

I think one of the reasons we come to church is because we believe there's something to this message of forgiveness and renewal, of love and peace that can make a difference in our lives today. This morning I want to talk about what this means according to the phrase, "the Lord is my portion," in Psalm 119.

PRAYER

In the following reading note how often a word referring to God's teachings is used.

READ Psalm 119:53-60

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.

The LORD is my portion;

I promise to keep your words.

I entreat your favor with all my heart;

Be gracious to me according to your promise.

When I think on my ways, I turn my feet to your testimonies;

I hasten and do not delay to keep your commandments.

If we diagrammed this passage we would see the words, "the Lord is my portion," falls right in the center of psalmist's statements concerning his devotion to God's teachings, His Word. This is the psalmist's confession of faith in that Word.

Here the word "portion" is used in the same way a nutritionist might say, "If you have a 'portion' of spinach 3-times per week you'll improve your health significantly."

In the Bible when a person or group of people received a portion of something it meant they had received exactly what they needed. For example, the tribes of Israel each received a “portion” of land for their future prosperity, except the tribe of Levites. They were priests, and they received the Lord himself as their “portion.” He was EVERYTHING they needed.

In the Psalm, when the writer wrote, “the Lord is my portion,” he was saying that with God as his Lord, he had everything he needed for this life.

But how do you get there, to that place where you can say with confidence, the Lord is my portion, He’s everything I need? It sounds kind of esoteric, mystical, kind of woo-woo. But not so for the psalmist! For him his relationship with God was as real as the cookies and coffee which are waiting for you right outside those doors after worship!

As I said, the words, “the Lord is my portion,” falls right in the center of what the psalmist wrote about concerning his devotion to God’s Word, which he refers to as “law, “statutes, “precepts, “words, “promises, “testimonies, and “commandments.”

For example, he wrote **“I promise to keep Your words,”** and then **“When I think on my ways, I turn my feet to Your testimonies; I hasten and do not delay to keep Your commandments” (vv. 59f).**

The psalmist’s relationship to God was in direct relationship to his faith in God’s Word, the Bible. It was the source of everything he needed to understand God: God’s work, God’s activity in the world. These words filled him with courage, confidence, and assurance in his relationship with the Lord.

St. John wrote in the Book of Revelation that he had a vision of Jesus **“dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God” (Rev 19:13).** St. John

was saying, Jesus is the incarnate Word of God who was sacrificed for our sins and who rose from the grave on the 3rd day.

When we confess with John that Jesus is the very Word of God in the flesh, we're saying Jesus fulfilled all God's promises in His life on our behalf.

It is a dark and dismal world out there. But in the Scriptures we find another world, a world filled with peace, and redemption, and light. Jesus wants to be our PORTION, that one thing in our life that satisfies all of our wants and needs.

What the psalmist and the prophets only hoped for, we have received. What the psalmist and the prophets gave their lives up for, fills our hearts with joy and peace. Jesus IS our portion for He is the Word made flesh, and it is this Word that satisfies our inner longing for peace, hope, joy, love, and renewal.

We first received Jesus in the waters of Holy Baptism, for the water was combined with the God's Word that saves us.

We receive Jesus in the Lord's Supper, the bread and wine interwoven with the promise of God to forgive our sins in this meal.

And we receive Jesus, the incarnate Word of God, whenever we believe His Words as we receive them in the Holy Bible.

Jesus said, **Matthew 10:38, "Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for MY sake will find it" (Mt 10:39).**

When we believe these words, we fall down on our knees before God Almighty, repent, and we are forgiven for all our sins. Then when we rise to our feet we are new creatures, heirs of God's heavenly kingdom, sons and daughters of our Father in Heaven.

The Lord is my portion.

Jesus said, **John 6:39-40**, “**this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.** ⁴⁰ **For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.**”

When we believe these words, we are saved. We are saved from sin, death, and the devil. And we are saved from the heartache of this world. I care about the terror our friends in France experienced this past week, but I’m not filled with fear because of it. For perfect love casts out fear.

I’m concerned about the immigration crisis around the world, and about global warming, and about the 10,000 children who will die today because of malnutrition, but I know in the end the only thing that matters is Jesus’ promise, “I will raise him up on the last day.”

The Lord is my portion.

Jesus said, “**I am the Light of the World**” (**Jn 8:12**). When we believe these words, Jesus leads us through the darkness of this world, comforting our hearts, awakening our spirits, casting out all our fear and worry.

The Lord is my portion.

Jesus said, **Matthew 11:28-30** **Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.** ²⁹ **Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.** ³⁰ **For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."**

When we believe these words, we fall into the arms of Jesus and He relieves us from the pain we harbor in our hearts. All of grief and our sorrows He bears for us, and He gives us peace of mind.

The Lord is my portion.

Jesus said, **John 7:37-39** "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. ³⁸
Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" ³⁹ **Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive....**

When we believe these words, God performs a miracle in our lives: He puts to use the gifts He's given us, and we make a difference. We have a little more love for our families, a little more compassion for our neighbors, and a little more grace for our co-workers, and God is glorified.

The Lord is my portion.

Friends in Christ, let Jesus be your portion, everything you need for this body and life.

"The Lord is my portion." Say it with me. (The Lord is my portion.)

Friends in Christ, this week may you have an opportunity to walk in faith, following Jesus, believing this His Word is the very Word of God, indeed.

Friends in Christ, this week may the Word of Jesus blossom richly in your heart, filling you with peace of mind, confidence, and peace.

And this week may you have the opportunity to share this good news with another person who really needs to hear it, in the name of Jesus. Amen.