

Introduction

1. Last wk = Bethel Matters article. Mind drawn to Psalm 119 & affliction. Show Title/Text.
 - a. Longest chp. = 176 verses. Theme = *exalting of God's Word in life of believers.*¹
 - b. Bible = law/testimonies/precepts/statutes/commandments/judgments/word/ordinances.
 - c. Little more than 1/3 way into Psalm, Psalmist brings up afflictions in 3 vv. = 67, 71, 75.
 - d. Psalmist slandered by shameless enemies who wanted smear his reputation, vv. 69-70.
 - e. *People-pain is the worst form of pain.*² Physical pain = injury.
 - f. People pain = injury + insult. Insult added to injury is double the pain.
2. As Psalmist reflected upon this, found comfort in how God uses affliction for our good.
3. Along the way I want to share thoughts on affliction from some seasoned Christians.

I. **God uses affliction to bring about correction, v. 67 (Show)**A. I Went Astray.

1. *Astray = sin ignorantly.*³ Suggests straying of path by being deceived, led astray.
 - a. Psalmist knew w/fallen nature vulnerable to self-deception lead to unintentional sin.
 - b. Unintentional sin still sin, but goes undetected so continue in for long time.
2. Like blind spot driving. Blind spot = spot where rearview mirrors miss passing car.
 - a. Must look extra hard to detect. If cause accident still our fault caused failed look.
 - b. Unintentional sin = sin so used to we must look extra hard to see. Easy to deny.

B. I Was Afflicted.

1. God uses affliction to get our attention, block our path or make us see as we really are.
2. I recall time of self-denial when rationalized sin in my life. Damaged relationship.
 - a. That brought me to my knees in brokenness. Mentor said, *Thou art the man.*
 - b. Led to repentance/confession. Been careful about that particular error ever since.
 - c. The affliction of that damaged relationship did its work & corrected me.
 - d. The agony of a man's affliction is often necessary to put him into the right mood to face the fundamental things of life. The Psalmist says, (read v. 67). (Show)⁴

II. **God uses affliction as a good teacher, v. 71.**A. Lesson Moved One Step Further.

1. Once affliction has corrected us, we can now learn the positive, good truth.
2. This reminds us of 2 Timothy 3:16. Affliction allows Word train us in righteousness.
 - a. Grew up w/kid cocky, brash and lived on wild side. As adults, his sister asked visit.
 - b. Going to prison on drug charges. Yrs since. When arrived there devastated man.
 - c. Tears streaming down. Never expected. All brashness gone; cockiness evaporated.
 - d. Crying over leaving behind 3-yr-old daughter for 3-yr-prison term.
 - e. Affliction had corrected him and taught him the truth about a life of drugs.

B. Affliction = Good Teacher.

¹ MacArthur, J., Jr. (Ed.). (1997). *The MacArthur Study Bible* (electronic ed.). Nashville, TN: Word Pub.

² Pastor John MacArthur in a sermon on 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 heard at Moody Church.

³ Strong, J. (1995). *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. Woodside Bible Fellowship. Strong's #7683.

⁴ Oswald Chambers. <http://www.azquotes.com/quote/957199>. Accessed 4/28/17.

1. Why should I ever resist any delay or disappointment, any affliction or oppression or humiliation – when I know God will use it in my life to make me like Jesus and to prepare me for heaven? (Show)⁵
2. God never allows pain w/o a purpose in the lives of His children. He never allows Satan, nor circumstances, not any ill-intending person to afflict us unless he uses that affliction for our good. God never wastes pain. He always causes it to work together for our ultimate good, the good of conforming us more to the likeness of His Son (see Romans 8:28-29). (Show)⁶

III. God uses affliction because He is faithful to His children, v. 75.

A. Faithfulness Defined.

1. Faithfulness = fidelity or loyalty.⁷ God can be counted on to do what's in best interest.
2. Since affliction is painful, assume God administering not good. Be disillusioned.
3. Haddon Robinson often called dean of homiletics professors. Taught many pastors.
 - a. Father became ill & prayed for healing. When not happen became disillusioned.
 - b. Advancing age & illness put Mr. Robinson in nursing home near son Haddon.
 - c. Dr. Robinson visited his dad every day for lunch until he died.
 - d. Imagine how many people'd love to spend one hour every day w/Haddon Robinson?
 - e. That would be worth almost any illness. Mr. Robinson had faithful God.
 - f. Gave him a greater treasure than return of his health.
 - g. Daily visits of his world-famous son until the day he died.
 - h. Only a loyal, faithful God would do that.

B. God's Faithfulness.

1. God uses chronic pain & weakness, along w/other afflictions, as chisel for sculpting our lives. (Show)⁸
2. He has never promised that we shall have no afflictions. He loves us too well to promise that. (Show)⁹
 - a. J. C. Ryle's family lost everything because of bad investments by his Father.
 - b. Ryle went from a well-to-do son of a rich family to penniless w/o a job.
 - c. For yrs after, he made payments to father's creditors because felt Christian duty.
 - d. The sudden poverty cost Ryle lost plans to be politician & became pastor instead.
 - e. Today biography reads *Prepared to Stand Alone*. (Show)¹⁰ Spurgeon greatest tribute.
 - f. J. C. Ryle is an evangelical champion. One of bravest & best of men. (Show)¹¹
3. W/o affliction we would not even know his name. God is a faithful God.

⁵ Kay Arthur. <http://www.azquotes.com/quote/1020845>. Accessed 4/28/17.

⁶ Jerry Bridges. <https://www.quotescodex.com/88223.jpg>. Accessed 4/28/17.

⁷ Strong, J. (1995). *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. Woodside Bible Fellowship. Strong's #530.

⁸ J. I. Packer. <https://www.storemypic.com/image/sQei>. Accessed 4/28/17.

⁹ J. C. Ryle. <https://starlightwriter.files.wordpress.com/2014/02/jcrylequote.jpg>. Accessed 4/28/17.

¹⁰ <https://banneroftruth.org/us/store/history-biography/j-c-ryle/>. Accessed 4/29/17.

¹¹ Charles Spurgeon. <http://www.jcryle.info/p/about-jc-ryle.html>. Accessed 4/29/17.