

Bethel

Prayer Meeting Addresses

Number 89

Our Lives Ordered by the Word

Reading: Psalm 119. 33-40

33 Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end.

34 Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.

35 Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight.

36 Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.

37 Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way.

38 Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear.

39 Turn away my reproach which I fear: for thy judgments are good.

40 Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness.

Address

No doubt you will have realised that the hymn we began with (1003) is a paraphrase of these words. "Order my footsteps by Thy Word." It is a prayer. This section is almost entirely a prayer, that in our behaviour and the things we do and the way we go, we might be completely guided, that our steps might be ordered, by the Word of God.

Once again I am thinking about the new year before us, this time from a different aspect of it. We shall have plans we have to make. We shall have decisions we have to take. There will be times when we hardly know which way is right and which is wrong. There will be other times when we are not sure just how to act. And we need the prayer of these verses, that it might be according to God's holy Word, our lives ordered by it, governed by it, our living in obedience to it. There will be things in the church of God. There will be things in our families. There will be things in our relationships one with another. There will be various problems. And how are we going to walk these things out? How are we going to handle them? The point is very, very clear here. The

psalmist had no confidence at all in his own wisdom, or his own ability, or his own strength. Really the whole of these prayers, it is trusting in the Lord; the whole of these prayers – dependence. Let me just briefly take you through them one by one.

"Teach me, O Lord." He was a great man; he was a mighty king; he was eminent; he was wise. But he did not think he knew everything; he did not know all the answers. He wanted to be divinely taught; he wanted the Lord to lead him. "Teach me."

"Give me understanding." The Holy Spirit's work, giving us a gracious understanding of His Word, and of our own need and helplessness, and the suitability of the Saviour, an understanding of the times in which we live, the times in the church of God, the times in our own homes. "Teach me, O Lord"; "Give me understanding."

"Make me to go." So there is a compulsion here, almost as if sometimes we can see what is right, but we are a little bit fearful. We know this is the way, this is the door the Lord has opened, but we are backward for many reasons. It might bring difficulties; it might bring trouble; it might even bring persecution. "Make me to go" – the compulsion of grace, the constraining of the love of Christ.

"Incline my heart." It is that thought of the magnet, pulling you in the right way, drawing you, drawing you away from sin and self and unbelief and hardness, drawing you in the right way, above all drawing you to the Saviour. "Incline my heart."

"Turn away mine eyes." We often look the wrong way, and our eyes often look a sinful way. We need the Lord to keep us, not just in what we do, but where we look. "Turn away mine eyes."

"Stablish Thy Word." We want to be established in the truth. We want to be established in the Word of God. We want the Word of God to be established in our hearts. So, "Order my footsteps by Thy Word," Lord, in the year before us, in all the things which may come up, and this six-fold prayer: "Teach me"; "Give me understanding"; "Make me to go"; "Incline my heart"; "Turn away mine eyes"; "Stablish Thy Word." And if the Lord answers that prayer, then we

shall walk tenderly in His fear, in obedience, and we will know something of what real, spiritual gospel prosperity is.

This address was given at Bethel Chapel, Luton, by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom, on Monday, 4th January, 2016

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O that the Lord would guide my ways
To keep His statutes still!
O that my God would grant me grace
To know and do His will.

O send Thy Spirit down to write
Thy law upon my heart!
Nor let my tongue indulge deceit,
Nor act the liar's part.

From vanity turn off my eyes;
Let no corrupt design,
Nor covetous desires, arise
Within this soul of mine.

Order my footsteps by Thy Word,
And make my heart sincere;
Let sin have no dominion, Lord,
But keep my conscience clear.

Make me to walk in Thy commands;
'Tis a delightful road;
Nor let my head, or heart, or hands,
Offend against my God

I. Watts

