

# St Andrew's Presbyterian Church Penrith

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## ENCOURAGEMENT LETTER 18/6/2025

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

How are you today? I am thankful for God's sovereign grace towards us, who turns us around to see his radiant glory in his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Today's encouragement is "Psalm 119 Daleth – From Dust to Freedom" before moving onto church matters.

### ENCOURAGEMENT: Psalm 119 Daleth – From Dust to Freedom

Have you ever found yourself laid low, struggling to get up? There are various instances in life where this may be the case. It could be a physical situation, where you are trapped and enclosed and in trouble. It was like in my younger years when I am in 12ft surf from a storm surge. I am ducking under a pounding wall of whitewash and both my legs cramp. I am tossed around struggling to surface, lungs burning. When I do break the surface, gulping in air, I see another two waves headed my way. It could be the deteriorating health from age, each day becomes a struggle to do what needs to be done. It could be our mental health. I have heard depression described like being at the bottom of a deep well sinking in the mud below. People cry out from the top to climb up, but you have not the strength nor the skill to rise out of your depression. It could be any number of situations: a struggle with unemployment, relationship breakdowns or any other manner of difficult circumstances we might find ourselves in. But perhaps the most difficult of these is spiritual: without Christ, we are laid low, separated from God, unless he saves us. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

How are you today? I am thankful for the view on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor of Nepean hospital which gave me a wonderful view of the Blue Mountains with the last tints of orange and purple from the new vanished sun colouring the horizon.

Today's encouragement continues in Psalm 119 with "Psalm 119 Heth – Knowing God", after which we will move onto church matters.

### ENCOURAGEMENT: Psalm 119 Heth – Knowing God

Why do we obey God? Obedience is not as valued in our world today. If it does not suit us, we will break the rules: speeding just a little above the speed limit, downloading pirated movies or music, tossing a bit of litter on the ground. But this fits with the inclination of our hearts. So why do we obey God? We might obey because it is right, because we fear his judgement, because we want to be seen as

doing the right thing, because we want to please him. While there is truth in these, what we find at this point in Psalm 119 and the stanza Heth, is we obey God so we might grow to know him more.

We see in the first couple of verses in Heth the Psalmist's desire to know God:

*You are my portion, O LORD;  
I have promised to obey your words.  
I have sought your face with all my heart;  
be gracious to me according to your promise.*

Psalm 119:57-58

The Lord is his portion, his inheritance, all that he needs. He does not need land or possessions as an inheritance, only the Lord himself. This conveys his desire to know God and that nothing else compares to a relationship with the Lord. So because he desires to know God, he seeks to grow in his relationship with and promises obedience to his word. He seeks God's face with all his heart, that is, he seeks friendship and relationship with God – think Moses who spoke with God face to face. His expectation is that the Lord will reciprocate with grace according to his promise – that those who live to know the Lord will find him.

In seeking to live to know the Lord, he comes to understand his own failings and shortfalls in his obedience to the Lord that disrupts his relationship with God.

*I have considered my ways  
and have turned my steps to your statutes.  
I will hasten and not delay  
to obey your commands.*

Psalm 119:59-60

The Psalmist considers his ways and measuring his life against the word of the Lord, and sees how far from obedience he is. He gives pause and considers, to understand clearly his own disobedience and its roots within his heart, and in so doing, steers the direction of his life towards keeping in step with the Lord's statutes. In comprehending his crookedness, he is swift to put his obedience into practice, not postponing it in order to give leeway to some sinful gratification.

The Lord and his Word is of more value to the Psalmist than anything else in this world.

*Though the wicked bind me with ropes,  
I will not forget your law.  
At midnight I rise to give you thanks  
for your righteous laws.*

Psalm 119:61-62

The wicked might persecute him, pressuring him to disobey the Lord and depart from his Word by taking him captive and binding him with ropes, but the Lord is worth the suffering. He would rather face difficulty and trouble than have life easy by forsaking

the Lord. He will not turn away from God or his law, no matter the cost. When he wakes in the middle of the night, he sees it as an opportunity to get out of bed and thank God for all his goodness towards him, remembering the law of the Lord with gratitude in his heart.

The last stanza ends with his love for those who know God and the Lord's love that fills the world.

*I am a friend to all who fear you,  
to all who follow your precepts.  
The earth is filled with your love, O LORD;  
teach me your decrees.*

Psalm 119:63-64

The Psalmist holds affection and friendship for those who fear the Lord, who know God for who he is and are in awe of the Most High. He is intentional in maintaining relationships with likeminded people who strive to know God and hold to his word. He sees the whole Creation is filled with the Lord's love, that each part of the created order is a revelation of his love to uphold and maintain the creation and sustain all the creatures within it. He knows the Lord's love personally and sees his love everywhere, so he responds to the Lord with worship and obedience.

The reason Jesus came is that "we might have life and have it to the full" (John 10:10) and that life is to know the only true God and to know Jesus (John 17:3). Here in Psalm 119 Heth we see the priority of knowing God which should lead us to repentance, valuing the Lord above all things, and living in the Lord's love. Jesus has made it possible to know God by dying on the cross to take the penalty for our sins, rising from the dead to give us life and giving us his Spirit that we might be conformed to the likeness of Christ. It is as we trust in Jesus and his transforming work in us that we will grow to know the Lord more, and become more like Jesus the obedient Son. What priority does knowing God have in your life?

## FINAL COMMENTS

*After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed:  
"Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.  
For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to  
all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the  
only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory  
on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me  
in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world  
began.*

John 17:1-5

As always, love and prayers, Steve.

