

St Andrew's Presbyterian Church Penrith

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ENCOURAGEMENT LETTER 2/7/2025

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

How are you today? I am thankful for the baptism of Nathan Gondo on Sunday, and how in baptism we are all pointed towards Christ the one who makes us clean through his blood shed on the cross. He unites us together in covenant with God and one another.

Please enrol your kids in the Hoist the Sails holiday club as soon as you can so that we can have an idea of how many will be attending.

Today our encouragement continues in Psalm 119 with "Psalm 119 Yodh - Leaning on the Loving Creator" before moving on to church matters.

ENCOURAGEMENT: Psalm 119 Yodh - Leaning on the Loving Creator

What do you lean on when life is tough? Anyone who has had a leg or foot injury knows what it is lean on something solid for support. Or even if you have experienced low energy and are tired. We lean on solid objects for support – a wall, a railing, a piece of furniture, another person. Anything that will hold us up and keep us from falling and help us move forward.

In Psalm 119 Yodh, the Lord is the one to lean on in the difficulty of life. He is our support when we are overwhelmed and struggle to move forward in life.

The stanza begins leaning on the Lord the Creator:

*Your hands made me and formed me;
give me understanding to learn your commands.*

Psalm 119:73

It is the Lord who has made the Psalmist and knows him. The Lord shaped him working in his life. Since the Lord is his Creator, as such he can give him understanding to grow in his knowledge and obedience to God's commands, bringing transformation and change.

The word of the Lord is what he hopes in:

*May those who fear you rejoice when they see me,
for I have put my hope in your word.*

Psalm 119:74

He prays that others who also fear God might find him an encouragement to them when they see his hope in God's word. As a preacher, the greatest encouragement I get is when people demonstrate a faithful response to God's word, putting their hope in his promises in Christ and clinging to the Saviour.

In the midst of hardship, the Psalmist holds onto God's faithfulness:

*I know, Lord, that your laws are righteous,
and in faithfulness you have afflicted me.*

Psalm 119:75

Two things that the Psalmist holds onto when he is afflicted. First, God's laws are righteous, they show the right way to live and it is not worth departing from them no matter how hard it gets. Second, his affliction is a demonstration of the Lord's faithfulness, that it is for his good. How? To encourage right living and strengthen trust in God.

The Psalmist rests in the Lord's covenant love:

*May your unfailing love be my comfort,
according to your promise to your servant.*

Psalm 119:76

The Psalmist finds rest in the Lord's covenant love and commitment to him as his God. It is this love that is the foundation for the Lord's promises. In the face of uncertainty and trials, the Lord's love is the solid support to lean on. It is this love we see displayed in the cross of Christ.

He finds life in the Lord's compassion for him:

*May your compassion come to me that I may live,
for your law is my delight.*

Psalm 119:77

Living through this trial is dependent upon the Lord's compassion to him, as he finds delight in God's law – God's law which declares his compassion (Exodus 34:6). We find life in God's compassion towards us in this life in Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life (John 11:25) and gives us eternal life.

He trusts in God's justice when he prays:

*May the arrogant be put to shame for wronging me without cause;
but I will meditate on your precepts.*

Psalm 119:78

The Lord will not let the arrogant continue forever, there is a day of judgement where they will face shame for their sins, but the Psalmist asks God to intervene now and uphold his cause. We too can lean on the Lord and commit our cause into his hands that he will do justly.

He prays for the support from God's people.

*May those who fear you turn to me,
those who understand your statutes.*

Psalm 119:79

During tough times, the encouragement of the Lord's people can be invaluable. We can find this encouragement as we meet together (Hebrews 10:25), but if we absent ourselves from the gathering of the saints then how can we give encouragement? And how can we then benefit from the encouragement of others?

The final prayer is that he might stay the line:

*May my heart be blameless towards your decrees,
that I may not be put to shame.*

Psalm 119:80

He prays he may hold fast to the Lord's commands and promises, being blameless in his integrity and obedience so he will never be put to shame for his sin.

Multiple reasons are given in this stanza as to why we can lean upon the Lord – God is the creator, God is faithful, God is loving, God is compassionate, God is just, God's word is sure. Each beat of the Psalm strikes a note of hope. A series of prayers, notable by the word "May" heading most of the verses, expressing a posture of prayer. We now see God more clearly than the Psalmist as we know Christ and see in him God's love, faithfulness, justice and compassion. In Christ, we are created new to live as his people by faith. In Christ, we have the fulfilment of God's word, the promise of God made sure. Whatever circumstances you find yourself, will you lean upon the Lord and his love?

FINAL COMMENTS

If you have reached the final comments and are still reading, share with me one way you have seen God's goodness to you.

At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

Titus 3:3-7

As always, love and prayers,
Steve