

**Psalm 119: 161-168; “I Rejoice at Your Word”, A Scripture Reading prepared
for the Afternoon Worship Service on January 6th, 2019,
by Pastor Paul Rendall.**

It says here in verse 161 that “Princes persecuted David without a cause”, and so it was. King Saul had every reason not only to reward David for his slaying the giant Goliath, but to hold him in high esteem because he (David) had delivered all Israel from becoming captives and subjects of the Philistines. Instead, when Saul heard the women come out singing – “Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten-thousands, he became envious of David and sought to take his life, without a cause, on numerous occasions. His persecution of David was stupidly senseless, and the way that David withstood the temptation to discouragement and not to stretch out his hand against the Lord’s anointed was to stand in awe of God’s word. He rejoiced at God’s word as one who find great treasure. He hated and abhorred lying and so he would not speak against Saul, but rather reasoned with him face to face. He would praise God seven times a day because of his trusting in God’s righteous judgments on his behalf. He came to know the reality of even having great peace in such circumstances because he loved God’s law and meditated upon it day and night so that he would have good success and so that he would not stumble into sin.

He hoped for the salvation which God would bring to him, that it would come quickly, but in the meantime he would do God’s commandments and his soul would observe God’s testimonies because he loved them exceedingly. He loved them because he loved God with all of his heart. But it will good if we can remember the principle of truth that I have given to you before, concerning this Psalm; that there is a double reference in thinking about who is speaking in these verses; one to David’s heart and his experience and the other to the Lord Jesus’ heart and His experience. It is true that David was a type of our Lord Jesus Christ in many ways. He was a prophet and a king of Israel, and so was the Lord Jesus; only in a much greater sense. David suffered persecutions from Saul, and from many under Saul’s service. He suffered persecutions even from his own son Absalom who was so selfishly ambitious that he wanted to kill his own father to gain the throne for himself. But the Lord Jesus Christ suffered just as great persecutions, and if we look into the matter more carefully, much greater persecutions than David did because He was the perfect and pure Son of God who truly was hated without a cause and persecuted without a cause.

As regards verse 1, we can say that the heart of both men stood in awe of God’s word. Both of these men said the words of these verses in their hearts as a prayer directed to God, but we must understand that the faith of David and his ability to do and say all of these things rested upon the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the One and the only One who did all of these things perfectly, and suffered all the persecutions and opposition and cruel punishments of the Pharisees, scribes, and rulers of Israel, with a perfect heart towards God and men. David did well, but he did well based on the grace which Christ would purchase for him on the cross, and the grace which was applied preventively and retroactively based upon the fact that God knew that His Son would obey Him fully and perfectly, and that He would satisfy His justice in relation to all sinners everywhere in all generations. Let us see preeminently the greatness and glory of the Lord Jesus in these verses, and be thankful for David’s good example, who by Christ’s grace, was able to do all the things which are mentioned here in these verses because God had for Christ’s sake, given him a loyal heart. Christ obeyed God perfectly so that David could also learn obedience through the things that he suffered. David was becoming more like Christ, He was becoming conformed to the image of Christ through His sufferings. It will be the same for each of us who believes in Christ. Let us see that our obedience rests upon Christ’s.