

Lesson 11: Psalm 119:81-88 – *Kaph*

Trusting in God and His Word During Persecution

<i>ESV</i>	<i>NKJV</i>	<i>NASB</i>	<i>NIV</i>	<i>NLT</i>
81 My soul longs for your salvation; I hope in your word.	81 My soul faints for Your salvation, But I hope in Your word.	81 My soul languishes for Your salvation; I wait for Your word.	81 My soul faints with longing for your salvation, but I have put my hope in your word.	81 I am worn out waiting for your rescue, but I have put my hope in your word.

81 My soul longs for Your deliverance (my complete salvation), but in the meantime, I put my hope and trust in Your word (promises).

Commentary:

My soul faints with longing for your salvation. (*NIV*) Deliverance, physical or spiritual. An immediate deliverance, not a future eschatological glorification.

My soul. “Not a spiritual aspect in distinction from the physical, nor the psalmist’s ‘inner’ being in distinction from his ‘outer’ being, but his very self as a living, conscious, personal being.” (*NIV Study Bible, footnote on Psalm 6:3, p. 791*)

Note the connection between “longing” and “hope.” Hope, trust, in the midst of longing.

A deep desire, a longing, for God to act on his behalf.

He was waiting for God to save him, waiting for His deliverance, His help.

But I have put my hope in your word. (*NIV*)

Hope. “To desire with expectation of obtainment or fulfillment; expect with confidence: trust.” (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*)

God and His Word are completely trustworthy.

God’s Word sustained him and gave him hope in his time of waiting and longing for God to act.

This should be especially true in times of persecution and affliction when we are especially in need of comfort and deliverance from despair, as seen in this section.

In times when it seems that God’s deliverance is slow in coming we must cling tenaciously to the promises of His Word.

“When you reach the end of your rope, tie a knot and hang on!” God’s Word is the “knot” at the end of our rope!

To hope in God’s Word is to hope in God Himself. The promises of His Word are His promises to us.

“In the midst of persecution and affliction the psalmist hopes in God’s Word.” (*Leupold, Exposition, p. 841*)

“Till the help comes, he fixes his hope on the Word in which God has promised to His children such help as may be needed by them.” (*Leupold, Exposition, p. 841*)

<p>Application: When I am in distress, it is time to turn to God and His Word. “Lord, thank You that I can put my trust and hope in You. Thank You for Your Word that gives me hope.”</p>				
<p>82 My eyes long for your promise; I ask, "When will you comfort me?"</p>	<p>82 My eyes fail from searching Your word, Saying, "When will You comfort me?"</p>	<p>82 My eyes fail with longing for Your word, While I say, "When will You comfort me?"</p>	<p>82 My eyes fail, looking for your promise; I say, "When will you comfort me?"</p>	<p>82 My eyes are straining to see your promises come true. When will you comfort me?</p>
<p>82 My eyes long (grow weary looking) for the fulfillment of Your promises; I ask, “When will You comfort me?”</p>				
<p>Commentary: My eyes fail, looking for your promise. (NIV) A figure of speech. Nevertheless, this gives the impression of the psalmist urgently searching God’s Word for some promise that will comfort him in his time of need. He turned to the Word of God for help. He poured over the Word of God. “In the vivid language of the OT the eyes are dimmed by failing strength... by grief (often associated with affliction... and by longings unsatisfied or hope deferred...)” (NIV Study Bible, footnote on Psalm 6:7, pp. 791-92) When will you comfort me? (NIV) He didn’t turn to God as a last resort; God was is <i>only</i> resort. God and His Word are a life preserver.</p>				
<p>Application: When you are in distress, find a promise in God’s Word and hang on to it for all you are worth!</p>				
<p>83 For I have become like a wineskin in the smoke, yet I have not forgotten your statutes.</p>	<p>83 For I have become like a wineskin in smoke, Yet I do not forget Your statutes.</p>	<p>83 Though I have become like a wineskin in the smoke, I do not forget Your statutes.</p>	<p>83 Though I am like a wineskin in the smoke, I do not forget your decrees.</p>	<p>83 I am shriveled like a wineskin in the smoke, but I have not forgotten to obey your decrees.</p>
<p>83 Although I am dry and shriveled up, cracking like a wineskin in the smoke, I do not forget Your decrees.</p>				
<p>Commentary: Though I am like a wineskin in the smoke. (NIV) A very graphic description of the effects of persecution. The outward circumstances were extremely difficult. God’s blessing and favor seemed far away. Nevertheless he clung to God’s Word. “Unused wineskins would be hung near the rafters of a room for storage. Hanging there for any length of time, they would become shrivelled and browned with smoke... The contrast with the second half of the verse suggests that this wineskin represents a forgotten object, the point being that, even though God seems to forget His servant, he on his part has not forgotten the statutes of the Lord to which he is obligated.” (Leupold, <i>Exposition</i>, p. 841) “...black, shriveled, of no further use” (Ryrie Study Bible footnote on Psalm 119:83, p. 914).</p>				

Fainting but hoping (vv. 81-83). His inner person was exhausted from longing for God to work. His eyes were strained from watching for some evidence of His presence (Lam 2:11). He felt like a dried-up wineskin that had been thrown aside as useless. However, he never gave up hope, for no matter how dark the hour, the future is our friend because Jesus is our Lord. "It is always too soon to quit" (V. Raymond Edman). (*The Bible Exposition Commentary: Old Testament* by Warren W. Wiersbe)

Application:

I, too, feel like a wineskin in the smoke—useless and forgotten. Not due to affliction, but because of my own sin. “O Lord, please restore spiritual life and usefulness to me as only You can do.”

It is never too late to return to the Lord and His Word.

84 How long must your servant endure? When will you judge those who persecute me?	84 How many are the days of Your servant? When will You execute judgment on those who persecute me?	84 How many are the days of Your servant? When will You execute judgment on those who persecute me?	84 How long must your servant wait? When will you punish my persecutors?	84 How long must I wait? When will you punish those who persecute me?
--	--	--	---	--

84 How long must I, Your servant, wait (endure, persevere)? When will You judge and punish those who persecute me?

Commentary:

How long must your servant wait? (NIV) “The literal rendering of 84a is: ‘How many are the days of Thy servant?’ The thought is: They are too few. The brevity of human life appears to be used as a plea for early help.” (Leupold, *Exposition*, p. 841)

When will you punish my persecutors? (NIV) He fully expected God to deal righteously and justly with his enemies. They would fully get what they deserved. He did not seek to personally take revenge against them.

Punish. “Lit. ‘effect justice upon’...” (NIV Study Bible, p. 918)

“He longs to see justice done, but he leaves the matter in the hands of the Just Judge of mankind.” (Leupold, *Exposition*, p. 841)

Application: I should not seek to take revenge but trust God to act in His time and in His way.

85 The insolent have dug pitfalls for me; they do not live according to your law.	85 The proud have dug pits for me, Which is not according to Your law.	85 The arrogant have dug pits for me, Men who are not in accord with Your law.	85 The arrogant dig pitfalls for me, contrary to your law.	85 These arrogant people who hate your instructions have dug deep pits to trap me.
--	---	---	---	---

85 The arrogant have dug pits (set traps) for me to fall into, men who do not live according to Your law.

Commentary:

The arrogant dig pitfalls for me, contrary to your law. (NIV) Contrast the arrogant and the righteous.

“Probably referring to slander—public accusations that the psalmist must be guilty of vile sins or he would not be suffering such affliction.”
(NIV Study Bible, p. 918)

Application: Don’t expect any good thing from evil people. Don’t put your trust or confidence in them.

86 All your commandments are sure; they persecute me with falsehood; help me!	86 All Your commandments are faithful; They persecute me wrongfully; Help me!	86 All Your commandments are faithful; They have persecuted me with a lie; help me!	86 All your commands are trustworthy; help me, for men persecute me without cause.	86 All your commands are trustworthy. Protect me from those who hunt me down without cause.
--	--	--	---	--

86 All Your commands are trustworthy and sure; please help me, for these men persecute me for no good reason!

Commentary:

All your commands are trustworthy. *(NIV)* “It is this delayed justice that apparently prompts the writer to remark that, though the words of the Lord are seemingly not being fulfilled immediately, yet ‘all [God’s] commandments are reliable.’” *(Leupold, Exposition, p. 841)*

Note the contrast between “the insolent” and God’s “commands.”

Application: “Thank You, Lord, that You and Your Word are absolutely trustworthy—worthy of my deepest trust. People have failed me; You never have!”

87 They have almost made an end of me on earth, but I have not forsaken your precepts.	87 They almost made an end of me on earth, But I did not forsake Your precepts.	87 They almost destroyed me on earth, But as for me, I did not forsake Your precepts.	87 They almost wiped me from the earth, but I have not forsaken your precepts.	87 They almost finished me off, but I refused to abandon your commandments.
---	--	--	---	--

87 They have almost wiped me from the face of the earth, but I refuse to forsake Your precepts.

Commentary:

They almost wiped me from the earth. *(NIV)* “‘Men had almost disposed of me in the earth.’ They would not stop short of murder if need seemed to require it.” *(Leupold, Exposition, p. 841)*

But I have not forsaken your precepts. Even in the face of death, the psalmist would not forsake God or His Word. Absolute loyalty.

Application: “Lord, I pray that, by Your grace and mercy, I will never forsake You or Your Word, regardless of what men may do to me.”

88 In your steadfast love give me life, that I may keep the testimonies of your mouth.	88 Revive me according to Your lovingkindness, So that I may keep the testimony of Your mouth.	88 Revive me according to Your lovingkindness, So that I may keep the testimony of Your mouth.	88 Preserve my life according to your love, and I will obey the statutes of your mouth.	88 In your unfailing love, spare my life; then I can continue to obey your laws.
---	---	---	--	---

88 In Your unfailing love for me, please revive me and give me life, so that I may obey the statutes that come from Your mouth.

Commentary:

Preserve my life according to your love. (NIV) Despite the difficulty of his circumstances, he was confident of God's love for him.

Prayer based on the character of God as revealed in the Word of God.

Steadfast love. Unfailing love.

I will obey the statutes of your mouth. (NIV) Our response to God's Word is our response to God Himself. If our hope is in God's Word, it is in God Himself. If we trust His commands, we trust Him. If we forsake His precepts, we forsake Him.

Obedience motivated by appreciation and gratitude for preservation.

...your love, and I will obey... Obedience motivated by appreciation and gratitude for God's love.

"Save me from my affliction and my persecutors, according to your promises, and I will obey your statutes." (NIV Study Bible, p. 918)

Application:

As I fulfill these commitments in response to God's Word, I believe that I will please and glorify the Lord. He, in turn, will bless me. I will be more Christlike.

Kaph

81 My soul longs for Your deliverance (my complete salvation), but in the meantime, I put my hope and trust in Your word (promises).

82 My eyes long (grow weary looking) for the fulfillment of Your promises; I ask, "When will You comfort me?"

83 Although I am dry and shriveled up, cracking like a wineskin in the smoke, I do not forget Your decrees.

84 How long must I, Your servant, wait (endure, persevere)? When will You judge and punish those who persecute me?

85 The arrogant have dug pits (set traps) for me to fall into, men who do not live according to Your law.

86 All Your commands are trustworthy and sure; please help me, for these men persecute me for no good reason!

87 They have almost wiped me from the face of the earth, but I refuse to forsake Your precepts.

88 In Your unfailing love for me, please revive me and give me life, so that I may obey the statutes that come from Your mouth.