

# A companion of them that keep thy precepts. (Quality: very good)

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Preacher: Dawson, Herbert (1890-1969)

[ 0 : 00 ] As the Lord shall be pleased to help me, I shall call your attention to a subject you will find in Psalm 119 and the 63rd verse.

I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.

Psalm 119 and the 63rd verse. I should like to feel that quite a few of you who were sinners born again, as I humbly hope, can make this confession of faith which welled up in the Selmist's breast.

Who the Selmist was is not really known only to God. But whoever he was, he was a man wonderfully well taught of God, and with an amazing range in his soul's experience.

And in the Selm itself, the Selmist seems to take up every aspect of that experience which sinners enter into, following on to know the Lord.

[ 1 : 51 ] From the time they are born again, till at length they enter into the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.

And it may be, as you read the Selmist, and it will do you good to read it down, not once or twice.

I am sure if you are a sinner born again, you will find some words the Selmist was inspired of God to pen, will touch a chord in your own soul's feelings.

And such words will express what you do indeed desire from God, like the Selmist, when he penned it.

[ 2 : 59 ] I might just look at three or four of those words in approaching the subject. Here is a word. Oh, that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes.

When I was a little fellow at school a long time ago, we sometimes opened morning school. Oh, that the Lord would guide my ways to keep his statutes still.

Oh, that my God would grant me grace to know and do his will. I am sure throughout all my school life, while I sang that it may be scores of times, I never did sing it, and out of the abundance of the heart for the mouth to speak, because I did not possess the grace of God in my school days, and in my early teenage life.

But I can assure you, this is a petition that suits me well, and has done for many, many years.

Oh, that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes. You can see the Selmist was indeed a man well taught of God, because he knew it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps.

[ 4 : 35 ] Not only so, he wanted his steps to be directed inside the covers of the word of God, as much as there was then for him to peruse.

And here is another word. I am sure you have got an amen in your hearts. To it, open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.

It is just what you and I need as sinners born again. In thy light shall we see light. Oh, so often we journey along in much obscurity as to the why and wherefore of the dealings of God with us.

There is another word here. Remember the word, Unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hold.

Some of us have had to plead that word many times along life's way. regarding words we hope have come to us with thus saith the Lord, and we have waited upon him for the words to be fulfilled.

[ 5 : 58 ] And some of those words have been fulfilled, and we are still yet waiting for one or two words to be fulfilled. But you can use this petition, Remember the word, Unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hold.

And then I do like this declaration. Here the dear psalmist was in a sweet frame, and he says, Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word.

Many of you can say so too, and the preacher also. But what you must remember is this, God cannot otherwise deal with you if you were sinners born again.

Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, according unto thy word, and he cannot deal otherwise.

Remember that. And how glad some of us have been of this word of the psalmist. And he says, See if you can say it.

[ 7 : 17 ] It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes.

Martin Luther says in one of his writings that affliction gave him a new Bible. And so it does give a new interpretation of the truth therein, a new understanding, and you go deeper down into it.

And so the psalmist declares it is good for me that I have been afflicted. And you can say it is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes.

What have you learned of these statutes when affliction has been laid on you? One statute you have learned, I am sure, the Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and he knoweth them that trust in him.

And here is just another word which I like, and let it be your prayer every day. Let my heart be sound in thy statutes that I be not ashamed.

[ 8 : 40 ] Mark one word, let my heart your head may be sound in articles of faith and a creed, but that is not enough.

Good creeds may stuff our heads around and in our hearts no grace be found. And now the psalmist wanted reality and he wanted to know the truth by a gracious experience, let my heart be sound in thy statutes that I be not ashamed.

And having that knowledge, what does he say? How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

Much might be said along that line of thought in commenting on these words that welled up in the psalmist's breast, and here is one that might suit you this Sabbath afternoon.

I opened my mouth and panted, for I longed for thy commandments. You cannot say much about the dealings of God with you.

[ 10 : 05 ] You cannot put into words what your feelings are. All you can do is I open my mouth and panted. You remember Godly David tells us something about that.

As the heart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. And he tells us what his longing was, and I am sure some of you long for it too.

Make thy face to shine upon thy servant and teach me thy statutes. Glad you would be in his light to see light on the dealings of God with you, and to feel as you want, to feel that matters are right between your soul and God.

And there is just one other word here, and strange to say, it is the last word in the Selm. It will not be the last word that you will be using.

You will have to use it quite a few times as you journey on. still the Selmist recorded it, and here it is to encourage you to hope in God.

[ 11 : 26 ] I have gone astray like a lost sheep. Seek thy servant, for I do not forget thy commandments.

And now let us start afresh. I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.

And now it might help you, in opening up the subject, if I say there are one or two things the Selmist did not say, and which as yet you cannot say.

the Selmist did not say, I am a forgiven sinner, although he really was, but he does not make that statement anywhere in this long Selm of his.

I am a forgiven sinner. You say, I should be glad beyond words to describe if I could say so. is it attractive to you, a statement like that, a declaration?

[ 12 : 42 ] There is help in God and hope for you, poor sinner. Through this man there is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.

Forgiveness is a joyful sound to malefactors doomed to die. Oh, may this bliss in me be found. May I redeem in grace and joy.

Then the Selmist does not say this, I am a child of God, and speak boldly concerning it as his confession of faith.

No, could you say so? I have a guarantee with nearly every one of you in this assembly, if you were asked to say so, you would qualify it.

You would say, I hope I am a child of God. It is what I desire to be. The Lord is my witness that many a time I have said to him, Lord, I address thy throne of grace.

[ 13 : 56 ] Call me a child of thine. But you do want out of the abundance of the heart for the mouth to speak.

And now this confession of faith is one that sinners born again can take up and they can use this wording in setting forth as to how they feel regarding people taught of God.

And the godly psalmist says, I am a companion of all them that fear thee. And mark this word in, I want as grace is given to look at the subject from two viewpoints, yet those two viewpoints will come from one source.

I am a companion of all them that fear thee, the psalmist declares. And who does he mean by them that fear thee?

of them that keep thy precepts. In other words, the psalmist looks on people of whom it can be said, when on the bough rich fruit we see, it is then we cry a goodly tree.

[ 15 : 25 ] Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. When a psalmist saw a man, a woman, a youth, a maid, whom he could believe was indeed a real Christian, he could give them his hand in fellowship and he could wish them well and tell them that he desired to be numbered with them living and dying, which is a great attainment in the life divine I've always felt sad that sometimes men ordained of God to preach have gone out of their way to belittle it.

I have never done so and the word of God does not do so. But I do say and you think it over because some of you have got this evidence and you must not think it is a little evidence.

it is a great evidence. Listen, we know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren.

And says that same godly John, he that loveth is born of God. Now I want to work this out as the Lord shall help me.

First of all I am a companion of all them that fear thee. The psalmist had his eyes opened that he could discern who they were when he met them.

[ 17 : 09 ] He could see the evidence of godly fear constraining them to do that which was right before the Lord.

And now this word companion means one with whom you share your bread. That is what godly scholars tell us it means in the original.

And it is a good interpretation. And you think as you go back over life's journey how your religion began.

And how you began to think about the things of God as you had never thought about them before. Your eyes were attentive to them that did fear God.

And you could see how they lived. Yes, and you saw how they died. And sometimes you stood by their graves and you heard the preacher say ensuring certain hope of a joyful resurrection to the life everlasting and something inside you responded to it and you said be this religion mine.

[ 18 : 35 ] Lord, I want to be found amongst these people with whom it is well while life endure and well when called to die.

Let me among thy saints be found. And ever since you felt like that you have never lost the feeling.

I know you have not always felt warm hearted it may be to them that do fear God but you do look on them and as you know of the dealings of God with them you find in your heart there is the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace and how often you have said with them numbered I would be now now and in eternity a companion of all them that fear thee and now this should help some of you dear younger people as well as the grey heads who have journeyed far in life's way because wherever you see this godly fear although it may be young abiger with some good thing in his heart toward the Lord God of Israel as you read about him something in your heart rises and you feel

Lord grant that I too may have some good thing toward thee as the Lord God of Israel some good thing thy holy fear as an umptuous light to what is right and a bar to what is wrong yes and now I want to look at this word especially from this viewpoint being a companion and now first of all it must be said that all sinners born again are companions although there are millions of them making up the host of the redeemed yet as they meet together and hear each other tell out the dealings of God they find what the word of God declares to be a blessed reality all thy children shall be taught of the

Lord and that teaching is ever the same remember that in all essential things to do with the salvation of our souls the teaching of God is the same everywhere so that wherever you go if you meet with one who is taught of God and you are taught of God you will flow together to the goodness of the Lord and you will be companions you will walk in agreement with each other in all essential things to do with your soul's eternal welfare and in walking together with each other you will walk with God it is a great thing to be a companion of all them that do indeed fear God and the word of God speaks so much about it and it tells us so that you need never fear what the future will unfold it shall be well with them that fear

[ 22 : 24 ] God in every state secure kept as Jehovah's eye it is well with them while life endure and well when called to die but I want to make this plain as all these people are taught of God and as they are all led into the truth some may go deeper down into it than others God is a sovereign in how he leads his people into the truth and I just make this comment in past him and remember it you must never set up how God has taught you as to how he is to teach everybody else whom he condescends to teach for God will not do it he has taught you and you say thank you to God and reduce to practice what you know and be one of them that keep the precepts set forth in the word of

God and set an example thereby as to whose you are and whom you serve but you must never set up how God has taught you as a standard whereby he is to teach everybody else no no God has not left in the word of his grace a rigid standard whereby everyone must attain the same measurement in things divine no no he has set up a real standard but you find in the word of God that there are babes children young men fathers yes all living all born again but in varied phases in their souls experience do remember that dear friends

I wish it had been remembered more in our denominational life a hundred years ago and we should not be where we are nowadays in our denominational life it's such a low ebb in our causes of truth if you begin to set up how God has taught you as the standard whereby he must teach everybody else I will tell you what you are doing you were verging toward fatalism no no the great thing is to have this badge herein shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one toward another to be a companion to be able to say you have said it quite a few times on the

Union Chapel route did you mean it I love to meet amongst them now before thy gracious feet to bow though vilest of them all and can I bear the piercing thought what if my name should be left out when thou for them shalt call is it a piercing thought then you must be alive the dead know not anything about that which is piercing the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God neither can he know them for they are spiritually discerned but I want to look at this being a companion and now I can only give you hints about it but all who are taught of God are companions in a sense of their sinnership under the law yet it might be thousands and thousands of them could never describe what is called a law word

I sometimes wondered about the origin of that phrase and you know my thoughts about stereotype phraseology but it is a word that is used especially in our pulpits a law word but then not all are taught by terrible things in righteousness as to their sinnership but the great majority as I view it nowadays learn it here a little there a little line up and line precept upon precept and they come at length to be able to declare see if you can declare it Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief oh they take root downward and learn how sad our state by nature is and often in their confessions before

[ 27 : 47 ] God oh they have to put their mouths in the dust of self abasement if so be there may be hope sometimes you read the lives of the godly and it is good that you should have them to read but you must never forget when all is said and done the standard you will be gauged by you and I is this what says the scriptures sometimes you read the lives of the godly you read their memoirs and you may be troubled and you may even be tempted and the devil may suggest you have never known anything like that in the dealings of god with you which is recorded here and now where are you you were just where you were before you are still a companion of all them that do fear god and you still desire to be and you must still sigh and cry before god lead me in thy truth and teach me and you will find as he carries on the good work it will be on this basis first the blade then the ear then the full coin in the ear

I believe many people taught of god have learnt more about their sinnership and gone deeper down into it in the latter days of their lives than they have however many years they have lived before following on to know the lord it is a great thing to be stripped of all our fancied meekness to approach the dread I am and when you get there then you can plead before god nothing in my hand I bring simply to thy cross I cling helpless look look to thee for grace yes oh it is a great lesson to learn and sometimes it takes years and years to go down into the varied details of it but the word of god says when he the spirit of truth is come he shall convince the world of sin by the law is the knowledge of sin and while you may not have stood before sinai's mount and heard its loud thunders in your conscience yet deep down in your heart you have had a solemn awareness that matters are not right between your soul and god and your conscience as told you from the soul of the foot even to the head there is no soundness in it wounds and bruises putrefying sores you have stood alongside

Job behold I am vile and now all these people in the text to whom the psalmist refers are companions in that line of things some go deeper down into it than others but all are taught of God the Holy Ghost will make the soul feel its sad condition for the sick and not the whole need the good physician I am a companion of all them that fear thee and now they are especially companions not only under the law I was going to say and I will they are much more so companions under the gospel because there they are found with an ear to ear and a heart to receive and something deep down in their heart that desires to reduce to practice what they hear how do you feel sometimes when you hear the gospel surely you feel like the hymn writer you would be glad to do it and that will help you to understand what it is to keep the precepts hoard up the sacred word and feed there on and grow go on to seek to know the

Lord and practice what you know precepts mean practice and now under the gospel then all these people are companions when they hear the gospel preached when it is preached and it is known and felt as the power of God in the proclamation of it you find all the companions who were sinners born again in their soul's desire to enter into it and to show it in their lips and lives whose they are and whom they serve to let their lives and acts express the holy gospel we profess their companions in how they hear they're like Lydia Lydia heard us says Paul whose heart the Lord opened some of you were not able to come in here so that she attended to the things which were spoken of Paul and now the

Selmist says I am a companion of all them that fear thee and of them that keep thy precepts you find in this same Selm precepts are sometimes referred to as commandments and the Selmist says here it is a great word I like to refer to it make me to go in the path of thy commandments for therein do I delight and what did Jesus say if if ye love me keep my commandments and you say I am a companion of all them that fear thee and there you are stuck halfway through the text when will you take the matter up before God and go right through the text and be one of them that keep the precepts and attend to what

[ 34 : 58 ] Jesus Christ has said Jesus says to each believer be baptized in my name be himself in Jordan's river was immersed beneath the stream I had no thought of bringing that into the sermon but it has come in and you must think about it companions under the gospel you find that these people sinners born again are companions not only in their convictions of sin when you listen to people in the public prayer making their confessions of sin how far far short they come in all they would be and do in living the life of the righteous you find that you are a companion of such who make those confessions because you have to make the same confessions it is just how you feel you were like Peter of old and he followed afar off yes and I might say this these people are sometimes companions not only as regards confessions of sin which are made they are companions in the condemnation they feel there is a condemnation

I could have told you about which is known under the law and they're all companions therein if my soul is sent to hell thy righteous law approves it well and it says in one cell and all the people shall say amen and they do if thou lord shouldst mark iniquities o lord who shall stand but dear friends there is also a condemnation known and felt alas under the gospel and sometimes when you have heard the gospel preached and Jesus Christ has been set forth and your soul has been made lively in things divine you have realized your guiltiness before god because you have to make this confession I would do good but evil is present with me yes preacher and people alike must all plead guilty here

I said about a fruitful tree earlier on can you ever look at a tree loaded with fruit and maybe broken down with the weight of it and not feel some condemnation in your conscience if you have a name on a church roll and if not if you are a companion of all them that fear god you say oh if i could only be in my everyday life like this fruitful tree bringing forth fruit to god's honor and glory but alas you seem to bring forth nothing but leaves according to how you feel often says the psalmist i am a companion of all them that fear thee i might say that these people are companions too in all their castings down and they have much casting down in their souls experience like the psalmist when he said oh my god my soul is cast down within me and you know what it is to journey on in everyday life with a cast down soul and you know what the psalmist says i pour out my soul in me and sometimes you ponder in your heart whereby you are a sinner with a cast down soul but you find in the sacred pages you have got quite a few companions whose lives are recorded who feel just like you do who tell the same tale that you were telling before god much might be said under that heading but then there is another side to this i am a companion of all them that fear thee and now these people are all companions in their comforts they cannot count anything to be comfort unless it comes with thus saith the lord comes from him who is the god of all comfort so that when you get help under the gospel or help in prayer or help in speaking one to another which you should do more than you do then they that fear the lord spake often one to another and the lord hearkened and heard it the lord assumes a listening attitude as it were to hear what you and

I say one to another and he hears when you tell out the dealings of god with your soul when you encourage each other to hope in god when you speak a word in season yes and the lord takes pleasure in it you say this comfort is that which a man cannot receive except it be given him from heaven it is not that which is just superficial or only sentimental no no it must be spiritual in its nature to be acceptable and that is what you come for as you come up to worship god and desire that the preacher might speak some comfortable words according to his commission comfort ye comfort ye my people set your god you remember what it says in the acts of the apostles when the apostles were released from prison and being let go they went to their own company what company do you keep who are your companions are they them that fear god are you concerned to be where they are and to lend a listening ear to what they say about the dealings of god if to be you might get some encouragement some help some instruction

I am a companion of all them that fear thee and now these people are companions from another viewpoint they're companions in the chastenings they are the subject of from the time they are born again as they journey on following on to know the lord you find in the word of god as many as I love I rebuke and chasten be zealous therefore and repent what did I read to you it is good for me that I have been afflicted that I might learn thy statutes and now you find these people are companions in their chastenings you go and see a brother or sister whom god has laid his chastening hand upon and as they tell out what they feel about it you will find it is along this line of thought

[ 43 : 19 ] I want this affliction to be overruled for my soul's good my soul's peace and profit as you have it in this same cell in a beautiful word let my soul live and it shall praise thee and let thy judgments help me lord I want to get some new waymark some new token for good some evidence that being chastened I am indeed a child of dying much might be said under that heading but the time is going I am a companion of all them that fear thee and now the psalmist emphasizes this viewpoint about he regards them that do indeed fear God there are some as it were if

I may put it from that viewpoint some as it were whom we can see especially fear God because of how they live and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus and as the psalmist saw people living like that concerned to keep the precepts living a life of practical godliness the psalmist said Lord I want religion that will help me to live like that I would bring forth fruit to thy honor and glory wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them but now you find this them that keep thy precepts now the word precept do listen means to be put in trust trust and remember it is

God who puts you in trust God has given in his word exceeding great and precious promises and they are what God will fulfill to you every one of them as need arises but God says to you you being my people I look to you to do something for me this people have I formed for myself they shall show forth my praise ye are my witnesses and so you read in Jeremiah I will give them one heart and one wipe and you find everyone who does fear God feels just the same that he does want to live inside the covers of the word of God let thy good spirit rule my heart govern all my words and ways let grace abound in every part teach my tongue to speak thy praise them that keep thy precepts and do remember dear friends young and old there are precepts for public life precepts for private life precepts to do with home life how you should live how you should conduct your family circle precepts for the course of truth that you belong to how you should feel regarding it what you should do toward the upkeep of it precepts to do with the church in the midst of it how you should ever endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace precepts which will help you as you go about the world to be in it and not of it there are abundance of these precepts them that keep thy precepts and everyone who does indeed fear

God is concerned in a right mind a right spirit to reduce them to practice and remember that it is in the little things not only the great things you see you may think some of you if I could only be this if I could only be that then I think I could serve God in such a sphere no no you must remain where you are and learn how to do it and maybe learn it like this the trivial round and common task will furnish all we need to ask room to deny ourselves a road that leads us daily to our God for I do hope you will think on these things as God shall help you and that you might out of the abundance of the heart be enabled to speak and some of you who have not yet done so to speak before the church

I am a companion of all them that fear thee and of them that keep thy precepts amen  
amen