

**Psalm 119: 121-125; “Be surety for Your servant”, A Message delivered at the  
Premier Estates Nursing Home, by Pastor Paul Rendall  
on the afternoon of April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015.**

The Psalmist David here prays to God concerning the oppression of spirit that he feels; his soul being afflicted by the words and actions of men who regarded God's law as void; empty of authority and significance to them. He was zealous for the honor and glory of God, and because of this, men who were proud were seeking to bring him down from his position as king. He prays, “Do not leave me to my oppressors.” “Be surety for your servant for good.” There is perhaps nothing more disturbing to a Christian than to have an oppressed spirit, a spirit oppressed by people around them who are attempting to live in such a way that they show by their words and actions that they will not submit to God or His Word. Sometimes they are even people who profess to know God and are thinking that they are serving God through their oppression of a true believer. What is the true believer in Jesus Christ to do? It is apparent from these verses that they are to pray and to make supplication to God, and that God will give them the grace to learn practically how to glorify Him in such situations that have brought this oppression.

We can see from these verses that in terms of the cause of righteousness that David was doing justice and righteousness. And so we need to consider this truth in relation to ourselves, that when this is the case that it is not always God's will to deliver the faithful Christian from his oppressors immediately. This does not mean that we cease to pray and cry to God for that deliverance, but God has important things to teach every oppressed Christian; things which are very valuable. And since we have a whole Bible to draw from let me name 3 of the things which the Christian who is oppressed, learns about this great salvation which is ours, by looking by faith to God. 1st - The Christian who is oppressed, when they pray, will learn much about God becoming their surety through Jesus Christ our Lord. 2nd - The Christian who is oppressed, when they pray, will learn much about God's mercy and will be instructed in how to be holy in such a situation.

**1st - The Christian who is oppressed, when they pray, will learn much about God becoming their surety through Jesus Christ our Lord.** (Verses 121-122)

David cries out to God concerning his oppressors, “Do not leave me to them; do not let them oppress me.” What does it mean to be oppressed anyway? The Dictionary says that when someone is an oppressor they are trying, “to control or rule in a harsh or cruel way, and they cause others to feel burdened in their spirit.” I want to read to you from Deuteronomy 26: 6, because here it is that you will find an example of great oppression affecting a whole nation of people. It says, “But the Egyptians mistreated us, afflicted us, and laid hard bondage on us.” “Then we cried out to the Lord God of our fathers, and the Lord heard our voice and looked on our oppression.” “So the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, with great terror and with signs and wonders.” “He has brought us to this place and has given us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey....” You will remember, from the book of Exodus, how it was Pharaoh the king of Egypt who was the oppressor of God's people. And all of the Egyptians were doing his bidding. His bidding was to oppress the people of Israel. But here we find the Lord becoming the surety for his people Israel. The children of Israel were in bondage there in Egypt. They needed the Lord to undertake on their behalf so that they would be delivered from this oppression. It was oppression to be forced to work so rigorously. The Egyptian taskmasters forced them to work very hard, even having to make bricks without straw. It was very oppressive to their spirits to know that they were slaves and could not worship and live to freely work and serve the Lord in accordance with His Word.

Oppression of spirit is when a person feels forced by others to think a certain way, and when they are forced to do things which they would not freely choose to do for themselves. When the children of Israel cried to God because of these oppressions, the Lord listened to them. The Lord did undertake to become their surety. This was in accordance with the covenant that He had made with them. The Lord does undertake to be surety for all those who are in covenant with Him. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and He acknowledged them. A surety is one who is willing to undertake to pay off the debts which someone who is unfaithful or too poor to pay, cannot pay. So let us now consider how the Lord Jesus Christ became surety for us. the Lord Jesus was willing to stand spiritual surety for strangers; for sinners such as you and I. He was willing to pay the spiritual debt that you and I owe, the debt which we owe because of sin. He thought the matter through very thoroughly.

Let me read for you, Hebrews Chapter 7, verse 17. I want you to see how the Lord Jesus' standing surety is linked to the New Covenant. Here the writer of Hebrews is comparing the Levitical priesthood with the priesthood of Melchizedek and he says, "For He testifies: (that is the writer of this Psalm 110 testifies) 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.'" "For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God." "And inasmuch as He was not made priest without an oath (for they have become priests without an oath by Him who said to Him: 'The Lord has sworn and will not relent, 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek', by so much more has Jesus become a surety of a better covenant." You can see here that there was a real lack in the sufficiency of the Old Covenant law to save men from their bondage and oppression because of sin. The defect was not in God or in the things that he commanded be done by the Old Testament priesthood. That which was lacking was a perfect priest to bring the acceptable sacrifice. There had to be a New and Better Covenant made by God by means of a different Priesthood in order that people might be saved and be made perfect in righteousness, and have all of their many sins entirely and completely forgiven. "The law made nothing perfect."

We in the New Covenant, it says, "have a better hope" of the realization of these things in Jesus Christ our Lord. We draw near to God through Him, realizing the merits of His body broken on the cross and His blood shed on behalf of many for the remission of sins. Jesus is the surety or the guarantee of these things. It is not that no one was saved under the Old Covenant law. Those who were saved were saved not by trusting in their priests and the sacrifices that they made, for themselves and for the sins of the people. They were saved by looking in faith at what those sacrifices represented, which was yet to come. They were saved by believing that their offering of sacrifices was pointing to the Christ who would come and die for sinners and for sins. They, in faith, were looking forward to the time when the Lamb of God would come who would be the fulfillment of all these sacrifices which they made, knowing that the blood of bulls and goats and rams and lambs could never of themselves take away one sin. It was only a pictorial image and representation of what was needed, which was the shedding of blood. The blood of our high priest is most precious. The high-priest who ministers perfectly on behalf of fallen sinners, whether they are Jew or Gentile, must be of a greater priesthood and the sacrifice must be of infinite and eternal value in the sight of Almighty God.

This is what the Lord Jesus was, this is what He became, and this is what He did. Do you now see the greatness of what Christ has done for you? Therefore you should trust in Him in any situation of oppression. He who was willing to become your surety suffered greatly because of your sins and disobedience. But He has satisfied your sin-debt and paid the price. This is why you can pray about being delivered from the oppression of men against you, and find an

answer waiting. This is how you can come to know the reality of Christ's peace and grace coming to you at such a time as this.

**Now 2ndly - We need to understand that the Christian who is oppressed, when they will pray, will learn much about God's mercy and will be instructed in how to be holy in such a situation.** (Verses 123-125)

Verse 123 says, "My eyes fail from seeking Your salvation and Your righteous word." "Deal with Your servant according to Your mercy, and teach me Your statutes." When he speaks of his eyes failing from seeking God's salvation, he is not speaking of conversion to Christ or understanding how he might know God. He already knows God personally. King David is rather speaking of the salvation which would come to him when he was delivered from the oppression of men. He wanted more than anything else to be able to do the right thing in relation to these men who were oppressing him so that God would be glorified in everything that he did and said in relation to them in the sight of God and in the sight of the subjects in his kingdom. By the way, this is often the greatest test of the sanctification of any New Testament Christian as well. We must ask ourselves the question this morning as we are coming to the Lord's table once again: Am I acting and reacting in a just and righteous way before God to the various situations of difficulty and distress which He has permitted to come to me? Am I acting and reacting in a just and righteous way before other people as I live my life with a spirit that has felt deeply distressed and oppressed because of the way that some person or some people have treated me in the past?

What am I to do about this? Well, the Psalmist David sets us a good example. He didn't become angry and indignant about it. He didn't return evil for their evil. He didn't fight fire with fire. He realized that ultimately that he was in that situation because God was sovereign and that He had permitted it for his good. A person who believes in God's sovereignty will always pray first, before they ever act in important matters, so David prays in verse 124, "Deal with Your servant according to Your mercy." That is how we are to view ourselves in a situation like this; as God's servant. What would You have me to do, O God? How would you have me to speak and to conduct myself? What do you want me to learn from this, O Lord? What are you trying to teach me practically from Your Word? "Deal with me in mercy, teach me Your statutes, for I am Your servant." I stand here waiting to do Your bidding. I know that I must have Your salvation, O Lord, to be delivered from the oppression of man. It know that I must have your help to be delivered from the oppression which my spirit feels because of what some person or people have done for me. Let me ask you if you are proceeding in this way in the situations that the Lord leads you into? There is nothing wrong with asking God to deliver you from oppressive people or from oppression of spirit. But when you ask Him for this mercy will you not also ask him to teach you his statutes as you go through it? That is being God's servant. That is how you bring glory to Him. May the Lord be with each of you to help you in difficult times.