

Women' s Bible Study
Session 8, Psalm 119:138

Several weeks ago we began the eighteenth section of Psalm 119 which states, *Righteous art Thou, O LORD, and upright are Thy judgments.*

- *God is righteous.*

His very character is righteous. God will not act outside of His character. Therefore He is the embodiment of all that is right and good. God represents perfect righteousness.

Ps 71:19 For Thy righteousness, O God, reaches to the heavens, Thou who hast done great things; O God, who is like Thee?

- *God's judgments are upright.*

Because God is righteous, His judgments are equitable. He sees everything exactly as it truly is. His judgment is without favoritism or deception. It is perfectly fair. There is no room for questioning or deliberation.

De 32:4 "The Rock! His work is perfect, for all His ways are just; a God of faithfulness and without injustice, righteous and upright is He.

The Hebrew letter that begins each of the eight verses in Psalm 119: 137- 144, is TZADDI which is translated 'purity'. Keep in mind the purity of God as we continue on to 138.

Ps 119:138 Thou hast commanded Thy testimonies in righteousness and exceeding faithfulness.

1. God has commanded His word to us.
2. God has commanded His word to us in righteousness.
3. God has commanded His word to us in exceeding faithfulness.

God has commanded His word to us. This means we have been given a charge or have been appointed to receive God's testimony. There is great responsibility on our part in accepting this gift. Imagine being entrusted with something that has great value. *What do you do with it? How do you treat it?*

To be given a charge means we have been assigned a duty, we have a responsibility or an obligation to do something. God's testimonies include all He has given to us in His word. The examples, the commands, the warnings, the encouragements, the judgments, the expectations, the hope - these are all God's witness to us of who He is and what we are to follow. This charge or command to His children is a treasure - not hidden to find as if hunting for something valuable and unseen - but written for us to understand with the help of His Spirit and practice in His strength.

A command from God is not a question, it is an order. His children are instructed to obey His commands. *De 13:4* "You shall follow the LORD your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him.

Consider who God is. The one and only true King. *Isa 44:6* "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides Me. When a king makes a decree to his subjects, there is no question whether it will be obeyed. In the same way, God's chosen are not to question or think that there is a choice in following His will.

Ps 51:5-6 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me. Behold, Thou dost desire truth in the innermost being, and in the hidden part Thou wilt make me know wisdom.

Ps 19:14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Thy sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer.

God has commanded His word to us in righteousness. God's character is absolutely one hundred percent morally right. There is not one once of wrong or sin or unjust way or thought or decree in God's being. Only God can claim absolute righteousness. And He has given His witness in all righteousness; meaning His word is right, it is pure, and it is equitable. *Is there any other who is able to state a testimony of unequivocal righteousness?*

God's righteousness demands our obedience. He is worthy of our praise. Praise is our offering up of ourselves to God. *Ro 12:1* I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, [which is] your spiritual service of worship. *What does this practically look like in our lives?* "We cannot confess God to be righteous unless we live uprightly and truly as he has commanded". 1599 Geneva Bible Notes

Consider. *How can our lives give glory to God?* In order to live a life that offers praise to an all-holy God, we need to know who He is and what He requires of us. Consider the steps we take to become good or proficient at something. It takes time and practice to acquire a skill. Action is required to gain knowledge of something and to develop a good understanding of it. *How strong is your desire to know God? What actions are you taking to improve your understanding of His word?*

Ps 119:138 also says that God has commanded His testimonies in exceeding faithfulness. God has commanded His testimonies in exceeding faithfulness. - They are firm, they are secure, they are truth, and they are steady.

Faithfulness from a perfect God is perfect faithfulness, something we are unfamiliar with in this world. Perfect faithfulness means we can depend on the word of God at all times, in all circumstances, to be right, to be available, and to be unwavering. *God's word does not change.*

Ps 19:7-9 The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. 8 The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. 9 the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether.

God's testimony is:

Perfect, it converts souls, it is faithful, it gives wisdom, it is right, it produces joy, it is pure, it enlightens, it is trustworthy, and it is altogether righteous.

*God, because He is gracious and merciful, has given to us an amazing valuable gift, His testimony - His word. We have a picture of who He is, of what He desires from us, of His comfort and His judgment, of His character and love. His word is a treasure to be held and used and pondered and studied. God's word contains the greatest love letters ever written. **Why?** Because His is a love that never ends. It always says the right thing, always does the right things, always understands perfectly, and is always at the ready for support and encouragement. God's children have been given a map. It is not a map we have to figure out by solving a riddle. There is no question that if we embrace Him and follow His word, treasure will be found.*

Everything that proceeds from God represents His perfect nature.

Jas 1:25 But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does.

Consider the previous scripture in Psalm 119. It makes a statement about the righteousness of God and His perfect judgments. God's righteousness is also seen in His testimonies and His faithfulness to carry out all He has said. **Is there anyone or anything that can make these claims with unabashed certainty? Consider.** *Have you ever thought you were okay, you did pretty well or were good enough?* The definition of perfection in *WordWeb* is "having no flaw or defect, being complete, pure, precisely accurate, and exact". Think of just one area - **How faithful are you to all that you say?**

De 4:8 "Or what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole law which I am setting before you today?"

God, as our heavenly Father, is faithful to His word. He is faithful to the blessings He has promised and He is faithful to the training of His children.

Ps 119:75 I know, O LORD, that Thy judgments are righteous, and that in faithfulness Thou hast afflicted me.

"All that which God hath testified in his word is right and truthful. It is righteous, and may be relied upon for the present; it is faithful, and may be trusted in for the future. About every portion of the inspired testimonies there is a divine authority,

they are issued and published by God's command, and they bear the impress of the royal style which carries omnipotence about it. Not only the precepts but the promises also are commanded of the Lord, and so are all the teachings of Scripture. It is not left to our choice whether we will accept them or no; they are issued by royal command, and are not to be questioned. **Their characteristic is that they are like the Lord who has proclaimed them, they are the essence of justice and the soul of truth.** God's word is righteous and cannot be impeached; it is faithful and cannot be questioned it is true from the beginning, and it will be true unto the end". *Treasury of David (emphasis mine)*

"The English translation gives the quality of the testimonies; the Hebrew gives that which is commanded; as if we might say, Thou hast enjoined righteousness to be thy testimonies, and truth exceedingly". --*John Stephen.*

The above quote refers to the way Ps 119:138 has been translated a bit differently in the English and Hebrew languages. Look at the translation in the KJV: Ps 119:138 Thy testimonies [that] thou hast commanded [are] righteous and very faithful. In either case, God commands in righteousness and faithfulness and His testimonies are both righteous and exceedingly faithful.

So when we consider who we are and realize we are before a perfect and faithful God, what is our response?

Ps 19:14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Thy sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer.

Thomas Scott says this of verse 138: "Thou hast commanded justice by thy testimonies, and truth especially,' (Old Version). This translation is as literal as that of our translation. — The law commands perfect righteousness; and even the gospel requires truth in the inward parts."

Ps 51:5-6 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me. Behold, Thou dost desire truth in the innermost being, and in the hidden part Thou wilt make me know wisdom.

Let's not overlook the strong description of faithfulness in Psalm 119:138. The word 'exceeding' precedes faithfulness. The KJV reads 'very faithful'.

Strong's Hebrew Dictionary defines this word as **vehemently, diligently, exceedingly, louder and louder, mightily, quickly and utterly.** Obviously this is a strong adjective and very descriptive of the behavior of faithfulness.

God's testimonies are exceedingly faithful! God's testimony is His witness to us of who He is, what He expects, what He has done and what He will do, all contained in the amazing package of His word, the Bible.

1Co 1:9 God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

1Th 5:24 Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.

La 3:22-23 The LORD'S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. 23 [They] are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness.

Ps 89:8 O LORD God of hosts, who is like Thee, O mighty LORD? Thy faithfulness also surrounds Thee.

Ps 89:33 "But I will not break off My lovingkindness from him, Nor deal falsely in My faithfulness.

2Ti 2:13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself.

Ps 36:5 Thy lovingkindness, O LORD, extends to the heavens, Thy faithfulness reaches to the skies.

Ps 119:90 Thy faithfulness continues throughout all generations; Thou didst establish the earth, and it stands.

We could go on and on with scriptures about God's faithfulness. Faithfulness is part of God's character. He is great in His faithfulness. He has established His faithfulness. There is nothing that compares with His faithfulness. His faithfulness never fails. God's faithfulness extends beyond boundaries and it will last forever. We see God's faithfulness in His works, we see it in His judgments, we see it in His promises and we see faithfulness in His forgiveness of sin. God is exceedingly faithful!

Are we exceedingly faithful to God's testimonies?

We are commanded to righteousness in our obedience to God's laws. If we are striving to be righteous and faithful to God, we will be careful to strive to observe all His commands. We will desire to take care to practice His statutes. We will choose to walk blamelessly in His ways and do what He says. We will call upon Him for perseverance and strength, and we will delight in His direction as we consider His truths constantly.

De 6:25 "And it will be righteousness for us if we are careful to observe all this commandment before the LORD our God, just as He commanded us.

Ro 10:5 For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness.

Lu 1:6 And they [Zacharias and his wife Elisabeth] were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord.

Ps 1:2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night.

We are to 'wear' righteousness. **Consider.** When we wear something or put on an item of clothing, it covers us. It protects us from the elements. It can be seen by everyone we come in contact with. Our 'clothing' says something about us. *What are you wearing, how do you prepare to stand against the elements, are you protected?*

Isa 11:5 Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, and faithfulness the belt about His waist.

Isa 59:17 And He put on righteousness like a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on His head; and He put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped Himself with zeal as a mantle.

Remember the definition of righteousness: purity, that which is right, equitable and just. As we strive to live in righteousness, our thoughts, actions and words will take on a character that is pure and holy in all circumstances. God's perfect word will be our manual for living, His Spirit, our encourager for remaining steadfast in reaching our goal.

What does it look like to be exceedingly faithful to God's testimonies?

This word, 'faithful' comes from the Hebrew word 'emwnah. It literally means firmness. It conveys the idea of security, being morally faithful, steady, and true.

Several questions pop into my mind as I write this definition. *Am I purposed to follow God? Am I resolute in my faithfulness to keep His truths? Do I remain firm in this conviction at all times? How steady is my walk with Christ?*

Mt 24:13 "But the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved.

Jas 1:12 Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which [the Lord] has promised to those who love Him.

Re 2:10 'Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

We are to be faithful with the truths God has entrusted to us. We are to be exceedingly faithful, even to the point of death. Faithfulness extends beyond just knowing and believing, it is doing. *Do we exhibit faithfulness in our service to God, in helping others? Are we faithful to declare His word? Are we faithful stewards of the people and things God has entrusted us with? Are we faithful in holding one another accountable to God's testimonies? Are we faithful in our work, in our speech, in the very smallest things? Not just a little faithful, or mostly faithful, but exceedingly faithful!*

Pr 28:20a A faithful man will abound with blessings,

Mt 25:23 "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'

God has commanded His testimonies in righteousness and exceeding faithfulness because He is perfect. **Matthew 5:48** says we are to be perfect. We are to strive towards that end.

Lord, thank you for your word. Thank you that You are righteous and faithful in all things. Help us to wear the clothing of righteousness and extreme faithfulness for You.