

To get started learning about affliction lets trace it through the 119th Psalm. Go with me back to Psalm 119.50 and mark with me a complete lesson on affliction. Remember if there are seven of something in God's Word it may be a way that He engineered for us a complete look at a special topic or area. So with these verses, a complete lesson from the Lord as our Divine Teacher as he traces how He will use afflictions as a part of His Divine Plans to build our lives into a masterpiece for His glory.

Here they are in Psalm 119 – v. 50, v. 67, v. 71, v. 75, v. 92, v. 107, and v. 153.

Remember this morning that affliction in our lives is much like the fires of Daniel 3 that the three Hebrew boys were made to enter. That fiery furnace has a powerful lesson. We remember if we read carefully the account, that the fire only burned away that which hindered them from walking with the Lord, as they were in the fiery furnace! So in our lives affliction burns away what hinders our walk!

What is Affliction? Mentioned 37x in the Old Testament affliction takes at least 7 forms noted below:

1. **Affliction is** the ill treatment Hagar got from her jealous and vengeful boss Sarai. Genesis 16:11 And the Angel of the Lord said to her: "Behold, you are with child, And you shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, Because the Lord has heard your affliction.
2. **Affliction is** the lack of love that Leah got from her husband Jacob. Genesis 29:32 So Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben; for she said, "The Lord has surely looked on my affliction. Now therefore, my husband will love me."
3. **Affliction is** the lost wages and broken promises Jacob got from his employer and father-in-law Laban. Genesis 31:36 Then Jacob was angry and rebuked Laban, and Jacob answered and said to Laban: "What is my trespass? What is my sin, that you have so hotly pursued me?"

4. **Affliction is** the hatred, jealousy, and betrayal that Joseph experienced from his family, and his employers – as well as the neglect and broken promises of his friends. Genesis 41:52 And the name of the second he called Ephraim: “For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.”
5. **Affliction is** the underpayment and overwork of the Hebrews by unkind and evil masters. Exodus 3:7 And the Lord said: “I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows.
6. **Affliction is** the pain Hannah endured because of her inability to have children, and the added insensitivity and cruelty of her family members to her pain. 1 Samuel 1:10 And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed to the Lord and wept in anguish.
7. **Affliction is** the unkind words, slander, accusations, and insults thrown upon David by his adversary Shimei. 2 Samuel 16:12 It may be that the Lord will look on my affliction, and that the Lord will repay me with good for his cursing this day.”

AFFLICTION: is described in Psalm 119 by two words; the first *onee* (6040) seems to portray an emotional state of misery as an affliction; the second word *anah* (6031) seems to portray a physical affliction of being bowed down or squished beneath a physical load.

1. **Only God's Word can really help us in afflictions – cards, visits, gifts, activities all can only offer temporary relief through distraction or amusement. Psalm 119:50** This is my comfort in my affliction (6040 emotional), for **YOUR WORD (Reading Divine Word to find and follow God's Will for my life 565)** has given me life.
2. **A consistent life is built by afflictions. God uses afflictions to pull us back and keep us on His path for our lives. Often we only call when we need something – so He gives us reason to call. Psalm 119:67** Before I was afflicted (6031 physical) I went astray, But now I keep **YOUR WORD (Reading Divine Word to find and follow God's Will for my life 565)**
3. **There are truths and lessons we only can learn in the furnace of trouble. And remember in the fiery furnace of Daniel 3, only the things that kept them from walking properly were burned away! So affliction scrapes away what is not part of God's plans for our lives – people, possessions, positions, securities... Psalm 119:71** It is good for me that I have been afflicted (6031 physical), That I may learn **YOUR STATUTES (Following the Divine Plans to build Life the way God intends it to be).**
4. **God's unchanging faithfulness is learned best in affliction. Afflictions remind us that everything the Lord does is good, right, and the best thing there could be for us. Psalm 119:75** I know, O Lord, that **Your judgments (Building Life upon God's Unchanging Decisions)** are right, And that in faithfulness You have afflicted (6031 physical) me.

5. **The onset of troubles mark the beginning of a personal tutorial with our Divine Teacher. Affliction is an opportunity to “delight” () in Him or for us to “perish () in our troubles. Psalm 119:92 Unless YOUR LAW (Receiving Divine Instruction from the Divine Teacher that is perfect). had been my delight, I would then have perished in my affliction (6040 emotional).**
6. **Affliction usually increases as we get older. But God's Word will always renew, refresh, and revive. Psalm 119:107 I am afflicted (6031 physical) very much; Revive me, O Lord, according to YOUR WORD (Hearing the Divine Voice walking us through life 1697).**
7. **Affliction comes with a promise from God for a special delivery. He comes right o us – with everything we need. Psalm 119:153 Consider my affliction (6040 emotional), and deliver me, For I do not forget YOUR LAW (Receiving Divine Instruction from the Divine Teacher that is perfect).**