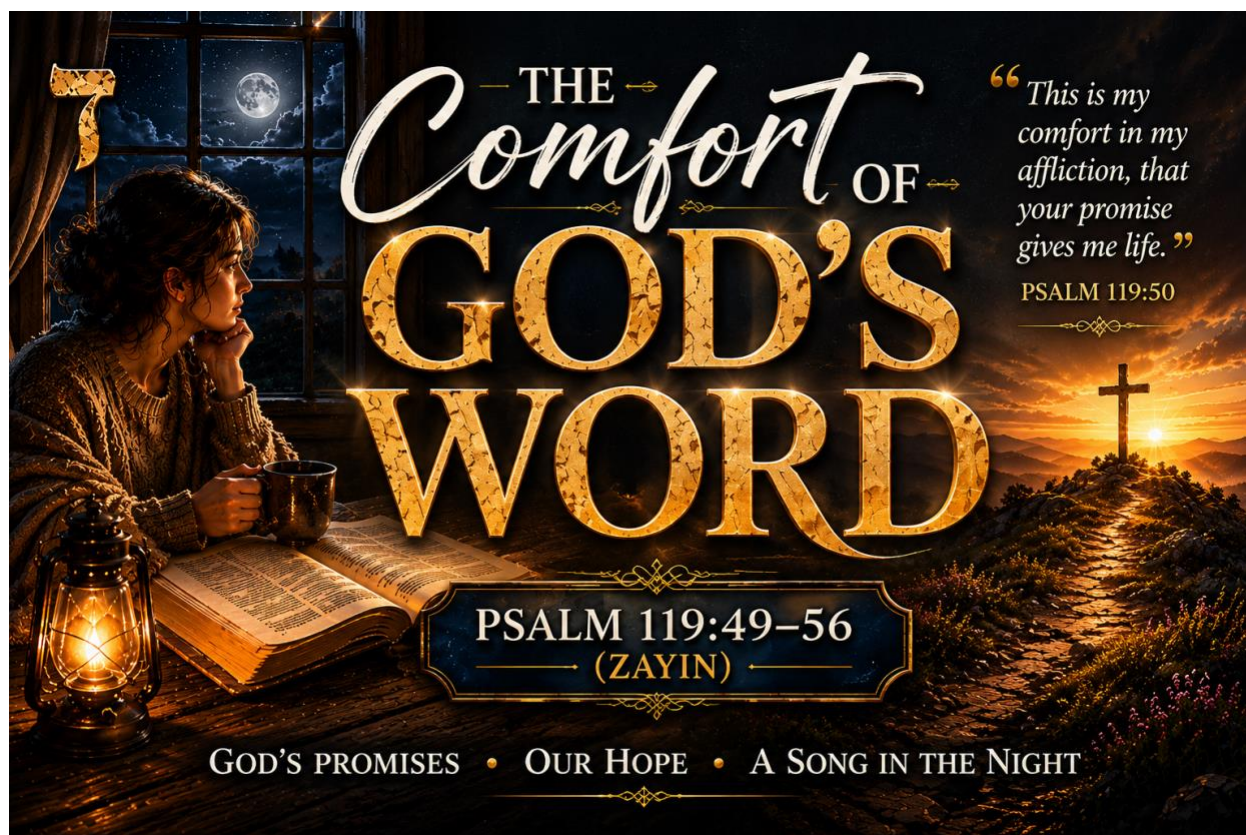




The Comfort of God's Word
Psalm 119:49-56
(Zayin)

Introduction: As we come to the seventh section of Psalm 119, we discover that the psalmist is still living in the real world.

- 1 - He has celebrated the blessed life of walking in God's ways.
- 2 - He has hidden God's Word in his heart.
- 3 - He has embraced the life of a pilgrim.
- 4 - He has found revival when his soul clung to the dust.
- 5 - He has prayed for a heart that is taught, inclined, and directed by God.
- 6 - He has discovered the freedom and confidence that come through obedience.

Yet none of these experiences have exempted him from suffering.

IMP: One of the great misconceptions of the Christian life is the belief that spiritual maturity somehow protects us from affliction. We sometimes assume that if we are walking closely with God, life should become easier. Psalm 119 teaches the opposite.

The closer we walk with God, the more we discover that we still live in a fallen world. We still experience disappointment, sickness, grief, criticism, loneliness, injustice, and loss.

- The difference is not that believers avoid affliction.
- The difference is where believers turn when affliction comes.

The psalmist teaches us that God's Word is not merely useful for ordinary days. God's Word becomes precious when the night is long, the burden is heavy, and the heart is weary.

The theme of this stanza is comfort.

- Not comfort through circumstances. Those may not change.
- Not comfort through distraction. Those are only temporary.
- Not comfort through escape. There aren't enough of those.
- Comfort through the promises of God.

Big Idea: God's promises do more than comfort us in affliction; they sustain our faith, shape our worship, and keep us walking with Him through the darkest nights.

First: God's Promises Sustain Hope in Affliction (vv. 49–50)

“Remember your word to your servant, in which you have made me hope. This is my comfort in my affliction, that your promise gives me life.”

a) The stanza begins with a prayer - *“Remember your word.”*

The psalmist is not suggesting that God has forgotten. Throughout Scripture, when God's people ask Him to remember, they are asking Him to act according to His covenant promises.

- When Noah was in the ark, God remembered Noah.
- When Israel was suffering in Egypt, God remembered His covenant with Abraham.
- When Hannah prayed for a child, God remembered Hannah.

To ask God to remember is to ask Him to be faithful to what He has already said.

Notice where the psalmist's hope rests.

- Not in a change of circumstances.
- Not in an improvement of conditions.
- Not in relief from suffering.

His hope rests in God's Word.

That is important because affliction often tempts us to place our hope in the wrong places.

We tell ourselves:

- “If this situation changes, I'll be okay.”
- “If this person changes, I'll be okay.”

- “If my health improves, I’ll be okay.”
- “If this burden is removed, I’ll be okay.”

The psalmist looks deeper. His confidence rests in something more stable than circumstances. It rests in the promises of God.

Notice the relationship between hope and comfort.

- Verse 49 speaks of hope.
- Verse 50 speaks of comfort.

Hope produces comfort because hope reminds us that the present moment is not the whole story.

- God has spoken.
- God has promised.

God has not abandoned His people.

The word “*affliction*” is broad. It can refer to suffering, adversity, hardship, oppression, or distress.

The psalmist does not specify the source because God’s people experience affliction in many forms.

- Sometimes affliction comes through illness.
- Sometimes through grief.
- Sometimes through financial pressure.
- Sometimes through betrayal.
- All through circumstances we never would have chosen.

Yet he says, “*Your promise gives me life.*”

The same God who spoke the universe into existence speaks life into weary hearts through His Word.

APP: Many of us can identify the source of our affliction immediately.

- A doctor’s report.
- A prodigal child.
- A strained marriage.
- A season of loneliness.
- A burden that refuses to leave.

The question is not whether affliction exists. The question is where we seek comfort.

The psalmist teaches us to bring our suffering to the promises of God.

Second: God's Truth Steadies Us When the World Opposes Us (vv. 51–52)

*“The insolent utterly deride me, but I do not turn away from your law.
When I think of your rules from of old, I take comfort, O LORD.”*

The suffering now becomes more specific. The psalmist is being mocked.

The word translated “*insolent*” refers to arrogant people. These are proud people who reject God’s authority and ridicule those who submit to it.

The psalmist is not merely suffering. He is suffering because of his commitment to God.

That has always been part of the pilgrim life.

- Noah was mocked.
- Jeremiah was mocked.
- The prophets were mocked.
- Jesus was mocked.
- The apostles were mocked.

Faithfulness to God has never guaranteed the approval of the world.

What is remarkable is the psalmist’s response - *“I do not turn away from your law.”*

- Affliction has not loosened his grip on God’s Word.
- Opposition has not changed his convictions.
- Mockery has not altered his allegiance.

One of the great tests of faith is whether we continue to trust God’s Word when doing so becomes costly.

Anyone can profess faith when faith is applauded. The real test comes when faith is criticized.

The psalmist survives because he remembers God’s rules “from of old.”

- He looks backward.
- He remembers God’s faithfulness across generations.
- He remembers what God has done.
- He remembers how God has acted.
- He remembers that God has never failed His people.

APP: The world changes constantly.

- Public opinion changes.

- Cultural values change.
- Social pressures change.

God's truth does not.

The believer finds stability by anchoring his life in what God has already revealed.

The God who sustained Abraham, Moses, David, Daniel, Peter, and Paul is the same God who sustains His people today.

Third: God's Word Gives Us a Song in the Night (vv. 53–56)

“Hot indignation seizes me because of the wicked, who forsake your law. Your statutes have been my songs in the house of my sojourning. I remember your name in the night, O LORD, and keep your law. This blessing has fallen to me, that I have kept your precepts.”

These verses reveal the heart of a pilgrim. The psalmist sees wickedness around him. He sees people abandoning God's truth. He sees rebellion against God's ways. And he grieves.

His indignation is not personal irritation. It is sorrow over the dishonor done to God.

But notice where the stanza moves next - *“Your statutes have been my songs.”*

This is one of the most beautiful statements in Psalm 119.

- The psalmist is still a sojourner.
- His circumstances have not necessarily changed.
- He is still traveling through a fallen world.

Yet he has learned to sing.

- Not because life is easy.
- Not because suffering has disappeared.
- Not because every question has been answered.

He sings because God's Word has become precious to him.

The phrase *“house of my sojourning”* reminds us again that this world is not our final home.

The believer lives with one foot in this world and one foot in the world to come.

- We are pilgrims.
- We are travelers.
- We are citizens of another kingdom.

That reality changes how we endure suffering.

The night appears in verse 55 - *“I remember your name in the night.”*

Throughout Scripture, the night often symbolizes fear, uncertainty, loneliness, and trouble.

Many believers know what it is to lie awake at night.

- The house is quiet.
- The distractions are gone.
- The burden remains.

Questions seem larger in the darkness. Anxieties seem heavier.

The psalmist tells us what to do in those moments.

- Remember God’s name.
- Remember His character.
- Remember His faithfulness.
- Remember His promises.
- Remember who He is.

Verse 56 concludes the stanza - *“This blessing has fallen to me, that I have kept your precepts.”*

The blessing is not that life became easy. The blessing is that God’s grace enabled him to remain faithful.

- The fruit of God’s comfort is continued obedience.
- The promises of God strengthen us so that we keep walking.

APP: Many Christians want comfort without obedience. The psalmist shows us something different. God comforts us so that we continue following Him.

- The goal of God’s encouragement is not merely that we feel better.
- It is that we keep trusting, keep obeying, and keep walking.
- Why? Because this is the blessed life.

Fourth: This Is Where the Gospel Meets Us

a) The Father Commands This

The Father calls His people to trust His promises, remember His Word, delight in His truth, and remain faithful through every season of life.

- He calls us to live by faith even when affliction comes.
- He calls us to find comfort in Him rather than in circumstances.

b) The Son Fulfills This

Jesus Christ is the perfect singer of Psalm 119.

- No one trusted the Father's promises more completely than Jesus.
- No one obeyed God's law more perfectly than Jesus.
- No one endured greater affliction than Jesus.

- He was mocked.
- He was rejected.
- He was ridiculed.
- He was abandoned.

Yet He never turned aside from His Father's will.

- Even in Gethsemane He trusted the Father.
- Even at Calvary He trusted the Father.

The One who perfectly lived Psalm 119 entered our suffering so that we might share in His life.

And when darkness covered the cross, Jesus endured the ultimate night so that His people might never be abandoned by God.

c) The Spirit Enables This

The same Spirit who sustained Christ now dwells in every believer.

- He brings God's promises to our remembrance.
- He strengthens weary hearts.
- He comforts afflicted souls.
- He teaches us to trust God's Word when circumstances tempt us to despair.
- He gives us songs in the night.
- He enables us to continue walking when we feel unable to take another step.

Christianity is not self-generated endurance. It is the Spirit of God sustaining weak people through the promises of God.

Conclusion:

The movement of Zayin is both simple and profound. The psalmist begins with affliction.

- He faces mockery.
- He grieves over wickedness.
- He endures long nights.

Yet he is not crushed.

Why? Because God's Word has become his hope, his comfort, his song, and his strength.

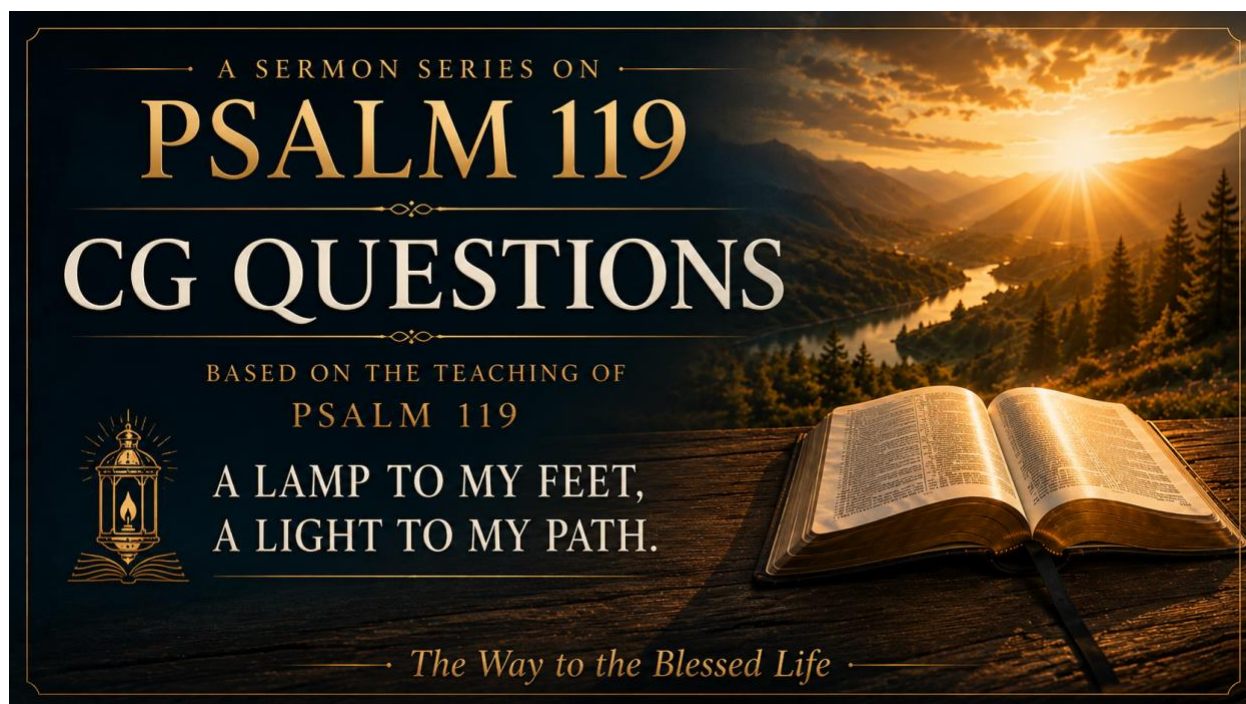
- The night remains.
- The affliction remains.

But the promises of God remain as well.

And God's promises are stronger than our afflictions.

The believer who remembers God's Word can endure the darkest night because he knows that the God who made the promise is faithful.

And one day every affliction will end, every promise will be fulfilled, every pilgrim will arrive home, and every song begun in the night will become praise in the light of God's presence forever.



Observation

1. What words or phrases does the psalmist use to describe his affliction in verses 49–56?
2. According to verses 49–50, what does the psalmist ask God to remember?
3. What relationship do you see between God’s Word, hope, comfort, and life in verses 49–50?
4. How are the “insolent” described in verse 51, and how do they treat the psalmist?
5. What does the psalmist do instead of turning away from God’s law when he is mocked?
6. What images stand out in verses 54–55 regarding songs, sojourning, and the night?
7. According to verse 56, what blessing does the psalmist identify?

Interpretation

8. Why does the psalmist ask God to “remember” His Word if God never forgets?
9. What does it mean that God’s promise “gives me life” in verse 50?
10. Why do you think the psalmist places his hope in God’s promises rather than in a change of circumstances?
11. What does the mockery of the insolent reveal about the cost of living faithfully in a fallen world?
12. Why is remembering God’s “rules from of old” a source of comfort?
13. What do you think the psalmist means when he says, “Your statutes have been my songs”?
14. How can a believer have a “song in the night” while still experiencing affliction?
15. Why does the stanza conclude with obedience rather than merely relief from suffering?

Correlation

16. Read Genesis 8:1. What happened when God “remembered” Noah, and how does that help us understand verse 49?
17. Read Exodus 2:23–25. How did God respond when He remembered His covenant with Israel?
18. Read Romans 15:4. How does remembering God’s works in previous generations strengthen believers today?
19. Read Matthew 5:10–12. How do Jesus’ words about persecution relate to the mockery described in verse 51?
20. Read Acts 16:22–25. What similarities do you see between Paul and Silas singing in prison and the psalmist having “songs” in his sojourning?
21. Read Romans 8:18. How does Paul’s perspective on suffering help us understand this stanza?
22. Read 2 Corinthians 1:3–5. What does Paul teach about God’s comfort in affliction?

Application

23. What forms of affliction are believers most likely to face in our church and community?
24. When difficulty comes, where are you most tempted to look for comfort besides God’s promises?
25. Which promise of God has strengthened you during a difficult season?
26. Have you ever experienced criticism, misunderstanding, or opposition because of your commitment to Christ? How did you respond?
27. What practical steps help you remember God’s faithfulness when life feels uncertain?
28. What does it look like to turn God’s Word into a “song in the night” during seasons of anxiety, grief, or loneliness?
29. How can our CG help one another remember God’s promises during affliction?
30. The psalmist sees continued obedience as a blessing. How does that challenge the way we normally think about blessing?

And This is Where the Gospel Meets Us

31. The sermon described Jesus as the perfect singer of Psalm 119. In what ways do you see Christ fulfilling this stanza?
32. How does Jesus’ suffering help us understand our own afflictions differently?
33. Why is it significant that Jesus endured mockery, rejection, and abandonment without turning away from His Father’s will?
34. How does the cross prove that God has not abandoned His people in their suffering?
35. What role does the Holy Spirit play in helping believers remember God’s promises and endure affliction?
36. Why is Christianity more than self-generated endurance or determination?
37. How does the gospel give hope to believers whose circumstances may never fully improve in this life?
38. Which truth from the Father, Son, or Spirit most encourages you as you face present difficulties?

CG Leader Closing Thought: Zayin teaches us that affliction is not evidence that God has forgotten us. Often it becomes the very place where God's promises become most precious. The believer's comfort is not found in the absence of suffering but in the presence of a faithful God whose promises sustain us, whose Son has suffered for us, and whose Spirit strengthens us to keep walking until we reach our eternal home.