



Week #15

Samech

Psalm 119:113-120

"Stinkin' Thinkin'"

Psalm 119:113-120

Our world is full of stinkin' thinkin'. We don't have any idea how many of the world's crazy ideas we have totally bought into until we compare our thinking with the clear, honest statements of the Word of God. That's one reason why it's so important to be daily reading and memorizing the Bible. We need to have daily attitude adjustments. And daily "stinkin thinkin changes".

In this 8-verse stanza, named Samech, I think the Psalmist is pointing out to us several types of stinkin' thinkin', and urging us to learn to look at things God's way.

We begin with verse 113:

Half-Hearted

113 I hate the double-minded,
But I love Your law.

- What does "double-minded" mean? James 1:5-7

The Hebrew word is:

שָׁאֵפִי, pronounced "say-afe",
And it means: "half-hearted", or "skeptical"

So the word is obviously referring to an attitude of "trying something out, but not wholeheartedly sold on it." Now that attitude may be just fine for buying a pair of shoes, but in the things of God it is repugnant.

The word "double-minded" is also used in James 1:5-7, to teach the same idea: *"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a **double-minded** man, unstable in all his ways."*

James is telling his readers that wisdom from God is freely available...all they have to do is ask. But...they must ask whole-heartedly, not half-heartedly. They must ask with a heart commitment that whatever God shows them to do, no matter what it is, they are going to do it. They can't ask for wisdom with the "cafeteria" mindset...in other words...I'd like to know the best thing to do in this situation, God, and then, after you give me your opinion, I'll decide whether or not I want to do it.

That's stinkin' thinkin'.

Here's another illustration of the wrongness of that attitude:

In Acts 12:25 we see Paul and Barnabas setting out on their First Missionary Journey. They and the elders of the church in Antioch have prayed about this Journey, have fasted, and have sought the mind of the Lord about how to go about spreading the Gospel message. They know there will no doubt be hardships, but Paul and Barnabas and a young man they are taking with them, John Mark, have still decided they want nothing more than to have the privilege of spreading the news about Jesus. He's God!!! He's Alive!!!

They sailed to Cyprus, an Island in the Mediterranean, preached and had great success in a couple of cities on that island. They did run into a little trouble there, with a man who was a sorcerer opposing them, but in the end there were very positive results. So they sailed from there to the coast of



what we know now as Turkey, and when they got there, John Mark, for some reason unknown to us, left them and went back to Jerusalem. (Acts 13:13)

John Mark, it turns out, was half-hearted. Not totally committed to the job at hand. A double-minded missionary.

We don't really see Paul and Barnabus's reaction to this mutiny until we get to Acts 15:36-41, when Paul and Barnabus are ready to start out on their Second Missionary Journey. Barnabus wants to give John Mark another chance and take him with them once again. Paul is definitely opposed to the idea – in fact, he is so opposed to it that he and Barnabus appear to have a sharp division. Paul goes one way, Barnabus and John Mark the other.

I wonder if Paul thought of Psalm 119:113: "I hate the double-minded!" Did he actually "hate" John Mark? No – scripture goes on to tell us that at the end of Paul's life he greatly valued the comradeship of this young man who had learned his lesson. But at the time, it was a set-back for the kingdom of God. A set-back that shouldn't have happened.

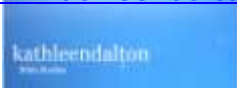
There is hardly anything more destructive in work for the Lord than a half-hearted servant. Someone else is constantly having to take up the slack for the volunteer who just can't show up for his commitment because it's too hard. Or because their feelings got hurt. Or because they slept in. Or because they are not sure they want to work that hard.

Half-hearted is stinkin' thinkin'.

- Are there times when we should "hate" half-hearted people?

Yes. And no. Yes, our feelings about the Word of God should be so strong that we don't put up with half-heartedness. Many times I have wondered if we should put someone in a volunteer position at church, and then decided not to, because that person had often displayed a lack of follow-through on their commitments. God's work is the most important work in the world. Half-hearted doesn't work.

But no, we don't hate the half-hearted. We hate their lack of commitment, and we decline to place them in future volunteer positions until we see a change.



Wrong Hiding Place

114 You *are* my hiding place and my shield;
I hope in Your word.

- Did you have a favorite hiding place as a child?

I have two sisters, and growing up we often shared a room. Even in the small houses we lived in it worked quite well to have a trundle bed on one side of the room and a single bed on the other. I remember sitting under the "high" portion of the trundle bed, cozy in a little corner of my own, when I wanted a hiding place.

- Do you have a favorite hiding place today?

Today I drive my jeep to a park, sit under the shade of a big tree, and "hide" from the telephone.

- Why do we need a hiding place and a shield?

I guess because there are just times when ordinary life presses on us too much, and we need a place to get away, for a little while, from responsibilities, or even from things we fear. We can't stay there forever...but a time to hide every now and then can really recharge our batteries.

But there's also a more serious need for a hiding place sometimes. Corrie Ten Boom in her book "The Hiding Place", told her story of hiding from those who would have killed her or transported her to a Nazi death camp.

- Are there times when we "hide" behind things which actually are not protecting us at all?

My grandkids were playing hide and seek in our front yard a couple of weeks ago. I had to laugh at the youngest, who decided to hide behind a tree too little to totally cover him. He was sure he was safe because he was behind the tree, but he was actually plainly visible to the one who was "it".



What do you and I hide behind which actually is not keeping us safe at all? What kinds of things do we think are surely very solid and dependable but turn out to be just skinny little trees?

Well...how about our health? We eat right, exercise daily, keep the weight off...and then still have a heart attack.

Or parental controls... We give them curfews, check on them frequently, have wonderful conversations about the important things of life, and still some of them decide to experiment with drugs or pornography.

Or church? We never miss a Sunday. Take our kids to Sunday School and youth group. Give generously. Teach a class. Go on a short-term mission trip. And then our son goes to college and becomes an alcoholic.

What happened? Why didn't our tree hide us from the one trying to take us out of the game?

Because the tree never could. We were hiding behind the wrong thing. The only right thing to hide behind is not a thing, but a person. Jesus. We snuggle up close to Him daily, reading His Words to us, pouring out our heart and asking for his direction. We learn to accept the fact that life is going to be imperfect and painful, but we hide deeper and deeper in Jesus, and even though the enemy gets close, he can't tag us and take us out of the game, because we are safely hidden in Jesus.

Choosing the wrong hiding place is stinkin' thinkin'.

Hanging on to Bad Friendships

115 Depart from me, you evildoers,
For I will keep the commandments of my God!

- What should our attitude be towards "evildoers"?

The Psalmist seems to be saying that we should chase away those who are doing evil. Sinners. But, aren't we all sinners? How can I act like I'm better than an old friend when he/she is just doing something I used to do?



- How can we witness to people if we push them away from us because they are sinners?

This really isn't all that tricky. You hate the sin and love the sinner. And don't join your heart to the sinner as a good friend until the sinner has met His Savior and given Him his life.

In his second letter to the church at Corinth, Paul addresses this head-on. "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship hath righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?" (II Cor. 6:14, 15)

When we're talking about chasing away the evildoers who don't know the Lord, it's simple. Love them, but don't "yoke" together with them. Don't get in a relationship which demands your loyalty and support or participation in their evil lifestyle. Like best friends. Or marriage. Or business partners.

But what about that situation where you have a Christian brother or sister who is not walking with Jesus... living in sin? They admit they are choosing sin, but they say "nobody's perfect". "How can you judge me when you know you sin, too?" Then what do we do?

Same thing. "Depart from me ye evildoers. For I will keep the commandments of my God." Paul, again when writing to the church at Corinth, addresses this, too. I Corinthians 5:6&7: "Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened."

What is he saying? Talk to your friend about his sin. Pray for him. Love him. And if nothing happens, you may have to, for a time, cut off your friendship with the one who knows he is a Christian, but does not intend to let go of obvious sin. It would be better for him/her to live without your friendship for awhile, than for him/her to go on thinking that sin can be played with and nothing will happen. Wow. This is hard. Hanging on to bad friendships is stinkin' thinkin'.

Taking Tolerance Too Far

116 Uphold me according to Your word, that I may live;
And do not let me be ashamed of my hope.

- What is "hope"?

Hope is knowing something good is coming. Not *hoping* it's coming. But *knowing* it's coming. Hope is what keeps us going during rough times, because we know it won't always be rough. We know it. Hope is the light at the end of the tunnel. It's there and we are getting closer to it every day.

- Why do we neglect to mention that we have something we are "hoping" for?

As believers in Jesus we have a "glorious hope". Titus 2:13 "Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ." Not just any hope, but a glorious hope. It's the return of Jesus. It's one of the best parts of the Gospel story. He's coming back!

I was having lunch with three of my grandkids a couple of months ago, and we were talking about Jesus. I said "Isn't it great that Jesus is coming back?" Macy, 5-years-old, said "What?!!!" I said "Yes, Jesus is coming back." She said "He is? When?" I sort of stuttered..."Well, we don't know exactly when..." And she said "That's wonderful Nana!" She was nearly speechless at the unbelievable news that Jesus was going to be here again!

You know what I was thinking, don't you? I was wondering how long it had been since I was that thrilled with this hope. And why I don't talk about it more often.

- We feel free to talk about so many things to our friends and loved ones...how can we be more comfortable talking about our hope?

I think we just need to spend more time imagining what it will be like. If I were seventeen and going to the prom for the first time, I know what I'd be dreaming about every night. I know what I'd be doing...going over and over in my mind what I was going to wear, and what we were going to do, and thinking and thinking and thinking about it. I'd probably be pretty useless

once I got to the night of the prom because my thoughts would be captive to the hope of that special night.

And then, after we spend all that time imagining and thinking and looking for Him, we need to pray that God will not let us be ashamed of our hope in the presence of those who don't know they could have that hope. We need to speak it out. Smile about it. Laugh out loud at the thought of it.

Our world tells us to be tolerant of others who don't believe as we do. Good. Let's love them and be kind to them and respect their right to believe differently, worship differently, and talk openly about their beliefs.

But let's not be so tolerant that we are ashamed to tell them of our hope. That's taking tolerance too far. That's stinkin' thinkin. It's their hope, too! They need to hear us say it. "He's coming back!" That's wonderful news!

Forgetting Who Keeps Me Safe

117 Hold me up, and I shall be safe,
And I shall observe Your statutes continually.

- Are you safe?

Yes, I feel pretty safe in my life right now. There were times, though, when we were younger, that I didn't feel so safe. When we moved from Colorado to Indiana was one of those times. We had tried to start a church in Ft. Morgan, Colorado, and it had not gone well. We had a few people gathered together to try to make a go of it, but we ran out of money and Ken couldn't find a job.

We were confused, penniless, and scared. We knew we could trust God, but we weren't sure where. Should we stay in Ft. Morgan and trust God to see us through until Ken could find work? Or should we call my Dad in Indianapolis and ask if we could drive there and dump ourselves and our 5 children on his doorstep?

Eventually we had to leave. We ran out of food. We started selling household items just to get money for gas and the next meal. We ran out of propane to heat a drafty little farmhouse. We packed kids and all worldly

belongings in a van that would soon be repossessed, and drove from the plains of Colorado to Indianapolis, not knowing what was next.

I remember we drove through some storms on that trip, and it was so windy. We got out to eat somewhere along the way, and as I was walking from the van to the restaurant, baby in arms, a gust of wind nearly knocked me over and almost snatched my little girl out of my arms. I held tight to her, staggered through to the restaurant, managing to stay upright, thinking all the way, "Keep us safe. Keep us safe. Keep us safe." He did.

- What got you there?

I admit, though, that sometimes I forget Who keeps me safe. Sometimes I think it's me. Or Ken. Or a good job at a great church. Or a sturdy little house. But it isn't. It's Jesus. He keeps the wind from whipping my life to shreds.

It's stinkin' thinkin' to forget who keeps me safe.

Lies are Sometimes OK

118 You reject all those who stray from Your statutes,
For their deceit *is* falsehood.

- How does God respond to lies?

God hates a lie. Lies are the exact opposite of God. He is truth. He is trustworthy. He is dependable. The liar is Satan. Jesus called him the father of lies. "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it." (John 8:44)

The Psalmist says here that God rejects liars....and so does the last book of the Bible : "...but the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all **liars** shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." Revelation 21:8



God paid the price for liars to be saved, but if they don't believe in Jesus, liars end up where they can never foul the presence of God ever again – in Hell.

- How do you respond to lies?

So...when someone lies to you, how do you feel? Betrayed? Like you will never be able to trust that person again? That's the normal reaction to lies. They are real relationship-killers.

- Do you lie?

Well...only if it is really necessary.

Stinkin' thinkin'.

God is Love. He Could Never Actually Send Anyone to Eternal Punishment

119 You put away all the wicked of the earth *like* dross;
Therefore I love Your testimonies.

- What will God do to the wicked?

The scripture is very, very clear about this. God will judge the wicked.

Job 21:30 "The wicked is reserved to the day of destruction. They shall be brought forth to the day of wrath."

Psalms 50:3 "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him."

Psalms 96:13 "The LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth."

Ezekiel 18:20 "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

Matthew 13:41-49 "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that do offend, and them which do iniquity: And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. So shall it be at the end of the world...."

Luke 12:2 "For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed: neither hid, that shall not be know. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops. And I say unto you my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom you should fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."

Hebrews 9:27 "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment..."

II Peter 3:10 "The Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

Jude 14&15: Behold, the LORD cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

Rev. 11:18 "The nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth."

Rev. 20:11-15 "I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were



cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

But...How could a loving God judge/punish people?

I think the answer to that is: **it's going to be hard.** He created every person in this world a long, long time ago. He placed the "seed" of every man and woman inside of Adam when He first created the world, looking forward to the time when each of us would be born. That's why it was such an incredible tragedy when Adam and Eve chose to disobey their maker. Inside of them was us...and we were doomed to inherit their sin nature from that point on.

And not just their sin nature...we also inherited their promised punishment for sin. The LORD told them, in Genesis 3:17 *"...you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."*

That promised punishment....death....began in the Garden of Eden. They actually did die immediately...in their spirits. Their spirit – that part of them which was able to communicate and love their Maker – died. Now they would feel like strangers in His presence...be afraid of Him...no longer long for their walks in the garden in the cool of the day. They were dead on the inside.

But the promised punishment was more than just spiritual death – it was also physical death. And although they did not die right that minute...death began for them...their bodies began to decay at that minute – and death came eventually.

As their heirs, we inherited both kinds of death. We are born into this world alive in our bodies, but dead in our spirits. The wonderful place inside of us that was meant to communicate with God is just plain dead. We have no desire for God. No longing for Him. No ability to reach out to Him. We are dead inside.

And, the moment we are born, we are also dying physically. Decay begins right away. The one thing that is absolutely, perfectly sure about each of us when we are born is that we will someday die. Ecclesiastes 3:2 says there is *"...a time to be born and a time to die."*

But the LORD didn't create us because He wanted to see us walking around on this earth dead on the inside, and dying on the outside. He wanted us to be alive. Fully, wonderfully, amazingly alive. *"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it abundantly."* (John 10:10b) He wanted us to laugh with Him, and love Him, and enjoy Him. And He wanted us to laugh, love, and enjoy each other.

You can see, then, that bringing down His promised punishment on us is going to be incredibly hard for Him. It will cause untold grief to His Father-heart...but it must be done. Because God is God. He is both loving and just. If He decided not to be just, only to be loving, then He would not be God any more. God is both. God has to be God. It isn't a question of "is that fair?" It isn't something which we can argue God out of. He is Who He is. We are who we are.

That's why He must punish sin. Whoever dies with unrighteousness still in their life...God has no choice but to judge and destroy that person. Because God is God.

The world tells us that God loves people too much to punish them. Stinkin' thinkin'.

I'm Not Afraid of God

120 My flesh trembles for fear of You,
And I am afraid of Your judgments.

- Are you afraid of God?



The Psalmist was. You and I should be, too. He is Almighty. Powerful. Righteous. Perfect. Holy. Everywhere at all times. Knowing everything.

It would be stinkin' thinkin' to not be afraid of God.

When we stand before God someday, it will either be at the Great White Throne, where we will be judged for our sin because we have never believed in Him.

Or it will be at the Judgment Seat of Christ where we are rewarded for our faith because we decided at some point in our lives to believe in Jesus.

I'll be at the Judgment Seat of Christ, and very, very, grateful to be there....but I think I will be trembling.

Your Assignment for next week:

- Read "Ayin" – Psalm 119: 121-128
(about one verse per day)
- Answer the following questions as you read through these verses:
 - Memorize Psalm 119:126
*"It is time for You to act, O Lord,
For they have regarded Your law as void."*

Psalm 119:121-128

121 I have done justice and righteousness;
Do not leave me to my oppressors.

- Even though the Psalmist has done the right thing, what does he think still might happen to him?



122 Be surety for Your servant for good;
Do not let the proud oppress me.

- What does the word "surety" mean?
- Why would the Psalmist need the Lord to be his "surety"?

123 My eyes fail *from seeking* Your salvation
And Your righteous word.

- What has the Psalmist been seeking...waiting for?

124 Deal with Your servant according to Your mercy,
And teach me Your statutes.

125 I *am* Your servant;
Give me understanding,
That I may know Your testimonies.

- What 3 things does the Psalmist know he needs?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

126 *It is* time for *You* to act, O LORD,
For they have regarded Your law as void.

- The Psalmist has hit the wall. There is nothing more he can do or ask for. What needs to happen?
- Where in scripture have we seen this illustrated?.... that a person simply hits the wall....there is nothing else he can do. If God does not step in, all is lost.

127 Therefore I love Your commandments
More than gold, yes, than fine gold!

128 Therefore all *Your* precepts *concerning* all *things*
I consider *to be* right;
I hate every false way.

- What will the Psalmist feel when he sees God work?

Week #15 of the Psalm 119 study. Psalm 119:113-120 “Stinkin’ Thinkin’”

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