

Psalms 119:143

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me: yet thy commandments are my delights.

Analysis

Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me (צָרָה וּמְצוּקָה תִּצְאוּנִי, tsarah u-metsuqah metsauni)—The Hebrew piles up terms for distress: tsarah (adversity, straits) and metsuqah (anguish, tight places) have seized him like creditors. **Yet thy commandments are my delights** (sha'ashuim, pleasures)—The adversative is stunning: in the midst of being gripped by anguish, God's Word remains the source of joy.

This paradox runs throughout Scripture. Habakkuk sang, "Yet I will rejoice in the LORD" (3:17-18). Paul and Silas sang hymns in prison (Acts 16:25). Delight in God's Word is not contingent on circumstances but flows from the Word's inherent beauty and the relationship it mediates. Job's testimony echoes this: "I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12).

Historical Context

Ancient Israel faced repeated cycles of trouble—Egyptian bondage, wilderness trials, Canaanite oppression, exile. In each crisis, meditation on Torah sustained the faithful remnant. Daniel's prayers in Babylon exemplify this pattern (Daniel 9).

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What does it reveal about the nature of Scripture that it can be a source of delight even in anguish?
2. How might regular meditation on God's commandments prepare you to experience joy in future trials?

Interlinear Text

צָר	וּמָצָא וְלִי	מִצְוָה וְנִי	מִצְוֹתֶיךָ	שְׂשׂוֹנִי:
Trouble	and anguish	have taken hold	on me yet thy commandments	are my delights
H6862	H4689	H4672	H4687	H8191

Additional Cross-References

Job 23:12 (Word): Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.

Psalms 119:107 (Word): I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O LORD, according unto thy word.