

“Contrasts”  
Psalm 119:113-120  
(Preached at Trinity, February 24, 2013)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. The earth is filled with seemingly unending contrasts. We have winter/summer, hot/cold. There are mountains and valleys. With every adjective there seems to be an opposing antonym. Fast/slow, high/low, winner/loser, hard/soft, rough/smooth, short/tall, loud/silent, and on and on.
2. The Bible sets before us many great moral contrasts: evil/good, wicked/ righteous, darkness/light, damned/redeemed, lost/saved, broad way/narrow way.
3. The nature of Christianity is that of unending contrasts. We stand as lights in this world of darkness. We are separated from all that is unholy.
4. Such is the nature of this 15<sup>th</sup> stanza of Psalm 119. It sets before us several contrasts for God’s people.  
This 15<sup>th</sup> stanza is designated by the Hebrew letter **ש** – samech.

I. We are to stand in contrast to the double-minded – **Verse 113-115**

A. **Verse 113** describes the person who has divided interests

1. The word translated “*vain* thoughts” means “divided” or “half-hearted”
2. Most translations translate it “double-minded”  
**Verse 113 NAS** - "I hate those who are double-minded"
3. People always pursue that which has gained their affections. They will give the greatest energy to that which is their greatest desire.  
They may join a church and sing in the choir but they will always make choices towards their chief desires.
4. Double-minded people are always half-hearted  
**1 Kings 18:21 KJV** - "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD *be* God, follow him: but if Baal, *then* follow him. And the people answered him not a word."  
**James 1:8 KJV** - "A double minded man *is* unstable in all his ways."

B. David stated a disdain for those who were double-minded

**Psalm 119:113 NAU** - "I hate those who are double-minded"

1. He describes them as “evildoers” in **verse 115** – Why?
  - a. Because although they profess to be followers of God their hearts continually lead them to sin  
**2 Timothy 3:1-2 KJV** - "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. <sup>2</sup> For men shall be lovers of their own selves"  
**2 Timothy 3:4-5 KJV** - "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; <sup>5</sup> Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

- b. Because this is God's opinion of the double-minded.  
 God hates the double-minded  
**Matthew 15:8 KJV** - "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me."  
**Luke 14:33-35 KJV** - "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.  
<sup>34</sup> Salt *is* good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? <sup>35</sup> It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; *but* men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."
2. David wanted nothing to do with them  
**Psalm 119:115 KJV** - "Depart from me, ye evildoers"  
**Psalm 6:8 KJV** - "Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity"
- C. Notice the contrast  
**Psalm 119:113-114 KJV** - "I hate *vain* thoughts: but thy law do I love.  
 Thou *art* my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word."  
**Psalm 119:115 KJV** - "Depart from me, ye evildoers: for I will keep the commandments of my God."
1. God's people are a separate people
2. We must be single-minded. This is the testimony of all who follow God.  
 This must always be the heart of God's people – to maintain separation from all that is unholy.  
**2 Corinthians 6:17 KJV** - "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*"
3. Look to the testimony of Daniel:  
**Daniel 6:7 KJV** - "All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions."  
**Daniel 6:10 KJV** - "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime."
4. Listen to the testimony of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego  
**Daniel 3:5-6 KJV** - "*That* at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up: <sup>6</sup> And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."  
**Daniel 3:12-13 KJV** - "There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. <sup>13</sup> Then Nebuchadnezzar in *his* rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king."

**Daniel 3:16-18 KJV** - "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we *are* not careful to answer thee in this matter. <sup>17</sup> If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver *us* out of thine hand, O king. <sup>18</sup> But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

4. May we resolve this day, we will follow our God no matter what with single-minded devotion.

**Joshua 24:15 KJV** - "choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

## II. We are to stand in contrast with those who have no hope – **Verse 116-117**

- A. The people of this world are characterized by fear
1. They fear financial ruin. They fear sickness and disease. They fear other men. Most of all they fear death.
  2. They have no hope because their gods are powerless. Their gods are the gods of vain prestige and human recognition, worldly wealth, physical beauty. But none of these things give hope.
- B. In contrast, the Christian has a firm hope
1. During severe trial we are most vulnerable to compromise.
    - a. When friends and family pressure us the temptation is to compromise
    - b. When sickness strikes we are tempted to put our trust in doctors and medicine
    - c. During financial distress we are tempted to look to our own resources for our hope.
  2. But we quickly remember the source of our confidence.
    - a. The Word of God lifts us up and strengthens our true hope  
**Psalm 119:116 KJV** - "Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope."  
**Psalm 119:117 KJV** - "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe: and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually."
    - b. If God holds us up we are safe. He will not fail us. He has given us His sure Word and His steadfast promises.
    - c. God's Word always keeps our eyes fixed upon our Christ. It is a sure foundation that will not fail.  
**Luke 6:47-49 KJV** - " Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: <sup>48</sup> He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. <sup>49</sup> But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great."

- c. We are not among those who build upon the shifting sand of human reason. We are built upon Christ and rest upon His Word. Spurgeon: “We may be ashamed of our thoughts, and our words, and our deeds for they spring from ourselves; but we never shall be ashamed of our hope, for that springs from the Lord our God.”

### III. We are to stand in contrast with those who are condemned – Verse 118-120

- A. The wicked are under God’s judgment
  - 1. David describes their condemnation  
**Psalm 119:118 KJV** - "Thou hast trodden down all them that err from thy statutes"  
**Psalm 119:119 KJV** - "Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth *like* dross"
  - 2. David describes them as rejected and cast aside like dross  
 Dross was the impurities that rose to the top when metal was heated and melted. It was skimmed off and discarded.
  - 3. The verb form signifies a completed action. They were already condemned. Although the wicked may appear to be most favored and blessed in this life they are under God’s condemnation. Paul described them as storing up wrath.  
**Romans 2:5 NAU** - "But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,"
  - 4. And notice their sin. "for their deceit *is* falsehood."  
 We tend to diminish some sins as insignificant. We even soften this sin by calling it “prudence” or “wisdom” or “diplomacy” or even “a little white lie.” The Bible classifies lying and deceit as wickedness.
- B. Again, David contrasts himself with the wicked.  
**Psalm 119:119 KJV** - "Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth *like* dross: therefore I love thy testimonies."  
  - 1. David describes them as “the wicked of the earth” and himself as one who loves God’s Law. He would have no part in their wickedness.  
**Psalm 119:115 KJV** - "Depart from me, ye evildoers"
  - 2. Do you see the great contrast here?  
 In **Verse 117** David prays that God will hold him up.  
 In **Verse 118** he contrasts this with the wicked who are cast down.
- C. The condemnation of the wicked served as a warning to David  
**Psalm 119:120 KJV** - "My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments."  
  - 1. Although we have confidence in the atoning blood of Christ and have a lively hope, we never lose sight of the infinite holiness of God. His judgments upon sin are terrible.  
**Hebrews 10:31 KJV** - "*It is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

2. Spurgeon: "God's words of judgment are solemn, and his deeds of judgment are terrible; they may well make us afraid. At the thought of the Judge of all, — his piercing eye, his books of record, his day of assize, and the operations of his justice, — we may well cry for cleansed thoughts, and hearts, and ways, lest his judgments should light on us. When we see the great Refiner separating the precious from the vile, we may well feel a godly fear, lest we should be put away by him, and left to be trodden under his feet."
3. Edward Payson – "True religion consists in a proper mixture of fear of God, and of hope in his mercy; and wherever either of these is entirely wanting, there can be no true religion. God has joined these things, and we ought by no means to put them asunder. He cannot take pleasure in those who fear him with a slavish fear, without hoping in his mercy, because they seem to consider him as a cruel and tyrannical being, who has no mercy or goodness in his nature; and, besides, they implicitly charge him with falsehood, by refusing to believe and hope in his invitations and offers of mercy. On the other hand, he cannot be pleased with those who pretend to hope in his mercy without fearing him; for they insult him by supposing that there is nothing in him which ought to be feared; and, in addition to this, they make him a liar, by disbelieving his awful threatenings denounced against sinners, and call in question his authority, by refusing to obey him. Those only who both fear him and hope in his mercy, give him the honour that is due to his name."
4. Thoughts of hell and judgment make us all the more grateful for the wondrous mercy of God.  
*Henry Martyn, 1781-1812.* – "In prayer, in the evening I had such near and terrific views of God's judgments upon sinners in hell, that my flesh trembled for fear of them...I flew trembling to Jesus Christ as if the flames were taking hold of me: Oh! Christ will indeed save me or else I perish."
5. And a view to the judgment of God makes us fearful all the more for the souls of the lost and more diligent in warning them of the wrath to come.

#### Conclusion:

1. Do you see these contrasts in your own life?
  - That you have an unreserved, uncompromising, single-minded commitment to Christ.
  - That you trust in God's Word. You rejoice in its promises and rest upon its truth.
  - That you are not among those who are condemned. You have no fellowship with them but are among them who serve the living God
2. There are infinite differences between the Christian and the unbeliever. And the difference finds itself in a single source. The Grace of God.  
**Ephesians 2:4-9 KJV** - "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, <sup>5</sup> Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) <sup>6</sup> And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus: <sup>7</sup> That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: <sup>9</sup> Not of works, lest any man should boast."