

# PSALM 119:25, MY SOUL CLEAVETH UNTO THE DUST: QUICKEN THOU ME ACCORDING TO THY WORD.

13 Dec 2019 Michael A Affliction, Christian Meditation, Christian Walk, Gospel Message, Self-examination Leave a comment

In the recent post on faith, I referenced verses 25 – 32 of Psalm 119 in talking about the “struggle of faith” believers experience during sanctification.

The definition, by Jonathan Edwards, of that struggle is as follows:

1) horror of being eternally lost; 2), the **sinner’s attempt to stop sinning via his will power**; 3), **realization that only God can save him from sin**; 4), **conviction**, the sinner beginning to see that God’s judgment is just; 5), **awakening to God with** genuine religious affections (this was part of the post on the Sinner’s Prayer, see categories, Gospel Message, for more on that struggle).

Psalm 119:25ff seems to reflect an awareness of the struggle of faith **that Edwards established in his study of the different states of the true and counterfeit conversion experiences he wrote about in his work *Religious Affections*.**

[Emboldening and underscoring are mine; I also broke Charles Bridges’ comments into more paragraphs than he did]

The purpose of this post is to quote verse 25, in part, from the writings of Charles Bridges, from his book *Psalm 119: An Exposition*, (first published, 1827) **to show readers how much verse 25 says about the struggle of faith; and I hope, to provide additional clarification that might help readers in their own process of sanctification:**

“Sin is no trifle to a child of God. It is his heaviest sorrow. Thus David — thus the Great Apostle found it (Ps. 38:4; Rom. 7: 24). And where is the believer who has not full sympathy with their complaints? **To have a *soul cleaving to the dust*, and not to feel the trouble, is the black mark of a sinner, dead in sins — dead to God.** To “know the plague of our own heart” (1 Kings 8:38), to

feel our misery, to believe and to apply the remedy (Rom. 7: 25, 25), is the satisfactory evidence of a child of God.

Dust is the portion of the world, and they wish for no better. But that the soul of the man of God should continually cleave to the dust, is most strange and humbling. And yet such is the influence of his evil nature — such the power of self-will and self-indulgence — such the regard to human praise, and the cherishing of self-admiration, **that were it not that he “abhors himself” for the very dust that cleaves to him, he would question the existence of a renewing change. He knows what he ought to be.** He has tasted the blessedness of “mounting upward on eagles’ wings” (Isa. 40:31).

But every attempt to rise is hindered by the clogging weight that keeps him down. It is, however, the *cleaving of his soul* that is so painful — not occasional, but constant — not like the bird of the morning that descends for a moment, and then soars his upward flight; but it seems as if, like the “serpent — dust was to be his meat” (Isa. 65:25); as if the spiritual, heaven-born soul was to sink and grovel below. And then, as the dust of the summer-road blinds the eye, and obscures the prospect: **how does this earthliness of soul darken the view of the Savior, dim the eye of faith,** and hide the glorious prospects which, **when beheld** in the clear horizon, enliven the weary pilgrim on his way!

**But the complaint is the language of conflict and humiliation — not of despondency. Mark the believer carrying it to the Lord — ‘Here I lie in the dust, without life or power. Oh! thou Savior, who “camest that I might have life, and that I might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10) — Quicken me: Breathe into me thine own life, that I may rise from the dust, and cleave to thee.’**

**This cry for quickening grace is the exercise of faith.** We have a **covenant to plead. Faith is the hand that takes hold of the promise** —“according to thy word.”

Can this word fail? “Sooner shall heaven and earth pass away, than one jot or one tittle pass” from the engagements of a covenant-keeping God. “He is faithful that hath promised,” (Heb. 10:23; with Luke, 21:33). The man who takes hold of this plea, is “a Prince who has power with God, and prevails,” (Gen. 32:28).

**But how different is the character of the mere professor!** ready probably to make the same confession,

yet **without** humiliation, **without** prayer, **without faith**. Nothing is more **common than to hear the complaint** — “*My soul cleaveth unto the dust.*” The world has such power over us — we are so cold — so dead to spiritual things: **while, perhaps, the complaint is never once brought with wrestling supplication**, but rather urged in indolent self-complacency, as an evidence of the good state of the heart before God. **Yet it is not the complaint of sickness, but an application to the physician, that advances the recovery of the patient.**

We do not usually expect to better our condition, by mourning over its badness, or merely wishing for its improvement. **Nor is it the confession of sin, but the application to the Great Physician, that marks genuine contrition before God.** That confession which evaporates in heartless complaints, **belongs not** to the tenderness of a renewed heart. But the utterance of genuine prayer is the voice of God’s own “Spirit making intercession for us;” and then, indeed, how cheering the encouragement, that he “that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God!” **Some are ready to give up or delay their duty**, when they have been unable to bring their heart to it. Thus does “Satan get advantage of us” by our “ignorance of his devices.”

**Quickening grace is not the ground or warrant for duty. Indisposition to duty is not our weakness, but our sin — not therefore to be indulged, but resisted.**

**We must mourn over** the dullness that hinders us, and **diligently wait** for the ‘help we every moment need.’ **God keeps the grace in His own hands and gives it at His pleasure, to exercise our daily dependence upon him (Philip. 2:12, 13).** The acting of grace strengthens the habit. **Praying helps to pray.** If the door is closed, “Knock, and it shall be opened,” (Matt. 7: 7,8). Assuredly it will not long be shut to him, who has faith and patience to wait until it be opened.”” [End Quote: the above is about 2/3 of Bridges’ commentary on Ps. 119:25]

Please also consider a few verses from Eze. 36:

Eze 36:29 **I will cleanse you** of your filthy behavior. I will give you good crops of grain, and I will send no more famines on the land.

Eze 36:30 **I will give you** great harvests from your fruit trees and fields, and never again will the surrounding nations be able to scoff at your land for its

famines.

Eze 36:31 **Then you will remember your past sins and despise yourselves** for all the detestable things you did.

Eze 36:32 But remember, says the Sovereign LORD, **I am not doing this because you deserve it. O My people of Israel, you should be utterly ashamed of all you have done!**

Eze 36:36 **Then the surrounding nations** that survive will know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt the ruins and replanted the wasteland. For I, the LORD, have spoken, and **I will do what I say.**

Eze 36:37 "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: **I am ready to hear Israel's prayers** and to increase their numbers like a flock.

All the above indicates that even though we have a new heart given us by God via regeneration, we must depend upon God to live by His word, to walk in His way.

It seems that the "struggle of faith" that Edwards identified as being part of the process of sanctification is largely the believer's coming to a realization that the words of Ezekiel 36 are absolutely true, that God gives regenerate hearts and deliverance from the way of self; that there is a struggle that occurs in those with regenerate hearts wherein they turn from trusting in self to trusting in God.

#### STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Acquire a copy of **Charles Bridges *Psalm 119: An Exposition*** and read a verse a day as a devotional in the new year. I think that you will find that it is about the Pilgrim's way through this world. [I purchased my copy used on Ebay, it was last printed in 1987, according to my copy.]

Read the post on The Sinner's Prayer: see categories, Gospel Message, it is among those posts. The sinner's prayer mp3 notes all the perversions of the gospel message, by evangelists, during the 20th century.