

Psalm 119

week 10, v. 116-117

Let's do a quick review of where we've come from in this section beginning in verse 113. The Psalmist states his personal reaction to a mind that is not fully devoted to God, sin is prevalent around him and even fights within him. His choice is to love and follow God's commands. God is his protection and defense and he patiently places his hope, which is certain, in the fulfillment of God's word. Because of this he can firmly say to sin and those who entertain sin that they have no part in his life. In order to be fully devoted to God sin cannot reign in David's life. We now continue with the Psalmist's dependence and hope on the fulfillment of God's word.

What does it mean to sustain something or to be sustained?

sustain <camak> to bear up, establish, uphold

When you are sustained you are supplied with necessities and support. WordWeb. Think of the word sustenance. We need sustenance in order to live. According to Life Science we can go an average of 3-5 days without water before beginning to die and approximately 3-5 weeks without food. In the extreme cold without shelter we are only able to survive about three hours. We need shelter and nourishment in order to physically live. We need the sustenance of God's truths in order to live a life that is pleasing to Him.

Psalm 119:116 Sustain me according to Thy word, that I may live; and do not let me be ashamed of my hope.

Ps 37:17 For the arms of the wicked will be broken; but *the LORD sustains the righteous.*

Ps 37:24 When he falls, he shall not be hurled headlong; because *the LORD is the One who holds his hand.*

Ps 51:12 Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation, and sustain me with a willing spirit.

Ps 71:6 *By Thee I have been sustained from [my] birth; Thou art He who took me from my mother's womb; my praise is continually of Thee.*

Think about the above verse. **Can you look back upon your life and see God's protection and His direction even before you knew Him?**

Let's go back again to the beginning of this section of scripture. Ps 119:113-115.

Remember, David declares his hate for deception or hypocrisy and his love for God's word. He looks to God as his protection and defense as he patiently waits on God's promises. God's word gives him confidence to state he will have nothing to do with sin as he guards the commands of his God.

David continues to write about his dependence on God's truths. He knows God will uphold him according to His word. His life – both physically and spiritually depends upon God's grace. God is the One who sustains him. We can trust in God's promises.

Think! When we speak of something to come or tout the expectation of certain events – and they don't come to pass, we can look foolish to all those around us who were waiting for the fulfillment of our words. Things happen, plans change, people change. We are unable to control circumstances even though we may try. This will never happen with God! Speaking of His promises and the fulfillment of them is the only credibility we have.

Where does the world go for strength, for confirmation, to be nurtured, for support? What is the source of your sustenance?

But those that hope in God's word may be sure that the word will not fail them, and therefore their hope will not make them ashamed. Matthew Henry

Ps 41:12 As for me, Thou dost uphold me in my integrity, and Thou dost set me in Thy presence forever.

Ps 63:8 My soul clings to Thee; Thy right hand upholds me.

Isa 41:10 'Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'

Ps 25:2 O my God, in Thee I trust, Do not let me be ashamed; Do not let my enemies exult over me.

Ro 10:11 For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."

It is a sweet comfort that this great necessity of upholding is provided for in the word, and we have not to ask for it as for an uncovenanted mercy, but simply to plead for the fulfillment of a promise, saying, "Uphold me according to thy word." He who has given us eternal life hath in that gift secured to us all that is essential thereto, and as gracious upholding is one of the necessary things we may be sure that we shall have it. Treasury of David

Recognize that the Psalmist does not say uphold me so I can fulfill my dreams. It's all about God – His commands, His plans, His purpose for us. David says uphold me that I may live, and not be ashamed of my hope. Because God fulfills His promises to His children He is the One glorified. It's about living for Him!

Ps 119:117 Uphold me that I may be safe, that I may have regard for Thy statutes continually.

uphold me <ca'ad> to support (mostly figurative): comfort, establish, hold up, refresh self, strengthen, be upholden.

uphold: keep or maintain in unaltered condition; cause to remain or last; support against an opponent WordWeb

David understands he needs God's continual help in order to keep His commands. Without God he is weak. Think of the word distraction. A distraction causes mental turmoil, it takes away from the goal, it is an obstacle that diverts our focus, time and energy. Our Psalmist could so easily be distracted by the evil around him and the sin within him. *Can you relate to this struggle?* He has voiced this concern several times throughout his writings. His safety and security lies with God.

What are the distractions in your life? How do you fight against them? What is our example? Have you asked God to remove those distractions, to show you how to fight against them?

Ps 17:5 (KJV) Hold up my goings in thy paths, [that] my footsteps slip not.

Ps 71:6 By Thee I have been sustained from [my] birth; Thou art He who took me from my mother's womb; my praise is continually of Thee.

Ps 73:23-24 Nevertheless I am continually with Thee; Thou hast taken hold of my right hand. ²⁴ With Thy counsel Thou wilt guide me, and afterward receive me to glory.

Ps 139:11-12 If I say, "Surely the darkness will overwhelm me, And the light around me will be night," ¹² Even the darkness is not dark to Thee, And the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are alike [to Thee.]

Isa 41:10-13 'Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.' ¹¹ "Behold, all those who are angered at you will be shamed and dishonored; those who contend with you will be as nothing, and will perish. ¹² "You will seek those who quarrel with you, but will not find them, those

who war with you will be as nothing, and non-existent. ¹³ "For I am the LORD your God, who upholds your right hand, Who says to you, 'Do not fear, I will help you.'

We are saved by past grace, but we are not safe unless we receive present grace. The Psalmist had vowed to keep the Lord's commands, but here he pleads with the Lord to keep him: a very sensible course of procedure. Our version reads the word "uphold," and then "hold up;" and truly we need this blessing in every shape in which it can come, for in all manner of ways our adversaries seek to cast us down.

Up, up above the littleness in which I have lived too long, -- above the snares which have so often caught me, -- above the stumbling blocks upon which I have so often fallen, -- above the world, -- above myself, -- higher than I have ever reached yet, - - above the level of my own mortality: worthy of thee, -- worthy of the blood, with which I have been bought, -- nearer to heaven, -- nearer to thee, -- "hold thou me up." TOD

God's methods of holding his people up are many. Sometimes it is by the preacher's word, when the word comes fitly spoken to the heart and conscience. May God, in his infinite condescension, enable his servants in this church so to hold you up. Sometimes it is by the ordained means and sacraments which his grace commanded. Sometimes it is by the efficacy of the Holy Scriptures, when some passage in your own room strikes the mind, Just in season; or the stay of some sweet promise comes in sustaining to your spirit. Sometimes by the simple in working of the Holy Ghost in a man's own thoughts, as he will work "Uphold me with thy free Spirit." Sometimes by the ministration of angels, -- "They shall hold thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." Sometimes by putting you very low indeed, making you feel that the safe place is the valley. There is no elevation like the elevation of abasement. Sometimes by severe discipline to brace up the heart, and strengthen it, and make it independent of external things. Sometimes by heavy affliction, which is the grasp of his hand, that he may hold you tighter. Sometimes by putting into your heart to think the exact thing that you need, -- to pray the very prayer which he intends at the moment to grant. Sometimes by appearing to let you go, and forsake you, while at the same time -- like the Syro Phoenician woman -- he is giving you the wish to hold on that he may give you the more at the last. --James Vaughan, of Brighton, 1877. [ref Mt 15:21-28; Mr 7:24-30]

Think! Summarize the methods above. **How does God hold us up?**

His Word through Sermons, through **others**, through His **church**
personal **study, memorized** scripture

His Spirit reminders, thoughts, accessibly placed scripture

Adversity causing us to stay close to Him

Discipline stripping away that which is not important

Prayer

Why do we need God to hold us up? There is danger all over! Looking back just in this Psalm we've read about

115 – evildoers

113 – double-mindedness, vain thoughts, sin

110 – traps laid by the wicked

109 – continual threats.

107 – afflictions

Think about the physical picture of holding someone up rather than keeping them down. Sin keeps us down among the mire where we can easily become trapped. Think of holding a child who cannot swim up out of the water. We hold babies who are unable to support themselves. Without God we are defenseless against sin. **Do you depend upon God to hold you up out of the trappings of sin so you are able to follow His commands?**

Our challenge is to use all the resources available to us through each other, through the body of Christ, through involvement in ministry, through teaching, through personal study, and through prayer to glorify God as He fulfills His promises in each of us. Full dependence on Him will reap confidence in our salvation – what we live out now and what we look forward to in the future.

Application Questions

What does it mean to be sustained?

How does the Psalmist request that God sustain him?

Why does he request that God sustain him?

What condition does he request as the outcome of God's sustaining grace?

Go back to the beginning of these questions, personalize them and answer them.

Think of the things the world might go to for support or strength. How is this different than looking to God for support or strength?

In Psalm 119:117 why does David request that God uphold him?

Where is David's focus on his requests of God?

How would God have you apply these verses to your life this week?