

**LIVING
AND
LOVING
THE
WORD**

A commentary on Psalm 119

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THE PATH OF LIFE
Psalm 119.1-8

Last week we looked at the first psalm as an introduction to all the psalms, and in particular as in introduction to the longest psalm, Psalm 119. Tonight we begin our study of the Psalm 119 .

Psalm 119 is the longest of the 150 psalms, it has 176 verses broken up into 22 stanzas of 8 verses per stanza.

Some have attributed this psalm to David but the author is unknown.

Psalm 119 is simply 176 verses about the word of God.

Before we get into the first stanza of this Psalm let's understand how the word of God is actually referred to.

There are five words used in these first 8 verses that all refer to the word of God in some way and are used throughout this entire psalm:

LAW: the word is 'Torah' and it means instruction or teaching

TESTIMONIES: facts about God; something that refers to God and what He has done

PRECEPTS: particular and specific instructions of God

STATUTES: the binding force of God's word written down

COMMANDMENTS: obligations, a code of law

The study of God's word leads to a study of God Himself, which leads not just to a desire for the word of God, but for the God of the Word.

*1. How blessed are those whose way is blameless,
Who walk in the law of the LORD.*

★BLESSED: there are two different words used for the word 'blessed' in the Hebrew. One is when God pronounced blessings on someone; the other is when a person experiences blessings of some sort. One is from God to man and the other is the result of something.

Here the word BLESSED means realizing something beneficial from reading and living the word of God.

In other words those who walk in the law of the Lord, those who observe His testimonies and who seek him with all their heart (v. 2) will be the ones who will receive the benefit of their love for and obedience to the word of God.

What might those blessings be?

- 1, A clear understanding of God's will for your life;
2. Examples of both faithfulness and unfaithfulness of those who followed the Lord;
3. Lessons to be learned about God's provision and protection of His children;
4. God's great love for us through His Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

How can our way be blameless if we do not walk in the law of the Lord?

PS 1, the life of the man who did not walk, stand, or sit was the blessed life. Instead this man took delight in meditating on the word of God.

WALK = way of life

★BLAMELESS does not mean sinless or perfect but it does mean living a life that is free from blame based on how they live their life.

[Wiersbe] blameless does not mean sinless but wholehearted devotion to the Lord, sincerity, and integrity.

LAW: Torah, meaning instruction or teaching [the main meaning]

[CC] this blessing does not come upon us because of grim duty or because of legalistic, external performance. Blessing comes with a combination of external obedience and internal affection.

★Our walk has to be redeemed before it can ever be blameless. And we must walk by faith before we can walk in the law.

**2 *How blessed are those who observe His testimonies,
Who seek Him with all [their] heart.***

★SEEK: follow after; God seeks us before we ever seek Him. But once God saves us then we have to start to seek out, to go after spiritual growth. God's word always has a lesson to teach us if we allow ourselves to be teachable.

So not only is a person blessed who walk after the Lord, but they are also blessed because they do or observe God's TESTIMONIES: facts about God.

They seek Him, go after him, follow after him – this is a conscious act of the will on the part of man

★*Before we can observe His commandments we have to first obey His command – you must be born again.*

The 'blameless' way is the life of integrity. Only staying close to the Word of God will our 'way' ever be blameless, to have integrity of heart and mind. God desires for His children to be blameless in their walk as the Lord Jesus was blameless in His.

1 & .2 "How blessed" are those who "walk" and "seek" after the Lord

If only Christians would get hold of this very simple yet profound truth: the blessed life, as so often portrayed in the Psalms, is simply for those who go after God with all their life.

vv. 1-2 are similar to PS 1.1: How blessed is the man who does not walk, stand, or sit with the unrighteous. Here in vv. 1-2, David writes how blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk, observe, and seek. The teaching of the word of God is very clear: seeking after God brings with it great blessings.

3 ***They also do no unrighteousness;***
 They walk in His ways.

THEY DO NO UNRIGHTEOUSNESS because they have the word of God , they are doing their best in the power of the Holy Spirit to live lives that honor God.

In Psalm 1 we read the man is blessed if he does not walk, stand, or sit with sinners; and that instead he meditates on God's word and takes delight in God's word. And because he takes delight and takes God's word as it is, he will be like the firmly planted tree that produces fruit and prospers. Here, the man is blessed if he observes God's word, if he seeks out God with all his heart. And if they walk after the Lord and walk according to the work of the Lord their lives will be free from blame.

★The person whose way is blameless (v. 1), those who observe His testimonies (v. 2) and seek Him with all their heart (v. 2) will be the person who does no unrighteousness. Their life is simply an overflow of the heart, and the heart tuned to God will always seek His will.

4 ***You have ordained Your precepts,
That we should keep [them] diligently.***

★PRECEPTS: orders and commandments; particular instructions of the Lord

God has given us His word, his commands, for our lives, for our spiritual health. To keep his words, his commands, His testimonies brings the blessings of life.

5 ***Oh that my ways may be established To keep Your statutes!***

★ESTABLISHED: faithful, sure, reliable

★STATUTES: regulation, law, customs; the binding force of God's words written down

We pray for what we WANT; we are thankful for what we HAVE; and we trust God for what is PROMISED [Bridges]

The only way we will ever walk with the Lord and have our 'way' established is to stay in the word of God. The one who keeps His testimonies (v. 2) and who walks in the law of the Lord (v. 1) will be the one with the established way.

★It is also God who enables us to keep His statutes through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Apart from the spirit of God we are unable to do anything for God.

6 *Then I shall not be ashamed When I look upon all Your commandments.*

LOOK: have respect

There is no shame in reading the word of God and living the word and allowing the word of God to affect your entire life, as it should be.

★Those who walk in the law of the Lord, those who observe His commandments, whose ways are established to keep His statutes are those who are not ashamed. So often we live lives we are ashamed of when we come to faith in Christ, it almost paralyzes us. But in Christ there is forgiveness and freedom, not shame and guilt. He bore the shame and guilt of the cross for our freedom.

2 Tim. 1.3 [read] – serving God with a clear conscience

**7 *I shall give thanks to You with uprightness of heart,
 When I learn Your righteous judgments.***

I will give thanks to the Lord for what he has done in my life because he has transformed my heart to a heart of thanksgiving.

WHEN I LEARN: God allows us to see how he has worked in our lives.

★Thanksgiving to the Lord comes from the upright heart that has been changed by the Lord through His word. When we begin to meditate on His word, ‘walk in the law of the Lord’ (v. 1), and we begin to live His word, “observe His testimonies” (v. 2), then we will have no problem giving thanks to Him.

**8 *I shall keep Your statutes;
 Do not forsake me utterly!***

It seems David was in fear of God turning His back on him because of some sin. The word ‘forsake’ is a strong word that means to turn your back on someone. In these first 8 verses David writes of the blessings of following God’s word and the fact that God gave His word to us so we would be blessed. And David’s statement of action, “I shall keep your statutes”. This should be our plan in life too – to keep the word of God.

Both the first 8 verses here and PS 128, and PS 1 all tell the same truth: great blessings and spiritual prosperity are found in the life of the person who not only loves God's word but lives God's word. The blessings are for those who walk, observe, seek, do. A simple yet profound promise from the word of God and yet neglected by so many Christians.

SOME PRINCIPLES TO BE APPLIED TO THESE FIRST 8 VERSES:

1. God has given us His word for our spiritual growth and health.

We just need to understand that simply reading and gaining information from God's word will do us no good unless we take His word and put into our lives to be lived for the glory of God.

2. God's word helps keep us from straying to sin and disobedience.

God's word helps us understand what sin is, the devastating effects of sin in our lives, and how we can be forgiven of our sins through Jesus Christ.

3. God's word has been given so that it can be lived and obeyed.

God's word is not impossible to observe

DT 30.11-14: his word is not unattainable nor out of reach

4. God's word helps us understand his desire for our lives.

God's word spells out his desire for our lives, it spells out the work of the Holy Spirit in helping us understand his word, and His word lets us know about His return and judgment on this earth.

LIVING THE CLEAR LIFE

Psalm 119.9-16

About once every 2 weeks we run vinegar through our coffee maker because of mineral deposits that build up in it due to the hard water. And when the vinegar comes out in the carafe it has bits and pieces of mineral deposits and the water is a brownish color because of the coffee residue – not clear and certainly not pure!

If you have ever traveled overseas you know that one of the key concerns is clean water; in fact many missions organizations focus their efforts on providing wells in developing countries that provide clean drinking water. Contaminated water is a leading cause of many diseases.

According to statistics on the website of thewaterproject.org:

Nearly 1 out of every 5 deaths under the age of 5 worldwide is due to a water-related disease.

443 million school days are lost each year due to water-related diseases.

1 in 9 people world wide do not have access to safe and clean drinking water

783 million people do not have access to clean and safe water. 37% of those people live in Sub-Saharan Africa

So vinegar can be made impure through mineral deposits, and water can be made impure through bacteria and other forms of waste.

The same is true of our lives. If we want our lives to be pure so that God is honored then first we have to trust and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and then we have to submit our lives to the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit through God's word.

Last week we began a study of Psalm 119 which focuses on the word of God.

We discovered in the first 8 verses of this longest psalm that living the word of God leads to blessings in our lives.

Tonight we will discover what studying and meditating on the word of God does for us.

[SCRIPTURE]

We're talking about how the word of God helps us live this pure or clear life.

I just want to remind you again of some words that are used throughout Psalm 119 that refers to the word of God:

LAW: the word is 'Torah' and it means instruction or teaching

TESTIMONIES: facts about God; something that refers to God and what He has done

PRECEPTS: particular and specific instructions of God

STATUTES: the binding force of God's word written down

COMMANDMENTS: obligations, a code of law

Let's read these verses and discover how to live the clear life.

I. The STANDARD for the clear life is the WORD OF GOD (v. 9)

Right up front we see a contrast here: the writer poses a question:

How can a young man keep his way pure?

What is implied here is there is an impure way to live and a pure way to live.

PURE: to be clear, transparent

HOW? The rest of this stanza helps us understand

The writer simply states that by keeping or living or obeying the word of God, that would help keep him living a pure or clear life before God.

With the greatest care a man will go astray if his map misleads him; but with the most accurate map he will still lose his road if he does not take heed to it. [CHS]

That is so true in our lives today. In our world of the GPS we sometimes rely on the GPS to give us good directions to get where we need to go, but if those directions are not accurate then we either get lost or get frustrated because we can't find where we need to go.

Now notice he did not say SINLESS but pure.

A pure life is the one that God looks at and cannot find anything in it that would spoil or damage that person's testimony as a child of God.

The Bible is our guideline for life. Contained in the pages of the Bible are the examples of lives lived that were pure and lives that were impure. Also in the Bible are clear guidelines that help us understand the kind of life God expects us to live.

But understand it takes the power of the Holy Spirit as we cooperate with Him that helps us live the clear or pure life.

Also understand that simply trying to live a pure life apart from the cleansing and saving power of God in Jesus Christ is impossible. We can't even begin to live this pure life until God through Christ has saved us and filled us with His Holy Spirit, then we can begin to pursue and live this clear, pure life, the life that honors God.

Does that mean we will never stumble as we follow the word of God? No, but it does help us understand that when we do stumble we have an advocate in the Lord Jesus Christ who is before the throne of God acting on our behalf when we pray and ask for forgiveness.

1 JOHN 1.9 is a great example [read]

God's word gives us clear instruction in what is pure and impure, clean and unclean

MATT 5.8: *blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.*

The pure in heart exhibit a single-minded devotion to God that comes from an internal cleansing brought about by following Jesus.

[Bonhoeffer] the pure in heart have hearts free from defilement and are not distracted by conflicting desires and intentions.

[DEV] If our way is pure, then we will not wander from God's commands (v. 10). On the other hand, if we do wander away from the word of God, our way will not be pure because we will not be seeking the Lord as we should.

There can be no more important inquiry for one just entering on the journey of life; there can be found nowhere a more just and comprehensive answer than is contained in this single verse. All the precepts of ancient and modern wisdom, all the teachings of heathen morality and religion, and all the results of the experience of mankind, could furnish nothing in addition to what is here suggested. The world has no higher wisdom than this by which to guide a young man so that he may lead a holy life.

[Barnes]

So first the STANDARD for this clear life is the word of God. If we ignore God's word we are cutting ourselves off from living the life God is pleased with.

II. The SEARCH for the clear life keeps us from WANDERING AWAY (vv. 10-11)

Verses 10 and 11 give us some clear instructions about the HOW part of keeping our way pure: SEEKING God through His word and TREASURING God's word

HEART: the heart is the seat of emotion and desire. The psalmist is centering his pursuit of God's word with all his heart and everything he has.

He did not wear a text on his heart as a charm, but he hid it in his heart as a rule. [CHS]

HOW DO WE SEEK GOD TODAY?

WANDER: drift; to move around or to go about in a particular way with no direction or purpose; to follow a path with many turns. Now I like that last definition because that's exactly what happens

when we wander from the word of God, we will go down a path that has many turns because of false teaching and because of the deception of the enemy. And just as a sheep that wanders becomes prey to predators, so too do we become prey to the attacks of the devil when we stray from the word of God
HOW DO WE WANDER FROM GOD'S COMMANDMENTS? *When we disregard them, when we ignore them, when we do not make it our point to know them.*

PROV 19.27: Cease listening, my son, to discipline, and you will stray from the words of knowledge

How do we wander from the commandments of God" by taking our eyes off the Lord, by looking back at the world (Luke 9.62), by not treasuring God's word in our hearts, by not meditating on the precepts of God's word, by forgetting God's Word.

HOW TO AVOID WANDERING

TREASURE GOD'S WORD (vv. 11a)

MEDITATE ON GOD'S WORD (v. 15a)

REVERE GOD'S WORD (v. 15b)

DELIGHT IN GOD'S WORD (v. 16a)

REMEMBER GOD'S WORD (v. 16a)

Jesus said we are to love the Lord with all our heart, and now the Psalmist gives us another affirmation of that. the heart was considered the seat of emotion and will, so the Bible commands me to seek the Lord with everything I have which means my life must be absorbed into the Lord and everything about Him.

V. 11

Various translations: hid, stored up, treasured

How does hiding or storing up or treasuring God's word in our hearts keep us from sinning?

JOHN 14.26: but the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you

JOHN 16.13a: but when He the spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth

The only way God's word is going to keep us from sinning and to help us keep our way pure is if we don't just read God's word but treasure it, hold it as dear to our spiritual health, memorize it, study it, use it so that when temptation does come our way, and it will, we will be able to recall the word of God that will help us understand God's love for us and how to avoid yielding to that temptation.

The purpose of treasuring God's word in our heart is to help us keep from sinning against God. God's word gives us the guidelines, but if we ignore them then we set ourselves up for failure.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO TREASURE GOD'S WORD? Love it, read it, take delight in it, live it, teach it.

The purpose here is to prevent sin, and back to v. 1, if we treasure it then we will keep our way pure for the Lord.

[DEV] One man has said that the Bible will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from the Bible. Verse 11 is so true, that when we treasure the word of God in our hearts, it will keep us mindful of the precepts of God and help us flee from all forms of unrighteousness and learn to take every thought captive to Christ.

So first the psalmist asks a question that sets up this grouping of verses:

How can a young man keep his way pure?

Then, he gives some details: SEEK God's word and TREASURE God's word

Once he begins seeking and treasuring God's word, look what happens:

III. The SUPPLICATION for the clear life is a REQUEST TO BE TAUGHT (vv. 12-13)

V. 12:

BLESSED simply means to speak well of. The psalmist here is praising God because of the power of God's word and the effect it had on his life.

To be taught we have to be teachable.

Man's teaching puffs up, God's teaching humbles us;

Man's teaching may lead us to both truth and error; God's teaching IS truth;

Man's teaching leads to learning; God's teaching leads to holiness

[DEV] How can we be sure we are teachable? We must read God's word and allow the Holy Spirit to convict us and guide us as we live each day. God's word was written so we would know Him, not just follow a set of rules. His word is His guidelines for godly living, we just have to pay attention.

"Teach me your statutes" is a desire to learn.

V. 13

He was not afraid to share the word of God with others, to share what God had taught him with others.

[DEV] We cannot teach what we have not been taught nor can we teach what we do not know. When we begin to not only read God's word, but study and apply His word then we can begin to tell others the truth of His word because we are living it.

As he was taught he became a teacher.

2 TIM 1.14; 2.2 [READ]

IV. The STRATEGY for the clear life is an ACTIVE PURSUIT of God THROUGH HIS WORD

(vv. 14-16)

V. 14:

REJOICED IN THE WAY: maybe taken delight in God's testimonies?

AS MUCH AS: maybe a clue to who he was – someone acquainted with riches but has realized how fleeting and empty they really are compared to the word of God.

We rejoice in riches, in possessions, in stuff, more than we rejoice in the testimonies of God. But if God is our treasure, if our joy and our comfort and strength are in the Lord and our walk with Him and His word, then the world will not affect our walk, and we will not be moved!

V. 15:

MEDITATE: to think about, contemplate, regard

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF MEDITATION AS OPPOSED TO STUDY?

To meditate and regard means to think about, to consider, to ponder, and then to do. To regard literally is to consider carefully, to turn it over in my mind, and then to do it. This meditation and regarding is a deliberate act of the will in following and obeying God.

V. 16

I SHALL NOT FORGET: if you meditate, treasure, keep the word of God you will be less likely to forget God's word.

If anything displeases us we are glad if we can forget it. [Manton]

Do we delight in the word of God? Do we delight in reading and obeying it? Do we delight in being corrected by it and being disciplined by it? God have us His word for our lives, the good and the (sometimes) painful. If there is correction needed it is because God wants us to stay on the narrow path. His word helps us keep it “between the ditches” so to speak. His word is a delight because it teaches me of His great love for me. His word is a delight because I read that he loves me in spite of myself. His word is a delight because I read and I know I am a child of God because of Jesus Christ.

How does the New Testament parallel this teaching of reading and understanding the word of God for our spiritual health and well-being/

2 TIM 2.15

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

CONCLUSION/CALL TO ACTION

When the vinegar runs through our coffee maker it's not pure, it is dirty and has mineral deposits in it, and it can be easily seen.

God wants to be able to look at our lives and see clearly that there are no impurities caused by the world or caused by our sinful nature.

And that can be achieved as long as we cling to, go after, and treasure God's word in our lives.

GEMS FOR THE JOURNEY
Psalm 119.17-24

INTRODUCTION: *the Sunday School class I was a part of in Jacksonville, FL really made my last deployment in the Navy a real blessing. The deployment was six months. So the class packed a small box, had to be small because of limited storage space on the ship, and inside that box was six different packages of various sizes. The point was at the beginning of each month of the deployment I would open one of the smaller packages, and each one was marked with the month it was to be opened. Each package was different, it could be a book to read or some candy or some cards they had written or a CD to listen to; and that box helped get me through that 6 month deployment, gave me something to look forward to, and helped me know that with each package I opened I was that much closer to going home, and that was the best part.*

Psalm 119 is all about the word of God and the joy of knowing the word of God and living the word of God.

So far we have discovered this about the word of God:

Ps 119.1-8: the word of God is the source of a BLESSED life

Ps 119.9-16: the word of God is the source of a PURE life

Tonight we are going to discover that the word of God is our source for a GUIDED life. God's word guides us through life with specific "gems" that help us grow in His word and love His word and get through this journey called faith until the day we meet him in glory.

[SCRIPTURE]

We're talking about the word of God guiding us on our journey through life.

I. God's GOODNESS helps us KEEP HIS WORD (vv. 17)

DEAL BOUNTIFULLY means be good to or to reward someone for something. The word literally means to produce fruit, for an almond tree to produce ripe almonds

^{NET} Psalm 119:17 Be kind to your servant!

^{NJB} Psalm 119:17 Be generous to your servant

^{NLT} Psalm 119:17 Be good to your servant,

The psalmist pleads for God's bountiful dealings in his life for two reasons:

- 1, "That I might live"
2. "That I might keep your word"

First it is only because of God's bountiful dealings in our lives that we even able to live and breathe.

God created us and gave us life and breath.

PS 104.29-30: God sends forth His spirit and life is created, God withdraws His spirit and life ceases.

We are at the mercy of God at all times; praise the Lord He is not a fickle or malevolent God that just gets angry and takes people out on a whim!

Everything that we have, everything that we are, all the blessings of life that we experience are all because of God's gracious and bountiful dealings with us.

1 CHRON 29.14: in David's great prayer at the dedication of the temple:

"But who am I and who are my people that we should be able to offer as generously as this? For all things come from you, and from Your hand we have given you."

So first it is only because of God's bountiful dealings with us that we are even able to live.

Then it is only because of God's bountiful dealings that we are able to keep His word.

It is apparent in the psalms that regardless of the situation the child of God can sing and celebrate because of how God deals with us. How does God deal with us?

As God declared His person to Moses on Mt. Sinai: "The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth. . . who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin" (Ex. 34.5-6)

God deals with us with compassion, grace, patience, mercy, and truth; and he forgives our sins. While we may not be so forgiving of our fellow man, and while we may not treat our fellow man this way, it is God who treats us based on His character and not based on who we are because we are all sinners deserving of His punishment.

If God did not deal bountifully with us there would be no way we could keep His word. But because He does treat us with love and forgiveness then we can, through and by the help of the Holy Spirit, live and model His word.

Think about it, what kind of God would He be if on the one hand He expected us to live His word and keep His word, and yet on the other hand He dealt with us harshly and unlovingly? We would have no desire to keep His word at all. It is because He deals with us according to His character that we can keep His word.

GOD'S GOODNESS HELPS US KEEP HIS WORD

II. God's REVELATION helps us UNDERSTAND HIS WORD (vv. 18-19)

OPEN: literally to open that which had been previously concealed; to uncover or remove a veil of some sort.

OPEN MY EYES: it is the Spirit of God that “opens the eyes of our heart” so that we may understand God’s word. The Spirit of God is our counselor and helper when it comes to understanding the word of God.

This is part of God’s bountiful dealings with us, that He opens the eyes of our understanding, He enables us to understand His word.

v. 10: do not let me wander from your commandments

we will wander if our eyes are not opened to the truth and understanding of His word.

“Every man is blind until God opens the eyes of our understanding.” [John Calvin]

DO NOT HIDE is the opposite but same truth of v. 18: OPEN MY EYES. How could God expect us to live and keep his word, and how could we even hope to live and keep His word, if He concealed or hid his word from us. God wants us to know and live His word and has given us His Holy Spirit to help us understand it for life transformation.

v. 19

The writer of Psalm 119 uses a word that is very familiar in the Old Testament, and that word is STRANGER.

STRANGER: a temporary dweller

STRANGER: in v. 54 the writer indicates he is on a pilgrimage.

PS 39.12: David indicates he is a stranger and sojourner on this earth like his fathers were.

GEN 47.9: Jacob indicated he was a sojourner and so were his fathers

LEV 25.23: God tells the Hebrews they are both aliens and sojourners with Him.

1 CHRON 29.15: in David’s prayer he indicated he and the Hebrews were sojourners and tenants on this earth whose lives are but a shadow

(V. 19) HEB 11.13 gives us this same truth, that those who have trusted Christ are on a pilgrimage to the promised land, this is not our home, our home awaits us in the presence of the Lord. But the Bible is also clear that while we are passing through, we are to share Christ and proclaim Christ to all we have contact with.

So the psalmist gives us the picture of traveling through a land that is not his home and this is so true of us, that we are traveling through a land that is not our own.

The moment we trusted Christ, heaven became our home and we are just passing through.

Jesus has already prepared a place for us and one day we will inhabit that place, we will take possession of that place. But until then we are passing through this earth and serving the Lord along the way.

STRANGER: *Let us not forget, that we are looking forward and making a progress towards a world where none are strangers, where all are children of one family, dwelling in one eternal home.*

[Bridges]

III. God's JUDGMENTS helps us DESIRE HIS WORD (v. 20)

^{NLT} **Psalm 119:20** I am always overwhelmed with a desire for your regulations.

^{ESV} **Psalm 119:20** My soul is consumed with longing for your rules at all times.

^{NET} **Psalm 119:20** I desperately long to know your regulations at all times.

v. 20

When our second daughter Kris was born I was on deployment in the northern Arabian Sea. When I found out Dena had given birth I wanted so bad to get off the ship and get back home but that was not possible. I had an intense desire to be with my family but there was no way, and the Navy will not let you leave the ship that is on deployment simply because your wife gives birth. And so my intense desire to be off the ship and be at home with my family would simply have to wait until we got back to our hope port of Yokosuka, Japan would was not for another two months!

LONGING: a strong desire

ORDINANCES: first saw this word back in verse 13 as one of the many words used to describe the Word of God. It means a judgment of God or a decision of God.

Other words we have discovered in Psalm 119 that describe the word of God are:

LAW: the word is 'Torah' and it means instruction or teaching

TESTIMONIES: facts about God; something that refers to God and what He has done

PRECEPTS: particular and specific instructions of God

STATUTES: the binding force of God's word written down

COMMANDMENTS: obligations, a code of law

The writer of Psalm 119 knew God to be a just and fair God, and that while God does judge He does so according to His character. The fact that God is fair and impartial gives us that desire to know His word more because we know that even when we sin, even when we are in need of the forgiveness of God, we can come to him and He will forgive us and treat us with compassion and love based on His character.

The psalmist had such an intense desire to know God's word that it was almost a burden for him. He desired to know God's word, He longed to know God's word, He was consumed with knowing God's word. This desire to know God's word is created within us as we follow the Lord and as we seek to

know him more fully than we already do. God through the Holy Spirit gives us the ability to know and understand His word, and the more we know, the more we understand, the greater desire we have to know more about His word.

Go back and look at v. 11:

Your word I have treasured in my heart that I might not sin against You.

There would be no way the psalmist would be crushed or overwhelmed, consumed or desperately long for God's word if that word were not treasured as something special to him.

PS 1.2: the blessed man meditates on the word of God and takes delight in the word of God

PS 40.8: David took delight in doing God's will because God's word was in his heart

God deals bountifully with us so that we will come to understand and love and cherish His word at all times.

IV. God's DISCIPLINE helps us STAY FOCUSED ON HIS WORD (vv. 21-23)

v. 21:

ARROGANT: the word means to literally boil. The arrogant person is haughty and self-centered, he has a higher opinion of himself than he ought to and because of that he looks down on others as if he is better and they are lower than himself. And it is this kind of person the Lord is opposed to

v. 21

The 'rebuke' of the Lord is His discipline. He rebukes those who wander from His commandments because he wants the best for us. His commandments lead us to right living, a life that pleases Him. His rebuke is solely in love to lead us back to the right path in following Him.

v. 22: the reproach and contempt come from those who do not love God's word nor desire it nor take delight in it. The psalmist is asking for relief from those who would attack him because he observes and lives the word of God.

v. 23

David knew the only kind of life that pleases the Lord is the life that is dedicated to studying and living in His word. We have the choice, every day, to live our lives in one of two ways: guided by the word of god or going with the flow of society which includes just sitting and talking about others as a way of passing judgment on them.

When "princes" sit and talk against us we have one of two choices: listen to what they say and find a way to retaliate, or allow God's word to give us the answer how to respond. David said he would

meditate on God's word, and by implication, God's word would be his guide. Good advice for us. It may not be easy but that's what honors God.

IV. God's TESTIMONIES help us VALUE HIS WORD (v. 24)

The psalmist confirmed to the Lord that He was his counselor, not the princes. A counselor is one we can go to for wise advice and direction in life and the psalmist knew the best advice and the best wisdom came from the Lord. God and His word would be the only counselors the psalmist needed in his life.

God's word is our lamp and our light and his word is also our counselor. God's word comforts us, talks to us of our situation, tells us of God's love and forgiveness, and trains us up in righteous living. All we have to do is read it, take it into our lives, live it, and allow it to teach us.

Twice in this section David refers to himself as "your servant". Here he was, the king of Israel, and considered himself the servant of the Lord. And the contrast in the verses could not be stronger: your servant vs the arrogant and the cursed. David drew a sharp distinction between himself and those who didn't love the Lord. And so should there be a sharp distinction drawn in our lives between us and those who do not love the Lord and live for Him. Not that we are any better because we're not, but that God's transforming power has made that much of a difference in our lives.

If we desire to find comfort in the Scriptures we must submit ourselves to their counsel, and when we follow their counsel it must not be with reluctance but with delight. [CHS]

THE SAFE HARBOR OF GOD'S WORD

Psalm 119.25-32

INTRODUCTION: One of the books I have used in the past for pre-marital counseling talks about people treating marriage like a "safe harbor." A safe harbor is a place where a ship would sail to and drop anchor to avoid storms at sea. For some marriage as a safe harbor is seen in one of four ways:

- 1. The "harbor of personal fulfillment". "If I get married, I'll feel joy and happiness until the end of my days."*
- 2. The "harbor of companionship." "I can't stand the thought of living alone for the rest of my life."*
- 3. The "harbor of sexual fulfillment." "Marriage means that I can enjoy sex anytime I want and never feel guilty or fearful."*
- 4. The "harbor of social acceptance." "My family and friends won't quit asking me, 'Is there someone special in your life?'"*

None of these ideas of marriage are healthy but they are a reality that must be discussed to gain a proper understanding of marriage.

The apostle Paul, when sailing to Rome, was caught in a storm at sea; they were looking for a safe harbor to ride out the storm. His ship tried to make to the safe harbor of Phoenix on the island of Crete where they had planned on wintering over, but the wind took them further out to sea and they languished in a storm for 2 weeks before running aground on the island of Malta in the central Mediterranean Sea.

In Psalm 119, verses 25-32 give us a picture of the writer going through a very difficult time in his life and he is seeking a safe harbor. But the harbor this man is seeking is the word of God.

Tonight we are going to discover how God's word can be our safe harbor in times of trouble.

[SCRIPTURE]

We're talking about how God's word can be a safe harbor in our lives.

We have to have a clear understanding of God's word in order for it to be a safe harbor for us.

I. God's word RAISES US UP when we have been brought low (v. 25)

Of all the Psalms the 119th Psalm uses the word REVIVE more than any of the others. Nine times in Ps 119 we read the word REVIVE.

REVIVE means to be brought back to life again, which implies at one time there was life but now for some reason that life has been diminished. It can also mean to refresh and/or restore

When the psalmist writes that his, “soul cleaves to the dust” we get the picture of someone who has been brought low in their life. For some reason the psalmist has suffered a difficulty, a set-back, some type of distress either physically, mentally, or spiritually that has led him to feel despair.

^{NET} **Psalm 119:25** I collapse in the dirt. Revive me with your word!

^{NJB} **Psalm 119:25** Down in the dust I lie prostrate; true to your word, revive me.

^{NLT} **Psalm 119:25** I lie in the dust; revive me by your word.

One of the signs of mourning in the Old Testament was to sit and throw dust on your head.

So the writer has requested of God to revive him, or restore him, or refresh him according to the word of God.

So if God’s word is a source of refreshment and restoration, how exactly does God’s word do that for us?

First we have to be careful not to treat God’s word like an aspirin – “just take a couple of verses and call me in the morning” kind of thing. Yes God’s word does refresh us and God’s word does revive us, but the question is HOW does God’s word do this?

Think about this: how many times in the word of God do we read where God told the Hebrews they would be blessed if they obeyed His word and would be judged if they disobeyed?

DT 32.39 [READ] it is God who is in charge of life and death, it is God who is in charge of blessings and judgment.

JER 6.16: ask for the correct way to walk and it will be given

PS 118.1-9 [read]

God’s word informs us of God’s gracious dealings, of His many blessings and mercies, of His ever-present watchful care over his children, of His desire for us to walk in His word and to experience His blessings.

The key is, when we pray for revival, for refreshment, for restoration in accordance to God’s will then we have to be ready for His answer and we have to be GOOD with His answer. Oftentimes His answer may not be what we expected but if it is from God then it is His will being done.

Oftentimes pastors don’t pray for revival, real biblical revival because it comes with a price.

Normally there will be one of three responses to revival in the church:

Some will GIVE AWAY their personal preferences and seek the will of God: this is the proper approach to revival;

Some will STAND AWAY and see what will happen before they commit to anything;

Others will WALK AWAY because they refuse to repent and allow God to change them. This is probably the greatest roadblock to revival, refusing to repent and allow God to work through us for His glory.

God's word will revive and restore us when we have been brought low, all we have to do is cooperate with what the Holy Spirit is doing in order for that to happen.

II. God's word INFORMS US about His gracious character (v. 26)

What is implied here is the writer has poured out his heart to God. He has given God all his thoughts and feelings and just emptied himself before the Lord. So often this is what is required if we want to see real change in our lives and in the life of the church we have to be open and honest before the Lord. God knows our heart but we have to be able to agree with God before anything can happen.

How does God answer us when we pray? How does God answer our pleas and heart-felt yearnings?

God answers through the ministry of the Holy Spirit;

God answers through circumstances;

God answers through other believers;

God answers however God chooses to answer that will honor Him and that will get our attention

ILLUS: 1 KINGS 19:9-12 [READ] Elijah proclaimed himself as being very jealous for the Lord and yet he was being persecuted and hunted by the wicked queen. Elijah was having a pity party for himself and that's what we do at times. But God spoke to Him, God revealed himself to Elijah, not in the earthquake, not in the fierce wind, but in the still, small voice

Notice the second part of this verse:

TEACH ME: 10x in Psalm 119 the psalmist requests of God to teach him, and in 8 of these instances the writer requests of God to teach him His statutes. This shows us a willingness on the part of the writer to be taught the word of God.

STATUTE: the binding force of God's word written down which must be strictly adhered to

The psalmist had such a love for God and for the word of God that he knew that if God's word was going to revive him and refresh him then he wanted to be taught that word.

How often do we go to the word of God before we do anything else? Why is it that often prayer and the word of God seems to be the last resort we turn to instead of the first?

Because we want to fix things ourselves, we want to be able to say we did it. Turning to prayer and the word of God, to us, may seem like a weakness, as if we can't do anything about it, and the truth is we CAN'T do anything about it.

If God's word is truly going to be a safe harbor for me in difficult times then I have got to learn to trust in and allow God's word to instruct me in the right way..

III. God's word STRENGTHENS US in the difficult times (v. 27-28)

Notice the progression here:

First the writer requests that he be revived by the word of God;

Then he requests to be taught the word of God;

Now he requests to be given understanding of God's word

UNDERSTAND means to discern, to be able to correctly understand and apply God's word to our lives for life change (4x in Ps. 119 we read his request to receive understanding: vv. 73, 125, 144, 169)

So in Psalm 119, 10x the author requests to be taught God's word and 4x he requests to receive understanding of God's word – clearly a person who reveres and respects the word of God as biblical authority in his life.

PRECEPTS: the particular instructions of the Lord

In other words, as we read God's word and understand God's word we realize it speaks into the situation in our lives and tells us what to do. When we fully understand what we are supposed to do then it is incumbent upon us to do it right then.

God's word is for the here and now, not for the sometime later

Notice that the teaching leads to understanding, and the understanding leads to meditation on God's word.

MEDITATE simply means to understand it, to think about it, to turn it over in your mind

WONDERS: what God has specifically done in a particular situation

And meditation on the wonders and work of God leads to a powerful public testimony to what God does and can do.

v. 28

now we get a glimpse into what may be going on in the life of the psalmist:

MY SOUL WEEPS BECAUSE OF GRIEF

Whatever has happened the psalmist has been struck by grief and needs a place to turn for refreshment and restoration.

Grief can be overwhelming to the point that you don't know what to do;

It can paralyze you because you are unsure as to what to do;

It can make you weak because you feel so helpless

There are three questions people experiencing grief often ask themselves:

WHAT CAN I DO?

As your loved one is maybe sick and in a very critical situation you often ask yourself is there anything you could do because if there was you would certainly do it.

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Once your grief passes to the next phase, say your loved one has died, you're not quite sure what you are supposed to do next. All of a sudden you are faced with a score of questions and decisions you have to make and it absolutely can be overwhelming.

WHAT WILL I DO?

This is probably the most critical of the three questions. How you answer this question will determine how you will move forward in life.

And although every situation is different I can almost tell you what you have to do, and that is – you live, live every day to the glory of God, make every day count.

IV. God's word DIRECTS US in the faithful way to live (vv. 29-30)

In these two verses we have an interesting contrast:

The false way vs the faithful way

The false way can be summed up in one word: self

When we try to find the solution to a difficult time on our own, when we simply try to work things out apart from the counsel of the word of God we will go wrong. And what we don't understand is this way is the false way because our hearts are sinful, and while we may think what we are doing is good and right it might not be what God would have us do.

PROV 12.15 [READ]

PROV 16.2,25 [READ]

Psalm 27 is a favorite psalm of mine and the last verse is especially important for people like me who have a hard time being patient:

v. 14: *Wait for the Lord; be strong and let your heart take courage ; yes, wait for the Lord.*

God's word will direct us and lead us in the path we are to go but oftentimes we have to be patient and wait for the Lord.

We want to jump out there and make it work ourselves and most often that just doesn't work;

Look what happened when Abraham's wife Sarah decided to take matters in her own hand with it came to providing a son for Abraham (Gen. 16)

So the writer of Psalm 119 requests of the Lord to remove the false way, possible the inclination to go on his own without consulting the Lord through prayer and through the word of God.

v. 30:

FAITHFUL WAY: we have already read about what the faithful way is: reading the word of God, studying the word of God, understanding the word of God, meditating on the word of God, and then living the word of God.

ORDINANCES: first saw this word back in verse 13 as one of the many words used to describe the Word of God. It means a judgment of God or a decision of God.

To say God has placed his ordinances before him means that as he reads God's word and understands God's word the faithful way becomes clear to him.

Just in these two verses of scripture it is clear that there is one of two way we can live our lives:

The false way or the faithful way – it all depends on what we do with the word of God.

V. God's word INCREASES us in our faith and trust in Him (vv. 31-32)

CLING: to hold on to tightly, not to let go

God's word was going to revive him and he is not letting go if it, he is going to trust in God's word and rely on God's word and stand firmly in God's word.

PUT ME TO SHAME: don't let my clinging to your word and relying on your word be a source of shame and embarrassment for me. (It never is!)

v. 32:

His life is set on living the word of God and obeying the word of God

ENLARGE: apparently a difficult word to translate to an English understanding. It originally meant to increase the size of a farm; to increase the room of your heart

CONCLUSION/CALL TO ACTION: a safe harbor is a place where ships can drop anchor to avoid storms at sea. The word of God is our safe harbor when we encounter the difficult times in our lives.

As a safe harbor, God's word:

RAISES US UP when we have been brought low

INFORMS US about His gracious character

STRENGTHENS US in the difficult times

DIRECTS US in the faithful way to live

INCREASES us in our faith and trust in

THE DISCIPLE'S DAILY PATH

Psalm 119.33-40

INTRO: We all have routines that characterize our days. We get up at a certain time, we have a ritual we go through after we get up, whether it is making coffee, reading the morning paper, having our devotional time, making breakfast, exercising – we all have a routine we follow in the morning. And we have routines we follow during the day. Whether it is a work-related routine, a leisure-related routine, or a routine driven by retirement. We have morning routines and we have daily routines, and when our routines are disrupted for whatever reason we sometimes have a hard time getting back on track for the day. And believe it or not those routines we have in our lives can also help us through difficult time. When things get tough, when you are down, when you are going through an especially difficult time in your life, it is that routine that often will save you and give you a sense of purpose and rightness to life and to the day. As you go through your routine for the day you give some sense of order, purpose, and rightness to the day.

Psalm 119 is a psalm about the word of God.

God's word is the source of blessings (vv. 1-8);

God's word leads us to the pure life (vv. 9-16);

God's word serves as a guide through life (vv. 17-24);

God's word serves as a safe harbor during the difficult times in life (vv. 25-32).

Tonight we are going to discover that God's word helps us in the routine of our daily lives.

[SCRIPTURE]

We're talking about how God's word helps us in the daily routine of our lives.

I. God's word gives us daily INSTRUCTION (vv. 33-35)

In these eight verses of Scripture there are seven imperatives – seven commands or demands from the writer. Now understand we do not give God orders, we do not tell God what to do.

When you read, “teach me”, “give me”, “make me”, “incline”, “turn away” – this is not the psalmist giving orders to God.

Instead this is the heartfelt desire by the writer to be in the middle of whatever God was doing.

So these commands are not commands to the Lord, but rather they are an intense desire by the writer to for God to do something in his life.

v. 33: TEACH ME

We need no instruction in the way of sin, that's been our way since the days of Adam. [Bridges]

The writer wants to be taught the word of God for his own benefit, and that is what God is doing

How does God's word teach us?

God's word gives us the path of righteousness vs the path of wickedness.

God's word gives us clear direction in how to live a life that honors Him.

God's word gives us clear teaching on the right way to live and the wrong way to live.

God's word also gives us examples of the lives of those who lived according to the word of God and the lives of those who lived apart from the word of God.

Understand here this is a double-edged sword. The writer is requesting of God to be taught his word with the understanding that once he had been taught he would live it. The key is living the word of God once it had been taught.

[TLB] Just tell me what you want me to do and I will do it.

v. 34: EXPLAIN IT TO ME

GIVE ME UNDERSTANDING: five times in PS 119 we read this request of the writer. Not only does he want God's word to teach him, he also wants to understand God's word. This is important. There is no way we can live God's word unless we understand its meaning and how to apply it to our lives.

UNDERSTANDING: discernment, moral clarity as pertains to God's word, insight

OBSERVE: means to live. There is no way we can live the word of God unless we have an understanding of the word of God.

Think about this way: how can we live and keep God's word if we don't understand it and how can we understand it unless we have been taught by someone?

This teach also must be from someone who is living God's word in their own life and who understands God's word, and that person is God through the Holy Spirit.

2 PET 1.19-21 [READ]

It is the Holy Spirit of God that gives us the understanding we need to make sense of God's word to be able to put it in our lives.

v. 35: HELP ME LIVE IT

MAKE ME = DIRECT ME

He takes delight in the word of God. And because He takes delight in the word of God he has requested that God help him walk or live according to that word. How does God "make" us or "direct us" in the path of His word?

1, Through love;

2. *By discipline;*
3. *By grace*
4. *By an understanding of His word*
5. *Through the counsel of other Christians*

Notice the progression here:

First the word of God is TAUGHT, then it is UNDERSTOOD, then it is able to be LIVED.

You can't live it if you don't understand it, and you can't understand it unless it is taught to you.

God's word is valuable for daily instruction.

Daily instruction in God's word is normally one step at a time, maybe even one word at a time as we learn it and understand it.

2 TIM 2.22: "pursue faith" – learn every day how to place our faith and trust in God to do what only God can do. This is a daily walk and a daily lesson we must learn; God's word teaches us as so that we can understand it and live it.

II. God's word helps us focus our ATTENTION daily (vv. 36-37)

v. 36

INCLINE: originally it meant to stretch out. To "incline the heart" simply means to turn the heart or soften the heart or focus the heart on the word of God; to increase the heart to hold and understand and live the word of God.

The opposite of being inclined to God's word is to be inclined to dishonest gain; i.e., chasing what the world has to offer.

In our lives we don't need any help being focused on the world and what the world has to offer but we do need help turning our focus off the world and towards the things of God.

v. 37

Part of v. 37 reads: turn the eyes of me from seeing worthless things.

At the heart of this is the tenth commandment: do not covet. To covet does not simply mean to want what others have, but specifically to covet means to want specifically what they have, to want to possess what someone else has. Coveting is not, "Hey that's a nice car wouldn't mind having one like that", but rather, "Hey that's a nice car and I want it and I am going to get it." That's what it means to covet.

Our problem is that if we are not intentional on focusing on God and what God provides we will look around at what the world has to offer and go after that instead of what God has to offer. We can be lured away from God and His provision if we are not careful.

COL 3.1-2 [READ]

It takes far more effort to set our minds on things of this world than it does on the things of God.

When we begin to look at vanity we are flirting with not being satisfied with the provision of God in our lives.

The ways of God, the life of God, the righteousness of God includes how God treats us. And because God treats us with love and grace and mercy that should revive us, bring us back alive in our love for the lord and a desire to serve the Lord.

A good verse of scripture that addresses this is:

2 TIM 2.4 [READ]

We are considered soldiers for Christ and while we live in this world our focus is to be on the Lord and His work and not on this world

GOD'S WORD IS VALUABLE FOR DAILY INSTRUCTION

GOD'S WORD HELPS US FOCUS OUR ATTENTION DAILY

III. God's word develops a daily FEAR of Him (38-39)

V. 38

ILLUS: it has been said that when you do something three times you have established a habit in your life.

HABIT: something that a person does in an often and repeated way

How is God's word established in us? Through trusting in him, through His Holy Spirit ministering to us in difficult times; through a reading of God's word and an understanding of how His word is true, His promises are truth, and He can be counted on no matter what.

ESTABLISH means to make firm, and the only way God's word is made firm in our lives is if we constantly feed on it and study it and live it.

The establishment of God's word in our lives will only be possible when we make the study of God's word a habit in our lives.

God's word is established in a variety of ways:

Through daily devotions, through small group Bible study, through the preaching of God's word, and through our lives as we live out the truths of God's word.

As we read God's word and understand God's word and live God's word that will help develop within us a deeper reverence for Him.

V. 39

This can be looked at in two different ways: first the writer of Ps 119 did not want his life to be a reproach to God. This is why he strongly requested to be taught God's word, to understand God's word, to walk in God's word so that God's word would have such an effect on his life that his life would not be a reproach to the Lord.

The other way this word affected his life is to allow God's word to comfort and assure him when others attacked him because of his devotion to God and His word.

When we revere God's word we will revere the God of the word; when we don't care for the word of God we really won't care for the God of the word. Because God's word is living and active, because it discerns the thoughts and intentions of our hearts, then as we submit ourselves to God's word it produces change within us, a change that includes having a deeper reverential respect and fear for God .

GOD'S WORD IS VALUABLE FOR DAILY INSTRUCTION

GOD'S WORD HELPS US FOCUS OUR ATTENTION

GOD'S WORD DEVELOPS A DAILY FEAR OF GOD

IV. God's word leads us to daily REVIVAL (v. 40)

As we learned last week the word REVIVE is unique to Psalm 119 – it appears 9 times, more than any other book in the Bible.

REVIVE means to bring back to life again, and literally in the Hebrew translation of this verse it reads, “in your righteousness make me alive”

The righteousness of God is how he treats us, and as we see and experience how God treats us we will be led to a deeper love and understanding of Him.

Even when we think we have blown it, when we think we have just really messed our lives up, all we have to do is experience the love and grace of God and that winds us absolutely changing our lives for the better. This is a daily experience for believers because while there may be days when it seems everything goes fine, there are other days when we just blow it and it all seems to fall apart, and it is in those days that God through His word speaks into the situation in our lives and breathes life and forgiveness, comfort and assurance where there is defeat and a feeling of hopelessness.

GOD'S WORD IS VALUABLE FOR DAILY INSTRUCTION

GOD'S WORD HELPS US FOCUS OUR ATTENTION

GOD'S WORD DEVELOPS A DAILY FEAR OF GOD

GOD'S WORD LEADS TO REVIVAL

CONCLUSION/CALL TO ACTION

If we are not careful we can let our daily routines squeeze God out of our lives. And we must also be careful that our walk with Christ doesn't become routine and get mired down in just going through the motions with no affect in our lives. This is a balance we must live with but if we let God's word be our guide then we will grow daily as His word teaches us and leads us to live for His glory.

One way may be to simply ask yourself this question:

What has God's word taught me today that has helped me in my walk with Him?

CONFIDENCE IN THE WORD

Psalm 119.41-48

INTRODUCTION:

Webster's Dictionary defines the word CONFIDENCE as, "the quality of being certain; a relation of trust." Both of these definitions are spot on when it comes to our relationship with the Lord. We can be certain of who God is and what God can do because of who He is, He is God and there are no others. And when we trust and believe in the Lord Jesus we enter into a relationship that is built on trust and confidence.

Trust in the fact that Jesus can and does forgive us;

Trust in the fact that Jesus removes our sin penalty forever;

Trust in the fact that He has prepared a home in heaven for us;

Trust in the fact that He will always be with us regardless of the circumstances;

Trust in the fact that we have been given a salvation that is eternal and protected by the power of God;

Confidence in the fact that even when we sin, we can come to God through Him and we will be forgiven;

Confidence and trust in the fact that one day Jesus will return to gather His church and make all things new.

This is the trust and confidence we have in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The writer of Psalm 119 wrote 176 verses about his love for the word of God.

So far in our study of this great psalm we have discovered:

God's word is the source of blessings (vv. 1-8);

God's word leads us to the pure life (vv. 9-16);

God's word serves as a guide through life (vv. 17-24);

God's word serves as a safe harbor during the difficult times in life (vv. 25-32).

God's word helps us in the routine of our daily lives (vv. 33-40)

Tonight, we will discover how God's word gives us confidence.

[SCRIPTURE]

We're talking about how God's word gives us confidence.

I. God's word gives us the confidence to answer critics (vv. 41-43)

LOVINGKINDNESS: a difficult word to translate according to Hebrew linguists

It can mean the mercies of God, it can also mean God's long-term reliable loyalty.

ESV: steadfast love

KJV: mercies

NET: loyal love

NJB: faithful love

NLT: unfailing love

So many different Bibles translate this word in a slightly different way but they still reflect the love of God in some way. One way you could translate it I guess would be the many dimensions of God's love.

EX 34.6: God proclaimed He was abounding in lovingkindness

God's lovingkindness, whether we view it as His mercies or His loyalty or steadfastness, they are extended to us regardless of what we do and who we are because this is the characteristic of God. The psalmist is simply desiring to experience the mercies and unfailing loyalties of God in his life. He also knows about the salvation of the Lord and that only from the Lord does salvation come.

ACCORDING TO YOUR WORD: the Psalmist could be referring to the many psalms that talk of calling on the Lord for salvation, deliverance, and rescue, such as:

PS 18.3: I will call on the Lord and I am saved from my enemies;

PS 50.15: call upon Me in the day of trouble I shall rescue you;

PS 55.16: I shall call upon the Lord and the Lord will save me

v. 42

HAVE AN ANSWER: if the psalmist had a rock solid confidence in the word of God based on his experience then he would have an answer for those who would reproach him because he believed in the word of God.

This is what the discipline of APOLOGETICS is all about, making a defense for the gospel, being able to question their questions.

Peter wrote about it this way:

1 PET 3.15: but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is within you, yet with gentleness and reverence.

The only way we will ever be able to make a proper defense for our faith and for the word of God is to stay grounded in the word of God.

Because he trusted in the word of God he knew it to be reliable and trustworthy. When we get to the point that we cannot trust the word of God then we have a problem. We must come to that point in our lives where we know the word of God is true and trustworthy and we completely rely on it.

REPROACHES: those taunting me - HEB

When we begin to doubt the word of God then we begin to run the danger of drifting away from God because of doubts. One of Paul's major points of emphasis to the young pastor Timothy was holding to correct doctrine when it came to the word of God (1 & 2 Timothy)

If we are going to give an answer to those who reproach us, and if we are going to give testimony before kings and not be ashamed (v. 46), then the word of God:

- must be in our mouth (v. 43)
- must be kept in our hearts (v. 44)
- must be part of our everyday life (v. 45)
- must be our delight (v. 47)
- must be the focus of our worship (v. 48)

God's Word and our on-going and growing relationship with the Lord helps us always be ready to give an answer to the lost world, even those who would reproach us.

Trusting in God's word for an answer when wrongly reproached also means having to hold our tongue at times, or turn the other cheek – no retaliation. Sometimes it may seem easier and a lot more fun to lash out as those who verbally attack us, but God is not honored in that. And that's the key – the honor and glory of God are always at stake in everything we do.

V 43

WORD OF TRUTH: the word of God is the word of truth, it doesn't contain the truth. If we say the word of God contains the truth we are also saying it contains other information as well that may not be truth. The word of God is the truth and as we live it and experience it we discover how powerful it is. And as we learn it and live it then it becomes our testimony and this is what the psalmist is stating in this one verse: don't take this word of testimony from me because I have learned it a lived it and have come to rely on it because it is the truth.

CHS: The word of truth cannot be a joy to our mouths unless we have an experience of it in our lives, and it may be wise for us to be silent if we cannot support our testimonies by the verdict of our consciousness.

I can be confident in the word of God because it is the word of God and not man. And because it is the word of God it will never change, it will all come to pass. It is the power of God and it is the wisdom of God. as a lamp and a light it guides me, and it tells me of the greatness and mercy of God. And because I have experienced the truth of God's word then I have the confidence I need to be his faithful witness, not just based on knowledge, but also experience.

II. God's word gives us the confidence to trust in its strength (vv. 44-45)

SO – in other words, because God's word is the word of truth and the word of testimony, and because God's word leads us to salvation, then or so I will keep it or live it or abide by it continually.

Keeping and living the word of God is what we have been called to do

LIBERTY: God's word gives us great liberty and freedom because it frees us from legalism. Many may read their bible and see only religion, a sort of "do" and "don't" list; but in Jesus Christ there is freedom and liberty, freedom from the chains of my sin and freedom from legalism through the grace of God.

The strength of the word of God lies in the reliability of it. There is strength in something we can rely on and have the confidence it will not let us down.

There may have been a car in your life that was breaking down all the time and so you could say you had not confidence in the car to get you where you wanted to go, it was unreliable.

If somebody lets you down you begin to doubt their reliability and have a hard time placing your confidence in them.

This happened to the apostle Paul at the beginning of his second missions trip

Barnabas wanted to take John Mark but Paul was against it because Mark had left them during their first missions trip; Paul had lost his confidence in Mark to be committed to the missions endeavor.

In fact the Bible tells us there was a sharp disagreement between Paul and Barnabas, Paul wound up taking Silas with him and Barnabas took Mark.

We can trust in the word of God and have confidence in the word of God because it is reliable and it is not going to let us down.

III. God's word gives us the confidence to speak to others (vv. 46)

ASHAMED: he would not be ashamed of the word of God because he lived it, he trusted in it, he had confidence in it, he knew it to be true. His testimony before kings would not be his own opinion but

based on fact. Testimonies are based on fact, this is what happened to me. testimonies are powerful witnessing tools because no one can debate what has happened in your own life.

But here is what is key: if we are not studying God's word and allowing the Spirit of God to minister to us and guide us, and if we are not taking God's word and applying it to our lives then we really have no testimony.

I can stand before a group of people and talk about the faithfulness of God to provide because I have experienced it in my own life.

I can speak to others about the importance of tithing because I have discovered how faithful God is and how God provides when we are faithful to give to him.

I can speak to others about trusting in the plan of God even when I could not see or understand what He was doing because he called us to move from Florida to Georgia as a pastor, from one town to another in Georgia, and from Georgia to Illinois; we trusted God and still do and God comes through every time.

If I live and trust in the word of God then I will have a clear testimony before those who may question God's word.

And if I don't live and trust in God's word then I will have no testimony.

This is why I often tell Sunday School teachers that they not only teach the lesson, they ARE the lesson. If they don't live it then they can't teach it.

IV. God's word gives us the confidence to worship in truth (vv. 47-48)

v. 47

As has been stated before it is apparent the psalmist loves the word of God and loves obeying the word of God. He has found it to be reliable and a source of comfort in his life. God's word is His desire for our lives and as we learn it and live it then we too wind up loving his word.

v. 48

Lifting up of the hands does not mean the psalmist is worshipping the word of God. He is lifting up his hands to the God who has revealed himself through His word. He is worshipping the God who gave us his word as a way to display his desire, his love, his purpose for our lives.

The lifting up of hands is symbolic of worship. The word of God leads us to worship the God of the word. The word of God leads us to liberty and freedom from sin and leads us in the righteous path, certainly worthy of praise in our lives.

The psalmist could take great confidence in the word of God because it:

1. Pointed him to the salvation of God (v. 41);
2. Was the source of his testimony (vv. 42-43);
3. Was the source of liberty in his life (v. 45);
4. Gave him great confidence before kings (v. 46);
5. Was a source of delight (v. 47);
6. Inspired worship (v. 48);
7. Was a source of daily meditation (v. 48).

God's word serves the same purposes in our own lives:

1. It points us to Jesus Christ, the savior of the world;
2. As we live His word we have a sure testimony to the truthfulness of His word;
3. God's word teaches us about the grace of God that sets us free from legalism;
4. The Holy Spirit brings to mind the word of God when we stand to give an answer for our faith;
5. The more we learn God's word the greater delight we have in it;
6. God's word inspires our worship as we learn more about the God of the word;
7. It is in God's word that we meditate on daily as we grow in our faith.

THE POWER OF REMEMBERING GOD'S WORD

Psalm 119.49-56

INTRODUCTION: two men who are part of a ministry called WORDSOWERS INTL. will be quoting the entire Bible from memory in an effort to raise money for relief efforts in Nepal. They were to begin today at noon and go until noon tomorrow. WORDSOWERS INTL. describes itself as a ministry of, "the oral interpretation of the Bible." In December 2011 a member of WORDSOWERS quoted the entire Book of Revelation in a ministry event in southern California. This man said it took him about an hour to quote Revelation from memory.

According to the website of Psychology Today, "Memory makes us. If we couldn't recall the who, what, where, and when of our everyday lives, we would never be able to manage. We mull over ideas in the present with our short-term (or working) memory, while we store past events and learned meanings in our long-term (episodic or semantic) memory."

(www.psychologytoday.com/basics/memory)

Memory is a vital part of our lives and an important function of our brains; when we can't remember something we get frustrated and upset.

In a related article from the website of Psychology today there is a list of eight ways to improve your memory:

1. Become interested in what you are learning;
2. Find a way to leverage your visual memory; memory is predominantly visual.
3. Create a mental memory tree; find a way to relate them.
4. Associate what you are trying to learn with what you already know.
5. Write out the items to be memorized over and over and over.
6. When reading for retention summarize each paragraph in the margin.
7. Do most of your studying in the afternoon. One study suggested (and I read it) that memory is more affected by the time of day and not by what a person perceives their most "awake" time is.
8. Get adequate sleep.

Factors that contribute to memory loss are:

1. Age. The older we get the harder it is to remember things.
2. Multi-tasking. The more things we do the harder it is to concentrate and remember everything.
3. Emotions.

Three factors that enhance memory, or help decrease the onset of memory loss:

- 1, Physical exercise. 150 minutes of walking per week increases your memory.

2. Mental exercise. Do something daily that stimulates your mind, such as reading or solving puzzles. The key is, if the mental exercise requires you to take a break occasionally, then it is probably a good one.

3. Taking ibuprophen. This is the most controversial because of the side effects that ibuprophen can cause, such as stomach bleeding. This study suggests if you are already on it then fine, but otherwise simply taking some every day is not recommended.

Some people have what is known as a photographic memory – they remember everything and have incredible recall abilities.

There is even a website called LUMOSITY that is designed to help you with your memory through brain games.

When I was going through forestry school in junior college one of my favorite classes was dendrology, the study of trees. Every week we had two laboratory periods. On Tuesday we would go into the woods and study 10 trees, pull leaves, and make a leaf notebook. We would have to know both common and scientific names of the trees. On Thursday we were back in the woods and would be tested on the 10 trees we studied on Tuesday and then would be given 10 new trees. It was a lot of memorization but pulling leaves and making a leaf notebook was really helpful.

Memory is a vital function of our brains and when we can't remember then we get frustrated.

Psalm 119 is the longest of the psalms and it is all about the word of God.

Tonight in vv. 49-56 we will discover the power in remembering God's word

[SCRIPTURE]

We're talking about the importance of remembering God's word.

So far in PS 119 we have discovered this about the word of God:

God's word is the source of blessings (vv. 1-8);

God's word leads us to the pure life (vv. 9-16);

God's word serves as a guide through life (vv. 17-24);

God's word serves as a safe harbor during the difficult times in life (vv. 25-32).

God's word helps us in the routine of our daily lives (vv. 33-40)

God's word gives us confidence (vv. 41-48)

So tonight we will discover the importance of remembering God's word.

REMEMBERING GOD'S WORD IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE:

I. Remembering God's word is important because His word is sure – it will never let us down (v. 49)

REMEMBER: although this is an imperative command, we neither command nor do we demand anything from God. This is a strongly worded request of God for God to remember His word to him who had read it and trusted in it; it was the source of his hope.

How can, or how does the word of God become our hope? Because we can take great confidence in it, it will not let us down, it is true and does not contradict itself. It is the very breath of God and it does not change.

YOUR SERVANT: this is personal. The writer is pleading with God to remember the words that He had spoken, that they were as valid and valuable to him as they were to others. God's word is not just for one person and then not another, God's word is God's word and regardless of who we are we can claim them as God's word for us because his word is both universal and personal, and His word will never change.

IN WHICH: God word was his anchor. God's word is who God is, and because God will never change neither will His word.

Look down at v. 89: *forever O Lord your word is established in heaven.*

Books written by man are subject to error because man is not perfect nor is he free from error.

Just look at what happened with the book HEAVEN IS FOR REAL. Many people read the book, Bible studies were made from the book, and even a movie was produced based on the book. And the book was a fake, the writer said it was all made up.

We can trust and believe in God's word because it will never let us down. And so committing God's word to memory and remembering God's word is vitally important because His word is sure – it will never let us down.

[CHS] the psalmist is not asking for a new word but rather that God's established word be fulfilled.

II. Remembering God's word is important because His word is soothing – it revives us (v. 50)

REVIVED: bring back to life again.

How does God's word revive us? Through its many assurances about the presence of God, the assurance of salvation, the love of God, the forgiveness of God, the grace of God.

AFFLICTION: six other times in PS 119 we read about the affliction of the writer. He writes that affliction brought him back to the word of God, that it was good for him, it caused him to be faithful,

that God's word kept him alive through his affliction and gave him comfort, and for God to look upon him and deliver him from his affliction.

Nowhere in the Bible does it tell us that Christians are exempt from affliction or persecution or difficult times. In fact the Bible tells us just the opposite, that because we trust and believe in Jesus Christ we will be persecuted and that afflictions are a part of life.

Why is it we don't have a problem going to the doctor or taking medicine when we are ill, and there is nothing wrong with that, but why is it we don't readily go to the word of God for strength through our afflictions?

Listen to some of the ancient and home remedies for sicknesses:

Alfalfa tea for arthritis;

A mixture of kerosene, olive oil, orange juice, and cod liver oil for arthritis;

Ginger root, whiskey, and honey for the common cold;

Dandelions for digestion and to detoxify the liver;

The inner bark of the slippery elm tree for sore throat;

Dried tobacco peppers for cholic and asthma

My grandmother had a remedy for congestion and a cough that was a mixture of honey, lemon juice, and perrorgorick – one drink of that and you were afraid to cough!

All sorts of home remedies for illnesses, and yet we have the word of God that is our comfort and strength and we shy away from it.

THIS IS MY COMFORT:

[CHS] the rich man clings to his money bag and says, 'this is my comfort';

The alcoholic clings to his bottle and says, 'this is my comfort';

The selfish person clings to his abandoned lifestyle and says, 'this is my comfort';

The drug addict clings to his drugs and says, 'this is my comfort';

But the child of God clings to God and feels his life-giving power through his word and he testifies, 'this is my comfort'

This doesn't mean that reading the word of God will make your headache go away, but God's word does give us advice on how to deal with anxiety and worry, and how to understand suffering and afflictions in our lives.

III. Remembering God's word is important because His is strength – it comforts us through persecution (vv. 51, 53)

v. 51

DERIDE: the source of derision could have come from the fact that he read God's word and loved God's word and lived God's word and in turn, God's word affected his life in a good way and he did not live like the culture around him.

He was not going to abandon God's word simply because was being persecuted and afflicted.

v. 53

BURNING INDIGNATION: the writer gets angry at the wicked to have no time for God. Paul wrote our anger must not lead us to sin. Sin should make us angry but not angry to the point we sin.

Do we have such a zeal and love for the Lord that we have burning indignation towards those who care not for God and His Word? Do we have such love for the Lord that the wicked cause us to have holy anger towards their attitude? Our love for the Lord must be so strong and zealous as Phineas when he killed the Hebrew who had the gall to take a Moabite woman into a tent right in front of Moses (NUM 25.10-18).

And if we have this burning indignation against the wicked then we will want to be the companion of those who fear the Lord and obey His commands (v. 63).

James and John were named the sons of thunder because they wanted to call down lightning and strike those who rejected the Lord.

LUKE 9.51-55 [READ]

IV. Remembering God's word is important because His word is our song – it is our companion through life (vv. 52, 54)

v. 52

FROM OF OLD: since early in life

From my earliest youth I have tried to obey you; your Word has been my comfort. [TLB]

REMEMBERED: because:

He kept the Lord's word (v. 8);

He treasured God's word in his heart (v. 11);

He meditated on God's word (v. 15, 23, 27, 48);

He took delight in God's word (v. 16, 35);

He understood God's word (v. 34);

He was revived because of God's word (v. 25, 37, 40);

His testimony was from the strength of God's word (v. 42, 46);

God's word was the source of his worship (v. 48)

And because of all he knew and had experienced from the word of God he could take great comfort from the word of God.

v. 54

SONGS: only place in PS 119 where we read this word. The word of God is considered a song by the writer because of all he had learned about God's word (v. 52).

The psalms themselves were written to be sung, they are the hymnal of the Hebrews. Just read the beginning of many of the psalms:

Ps. 76: a song to be played and sung on a stringed instrument;

Ps. 92: a song for the Sabbath day;

Ps. 126: a song of ascents (written to be sung as they walked up to Jerusalem)

HOUSE OF MY PILGRIMAGE: during my time here on earth

V. Remembering God's word is important because His word is our companion – it becomes personal to us through application (vv. 55-56)

v. 55

REMEMBER YOUR NAME: the more we meditate on God's word, the more we internalize God's word, the more it will be on our mind and come to mind, even in the night.

v. 56

MINE: my practice in life, my way of life.

CONCLUSION/CALL TO ACTION

Our memories may not be what they used to be. We have an easier time remembering some things while we have a hard time remembering others. Many times our memories are tied to events in our lives; some events we don't wish to remember and others we have fond memories of.

Psalms 119 teaches us that when it comes to the word of God remembering it is very important because it helps us understand the indispensable importance of God's word in our lives.

THE PERSONAL SIDE OF GOD'S POWERFUL SALVATION Psalm 119.57-64

INTRODUCTION:

1. GOD'S POWERFUL SALVATION DEFINES OUR LIVES (V. 57)

Every person must have something that defines their life. In other words, what is the focus of your life? What are you living for? If man has nothing to live for then he has a very sad life, it has no focus, it has no purpose.

BRIDGES: man, a dependent being, must be possessed of some portion. He cannot live upon himself. It must not only be good, but it must be his own good; something that he may lay claim to as his own. If he has not a satisfying portion, he is a wretched empty creature.

PORTION: inheritance

11 of the 12 tribes were each given a portion of the land in Israel as their inheritance. However, the tribe of Levi was given no land, they were set aside to carry the ark and serve in the tabernacle; their inheritance was the Lord. Thus when the people paid their tithes to the Lord a portion of that was used to support the priests in their service.

NEH 13.10ff – Nehemiah discovered the people were not paying their tithes to the tabernacle and thus forced the Levites to go out into the fields to work for a living; this was a sin against the nation for not providing for the tribe God set aside for Himself.

^{NLT} **Psalm 119:57** LORD, you are mine! I promise to obey your words!

God was all the psalmist needed in life and he sought nothing else. This was a deliberate and settled design of his life. His life was focused on following the Lord, on living for the Lord. To use the explanation that Bridges used, for the psalmist, he was possessed by God and he could lay claim to the fact that God was his!

It is God who chooses and saves us, but we must also make God our portion, our lot, our interest, our focus in life.

Sports enthusiasts may make football their portion in life;

Gardeners may make roses their portion in life;

Bakers may make pies their portion in life;

And there is nothing wrong with that.

However, as Christians, does God have a greater portion of our life than the world does, does God have more of our affections and interests than the world does?

It is after all God whom we will be spending eternity with, and it is the world that seeks to divert our attention and affections away from God.

All that we are and all that we have, are his; cheerfully surrendered as his right, and willingly employed in his work. [Bridges]

Paul wrote this about making God the portion of our lives:

PHIL 2.12: work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;

COL 3.1-2: keep seeking the things above . . . set your mind on the things above

As redeemed children of God, we must not just trust Christ and then leave it at that; our relationship with Christ must be what defines our lives, we must make sure God is our portion in life and not simply a part of our lives.

2. GOD'S POWERFUL SALVATION HELPS DEVELOP OUR LIVES (V. 58)

I SOUGHT YOUR FAVOR: I want to do what is pleasing in your sight. This should be the desire for all Christians.

EPH 5.10 tells us we should strive to learn what is pleasing to the Lord

If I am striving to find out and live and do what is pleasing to the Lord then my walk with Christ will be strengthened as I follow Him.

God will never do anything that goes against his character or His word. God deals with truth and righteousness and justice because he is the God of truth, the God of righteousness, and the God of justice. All we have to do is look in the word of God to see how God deals with us.

If a church is focused on seeking the favor of the Lord then the actions and ministries of the church will reflect that desire.

As sinners we need His favor;

As saints we live in His favor;

As wanderers we are brought back because of His favor

^{NLT} **Psalm 119:58** With all my heart I want your blessings. Be merciful as you promised.

We all want to experience the blessings of God. And the Bible is clear that God blesses obedience and He judges disobedience. Think about it: why would God want to bless a disobedient and sinful lifestyle? Well the answer of course is, He would not nor will He bless a disobedient life.

We have already experienced God's blessings through faith in Jesus Christ;

We are experiencing God's blessings through the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives every day;
We will experience God's blessings one day when we are ushered into His presence for all eternity and we get to spend eternity with all the saints who have gone before.

DEFINES OUR LIVES

DEVELOPS OUR LIVES

3. GOD'S POWERFUL SALVATION DIRECTS OUR LIVES (VV. 59-61)

v. 59 (directed in our path)

CONSIDERED: thought about, pondered.

This consideration could have been, "look how far I have wandered from your word and I need to get back." We are all prone to wander away from God's word in our lives.

ISA 53.6a: all of us like sheep have gone astray

This is the power of self-examination to make sure we have not strayed from the word of God and from following God;

HAB 3.40: let us examine our ways and test them and let us return to the Lord

2 COR 13.5: examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves

This consideration is 2-fold:

1. First with respect to salvation, a person must be brought to the point where they are confronted with the reality of their situation before they will consider it. This is done through the ministry of the Holy Spirit
2. Second, every Christian should always be aware they are susceptible to temptation and sin and if we are not careful we can turn from the right path.

TURNED: to go back to the point of departure, as if he had walked away from the Lord and His word and now was turning back to Him and His word.

Salvation can be seen in respect to turning: we turn FROM our sinful way of life and we turn TO the Lord Jesus for forgiveness and salvation.

Turning indicates a change in course of our life.

Turning must be through the work of the Holy Spirit within us; if we simply try to correct the wrongs in our lives apart from the Holy Spirit we accomplish nothing, our efforts will be in vain

^{NJB} **Psalm 119:59** I have reflected on my ways, and I turn my steps to your instructions.

^{NLT} **Psalm 119:59** I pondered the direction of my life, and I turned to follow your laws.

TLB: *I thought about the wrong direction in which I was headed, and turned around and came running back to you.*

What would cause us to consider our ways? Is this something we would automatically do, or would we be driven to consider our ways only when life goes south?

Let's look at some clues from what we have already discovered from PS 119:

v. 5: oh that my ways would be established to keep your statutes

v. 8: I shall keep your statutes

v. 10: do not let me wander from your commandments

v. 11: your word I have treasured in my heart

v. 16: I shall not forget your word

v. 30: I have chosen the faithful way, I have placed your ordinances before me

v. 33: teach me your statutes and I will observe it to the end

v. 34: give me understanding that I may observe your law

v. 38: establish your word to your servant as that which produces reverence for you

v. 50: your word has revived me

so we read that the psalmist has made God's word a part of his life, he has sought to understand it, to apply it, to live it, and to be revived by it. The word of God was such a part of his life that when he strayed from the word of God he knew it immediately.

This is where we need to be when it comes to the word of God; it must be such a part of our lives that when we stray from God, His word by the ministry of the Holy Spirit becomes a reminder of what is going on and we are reminded through the conviction of the Holy Spirit that we need to return quickly. To consider our ways is to look at our lives – honestly – and compare it to what God's word says about how we should be living, and if there are corrections to be made we should make haste to make them as quickly as possible.

v. 60. (directed in our priorities)

I will hasten and I will not delay to obey your commands [HEB]

Delayed obedience is disobedience. God's word has been given for our spiritual health and when we read His word then we have a responsibility to keep it.

So if we know we have strayed from God's word, why would we delay it getting back right with the Lord? Probably for the same reason we put off going to the doctor. We know we should go to the doctor because something is not right, but we don't want to go because of what the doctor might find, or because there may be some painful or uncomfortable test that has to be done, or because of some medicine we have to take with weird side effects. We put off going because of what someone else told us happened to them. The point is we have a built-in resistance to correcting what is wrong because maybe we just don't want to know.

In a matter of life and death, of eternal life and eternal death, the call is too clear for debate, and there is no room for delay. Many a precious soul has been lost by waiting for a more convenient season, a period which probably never arrives, and which the willful neglect of present opportunity provokes God to put far away. [Bridges]

v. 61(directs us in our purpose)

CORDS: cord, rope, line; figuratively, the enslaving nature of sin

ENCIRCLED: surrounded

Sin has a way of entangling us in its grip. The writer here may feel like he has been caught in the snare of sin, that he has been "wrapped up" in the cords and ropes of sin, but he has not forgotten the word of God, he trusts in the word of God, and even though he has been ensnared by sin, he will cling to the word of God for relief and rescue and comfort and strength.

Sin can make us lose our focus, lose sight of our purpose because of how entangling it can be.

Like the old saying, when you are up to your armpits in alligators it's hard to remember your original purpose was to drain the swamp.

^{NLT} **Psalm 119:61** Evil people try to drag me into sin, but I am firmly anchored to your instructions.

4. GOD'S POWERFUL SALVATION DEEPENS OUR LIVES (V. 62)

There is no time of the day or night that we cannot pray to God, that we cannot seek His help and comfort. Sometimes we are so burdened about events or circumstances that God gets us up to pray and seek His face.

v. 55: I remembered your name in the night

v. 148: my eyes anticipate the night watch so I may meditate on your word

v. 164: seven times a day I praise you

the more time we spend with God in His word and in prayer the deeper and stronger our relationship with Him becomes so that when the difficult times do come we will have no problem going to Him in prayer.

The more time we spend with God in his word and in prayer the more we find that we have to be thankful for.

5. GOD'S POWERFUL SALVATION DESCRIBES OUR LIVES (VV. 63-64)

I am a friend to all who fear you [HEB]

COMPANION: to be knit together, a fellow with someone else; a 'running mate' as we used to say in the Navy

"I am a companion." David said he hung out with those who feared God and kept His word. The people we hang out with says a lot about us as people. do we hang out with Christians who love the Lord and who love to talk about the Lord; or do we hang out with unbelievers who could care less about the Lord and their lifestyle is questionable?

1 COR 15.33: bad company corrupts good morals

PROV 13.20: those who walk with the wise will be wise

8-2

PROV 23.7: [speaking of the selfish man] for as he thinks within himself so he is.

- who we hang out with can affect our thinking

PROV 24.1 [READ]

PS 119.101 [READ]

WAYS = path. Our lives are a path and we are the ones who decide which path we will walk down. Will we walk along the path of righteousness and love for the Lord, the path of selflessness and the path of the cross; or will we walk the path of selfishness and self-centeredness, the path of the wicked?

^{NLT} **Psalm 119:63** I am a friend to anyone who fears you-- anyone who obeys your commandments.

TLB: Anyone is my brother who fears and trusts the Lord and obeys Him.

V. 64

FULL: speaks to the omnipresence of God, that God is present to everything. In other words there is no place where you can go that God is not.

LOVINGKINDNESS: His steadfast love and kindness; loyalty

Basically there is nowhere a person could go on this earth or in this earth that they would be cut off from the love, grace, kindness, and loyalty of God. If it were possible to be cut off from the lovingkindness of God, then what a terrible place that would be.

When we are unteachable, God is unknowable. But when we are teachable, more and more of God is known every day.

We are only alive because of the lovingkindness of the Lord. His lovingkindness is another word for mercy. God's great mercies on our lives are what keeps us alive. He loves us and cares for us, He provides for us. Think about it – our world is covered by a thin layer of air that keeps us alive, nothing more. Were it to disappear, so would we. Then there's gravity – if it were to disappear we would fly off into space. Then there's the tilt of the earth, our distance from the sun, our place in the solar system, and on and on; all deliberate and in perfect balance by God's hand. Yes, His lovingkindness is everywhere.

PS 33.5: the earth is full of the lovingkindness of God

PS 104.24: the earth is full of your possessions

ISA 6.3: the earth is full of his [God's] glory

ISA 11.9: the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord

HAB 3.3: the earth is full of His praise

CONCLUSION/CALL TO ACTION:

Throughout PS 119 the writer tells of his intentions concerning his relationship with God. But in these verses there is a clear decision by the writer to take responsibility for his relationship with God:

1. I promised to keep God's word (v. 57);
2. I sought your favor (v. 58);
3. I considered my ways (v. 59);
4. I hastened to keep your commands (v. 60);
5. I shall rise at midnight to give thanks to you (v. 62);
- 6 I am a companion of those who fear you (v. 63);
7. I want to learn your word (v. 64)

As redeemed children of God, we must not just trust Christ and then leave it at that; our relationship with Christ must be what defines our lives, we must make sure God is our portion in life and not simply a part of our lives.

PSALM 119.65-72

65 *You have dealt well with Your servant, O LORD,
 according to Your word.*

DEALT WELL: done good

For the psalmist to proclaim that God had dealt well with him tells us a couple of important facts about the writer:

- 1, His walk with the Lord was one of experience. However long the psalmist had known God personally was long enough for him to give clear testimony of how God had treated him.
2. His knowledge of God's word was such that he knew God's treatment of him was consistent with the word of God.
3. Implied here also is the fact that while God had always dealt well with the psalmist, he maybe had not always dealt well with God, and that can be said of us. While God is always good to us we are not always good to God. We don't always obey, we don't always follow His word completely; yet God always deals with us according to His character which is holy and right and just.

[CHS] we cannot say that we have dealt well with our Master; for when we have done all, we are unprofitable servants; bu as for our Lord, he has given us light work, large maintenance, loving encouragement, and liberal wages.

When our trials act as a thorn hedge to keep us in the good pasture, but our prosperity is a gap through which we go astray.

Why is it that a little ease works in us so much disease?

PS 10.14: [God] is a helper of the orphan

PS 68.5: a father to the less and a judge for the widows is God in His holy habitation

PS 146.9: the Lord protects the strangers, he supports the fatherless and the widows

PS 103.10 tells us this truth, that God has not dealt with us as He should nor has he counted our iniquities against us. God is a loving and compassionate and forgiving God, and He is also the God of justice and judgment; and His word clearly shows us that truth.

God is not going to deal with us in a manner that contradicts His character.

God deals with us in compassion, love, patience, and justice because He is the God of compassion, love, patience, and justice.

[CHS] what we read in the pages of God's inspired word we meet with again in the leaves of our life-story.

God's treatment of us as his children is based on His word which is a reflection of His character; he will always treat us with love and justice.

ILLUS: while we were living in China I could never get over the fact that foreigners were not treated fairly. There were two distinct pricing systems in China and they did not try to hide it: local Chinese were charged one price while foreigners were charged another price that was much more. Their rationale was simple: local Chinese don't have as much money as foreigners do and therefore foreigners can afford to pay more. They did not apologize for it or try to hide it, it was a way of life. it was not fair but that's the way it was.

God however does not treat us like that, God is fair, God is right, and God is just in his dealings with us. There has never been a time in our lives when we could look back and accuse God of being unfair or unjust in his dealings with us. This is why, on the surface, it may seem like God was harsh with Moses in Num. 20.8ff, when God clearly told Moses to speak to the rock to bring forth water, and instead Moses struck the rock – twice. Water came out but God told Moses because he did not treat God as holy before the people he would not be allowed to enter the promised land. God was not unfair to Moses; if God had let Moses off with just a warning and yet judged the people more severely when they disobeyed they would look at God as the God who plays favorites.

66 Teach me good discernment and knowledge,

For I believe in Your commandments.

DISCERNMENT: wisdom through experience

How does God teach us discernment and knowledge?

Most of the experiences we learn in life we have learned through doing. Experience is the best kind of teacher. And it seems that some lessons in life we have to constantly learn over and over again.

DT 8.2-5 [READ]

Notice some key words that God used: humble, test, make you understand, discipline

God uses many different methods to teach us, and some lessons are more painful than others.

One of the marks of a growing Christian is teachability. Do we really desire to be taught of the Lord? And if so, then we will diligently search His word and let His word speak to us, let His Holy Spirit teach us and guide us, and we will in turn, learn discernment, become wise, and learn the statutes of God.

10 times in PS 119 we read the words, “teach me Your statutes” or “teach me good discernment.” God’s Word is our lamp and light and our guide in life. As we began our mission trip to Iowa, we asked the Lord to be teach us what it is He wants us to learn and to help us be humble and teachable, and to be an encouragement along the way.

1 KINGS 8.36 Solomon prayed that God would teach them the good way in which they should walk

Think of your role as a parent: have you had to teach your children a particular lesson over and over again, and it seems like they just never get it? Don’t get too frustrated with them and don’t lose patience with them because God has been patient with you and God has not given up on you. This is why God gives children two parents with two different dispositions so that they won’t both throw their hands up in the air and just give up.

If we believe in the word of God then we have to believe that God is going to deal with us fairly and impartially, and that God will be patient with us.

67 *Before I was afflicted I went astray,*

But now I keep Your word.

AFFLICTED: to be bowed down, depressed, oppressed, to suffer hardship of some type

vv. 67, 71, 75, 107

We don’t know what this affliction was but it served to get the psalmist back on track.

PS 147.6: the Lord supports the afflicted

The psalmist wrote, “before I was afflicted I went astray”. Then in v. 70, “It is good that I was afflicted.” God may have used affliction to draw him back to Himself, which He can do in our own lives.

Sometimes we will have nothing to do with God and his word until we get afflicted, until we are brought to a low point in our lives. Here the psalmist writes that he went astray and then became afflicted, and it was this affliction that brought him to his senses and brought him back to the Lord.

Affliction is the school in which we learn of God’s goodness and provision in our lives.

I WENT ASTRAY: [Heb: I was the one going astray]

68 *You are good and do good;*

Teach me Your statutes.

God actually is the one who defined good. Right from the beginning of time. In creation He declared good all that he had created. And then when he created man God said that was very good. Jesus said no one was good except God alone. And David wrote in PS 14 no one does good. And yet we consider ourselves good enough to get to heaven.

We say, God is good all the time; and all the time God is good; and that is true. But the truth behind that saying is much more profound:

1. He is free from all moral imperfections, from anything that is wicked or evil.
2. He is perfect, and because he is perfect His law is perfect.
3. He administers His law fairly and impartially.
4. He only and always speaks the truth.
5. He always does what He says He will do; He is faithful.
6. He is genuinely concerned about the welfare of those He loves.
7. He deals with people based on His goodness not theirs.
8. His goodness is expressed through His patience with sinners.
9. Everything that God does is worthy of approval.

10. His goodness is expressed through His desire to want the best in others regardless of who they are.

(Erickson, *Christian Theology*; Grudem, *Systematic Theology*; Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*; Packer, *Knowing God*; Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*)

69 *The arrogant have forged a lie against me;
With all [my] heart I will observe Your precepts.*

As in v. 23, the psalmist wrote about those who didn't like him and were after him. If they could slander him in some way then all the better. The psalmist knew his best option was to allow the word of God to be both his refuge and his strength.

God's word counsels us, God's word comforts us, and God's word gives us courage. When those who speak ill of us rise up against us, let us take our strength and counsel from His word, God and His word will always prevail.

70 *Their heart is covered with fat,
[But] I delight in Your law.*
[HEB: he is callous as his fat heart is]

The "fat-covered heart" is the heart that has no feeling because of sin. Their delight is in themselves and not in God nor His word.

71 *It is good for me that I was afflicted,
That I may learn Your statutes.*

Whatever the affliction was, the Psalmist considered it good because it caused him to be drawn to God and to rely on God like he never had before.

Affliction can come in one of two ways: either as a result of what we have done, or as a result of what God has allowed to happen in our lives. In both cases affliction can serve to narrow our focus from the world to God, or to help re-focus our lives from the world back to God.

How often do people shy away from God or ignore God until they are “afflicted”, then they run to Him as fast as they can!

2 COR 12.7-10 – Paul was afflicted with what he described as a, “thorn in his flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me”. Paul prayed three times for the Lord to remove that thorn, whatever physical ailment it was, and three times God told Paul, “no, my grace is sufficient for you.”

The apostle John was exiled to the island of Patmos for preaching the gospel, and it was there that God spoke to him and gave him the vision that was written down in what we know today as the Book of Revelation. John needed to have a clear mind with no distractions in order to receive what God had for him.

The apostles John and Peter were thrown in jail three times for preaching the gospel, and each time they learned new lessons about the love, care, and provision of God.

God often lets us experience afflictions and persecutions to teach us lessons about his love and care, and often God uses afflictions to get our attention if we stray and get off track in our relationship with Him. Unfortunately there are times when God uses affliction to get our attention and we don't get the message.

Also, just because a person is afflicted in some way does not mean they have disobeyed God or that God is trying to teach them some lesson, but it is never wrong either to stop and take inventory of your relationship with Christ during those times either.

HEB 12.10-11: God uses discipline in our lives for His good, and affliction is one way God can discipline us. The result of God's discipline is the fruit of righteousness.

72 *The law of Your mouth is better to me Than thousands of gold and silver [pieces].*

The word of God was the psalmist's treasure and more valuable than any wealth he could acquire, and he was the king! God's word needs to have that kind of value in our own lives. when His word is

treasured above all else in our lives then our relationship with Him will bring great dividends for His kingdom.

Your word is better than winning the lottery!

This probably goes without saying. God's word is eternal, riches are not.

God's word will never let you down, riches will.

God's word is what we trust in because it is the very breath of God;

Riches will cause you to mistrust people because they want some of what you have.

These 8 verses, as well as many others in PS 119, give us a snap shot of David's desire to know and live the word of God:

v. 66: teach me good discernment and knowledge

v. 67: I keep your word

v. 68: teach me your statutes

v. 69: with all my heart I will observe

v. 70: I delight in your law.

A good lesson for us!

What can we learn from these 8 verses about the good truth of our good God?

- 1, God deals with us based on His goodness, not ours.
2. For us to grow as Christians we have to allow God's word to teach us.
3. Sometimes God uses afflictions and tough times to teach us lessons.
4. God's Word is more valuable than anything the world can offer.

PSALM 119.73-80

73 Your hands made me and fashioned me; Give me understanding, that I may learn Your commandments.

UNDERSTANDING: this is not just the acquisition of knowledge, rather this is the ability to understand the knowledge and information you have.

In college work, the bachelor's degree is: we will give you the information and you give it back to us;

The master's degree is: we will give you the information and you tell us what it means;

The doctor's degree is: create the information and tell us why it matters.

So here the psalmist is not asking for more information or more knowledge, he is asking God to give him the ability to make sense of what he already knows. It doesn't do us any good to have a lot of information if we don't understand it or know what to do with it or about it.

So when the psalmists writes that God made him and refined him, he is also saying that God gave him a brain and the ability to reason and understand, so he wants to take that ability to reason and understand and apply it to understanding God better.

So there are a couple of great truths we see here in this first verse:

1, God made us, not just as a lump of skin and bones, but gave us the ability to think and reason.

2. Because God has given us the ability to think and reason then we are responsible for understanding and knowing who God is.

The commandments of God are His law, his obligations for the type of life we are to live. So what is at our disposal to help us understand God's word for our lives?

1, God has given us the mental ability to think, reason, and question what we do not understand.

2. We have the Spirit of God that serves to help us in our understanding

3. We have been given preachers and teachers to help us understand.

4. We have volumes on top of volumes of study aids and commentaries on scripture to help us understand, many of them accessible right on the internet. For instance, if you go to the website:

Ewordtoday.com you will find commentaries written by John Gill, Charles Wesley, Martin Luther, and Matthew Henry to name a few;

If you go to the website ccel.org you will find all the volumes of John Calvin's commentaries on scripture;

If you go to the website pbministries.org you will find the commentaries of A.W. Pink;

And you could on and on about on-line helps to understanding Scripture.

5. We also have brothers and sisters in Christ who help us understand as well.

So the writer of Psalm 119 is simply stating a request to God: he affirms God as the creator and sustainer of life, and is asking God to help him understand God's word to follow it and live it. and we are going to follow this same line throughout the rest of these verses.

[BRIDGES] If I am conscious of being the workmanship of God, I shall feel my relationship to Him, and the responsibility of acting according to that.

MADE & FASHIONED: brought into existence and refined.

GIVE ME UNDERSTANDING: because you have formed me, help me understand who you are and what you desire of me.

Part of this understanding is that not only has God made us but we have to be remade spiritually in order to for us to fully understand and follow His commands.

MADE-FASHIONED. Along with PS 139 a good testimony to the creative power of God and how we get the picture of His handiwork in creation as He fashioned and made each of us as His crowning creation over all creation.

The word of God helps us understand the God of the word, our creator.

In v. 27: make me understand the way of your precepts.

In v. 66: teach me good discernment and knowledge.

And now here, give me understanding.

Our prayer always should be for God to help us understand His word, for in His word are life and direction and His word is truth.

“The Bible is the owner's manual for God's people. It is the only book that tells the truth about where we came from, why we are here, what we must do to succeed in life, and where we are going. (WW)

JOB 10.8: your hands fashioned and made me

JOB 31.15: made and fashioned in the womb

PS 100.3: it is He who has made us and not we ourselves

PS 139.15-16: skillfully wrought in the womb

PROV 16.4: everything has been made for God's purposes

ISA 43.7: we were created for God's glory

74 May those who fear You see me and be glad, Because I wait for Your word.

PS 34.9: fear the Lord you his saints, for those who fear Him there is no want.

David feared God, had reverence for God, and wanted others to see that fear of God led to blessings; they would be glad to fear God and not worry that God was out to get them.

By observing the life of the psalmist others would see and understand:

1. The God of the universe is real and personal and can be known;
2. This God gives us the ability to understand Him;
3. A life of obedience to His word is a life that experiences His blessings;

In both verses (v. 79 as well), we see the power of the personal testimony. If our walk with the Lord is strong, others will want to walk with us and be drawn to the Lord. On the other hand, if we claim to walk with the Lord and yet our lives say the opposite, we wind up pushing people away from the Lord.

When others can see the sanctifying work of God in us it will hopefully encourage them to follow the Lord closely as well.

Because God gives us the ability to understand, when we cooperate with the Holy Spirit in sanctification, then others will see how powerful God is in changing lives and they will be drawn to Him through what He is doing through us.

75 I know, O LORD, that Your judgments are righteous, And that in faithfulness You have afflicted me.

The psalmist is not complaining about affliction but rather God was justified in visiting this affliction on him for God's purposes based on God's character.

[Barnes] Mysterious as the trial may have been, hard as it may have been to bear, long as it may have been continued, and varied as may have been the forms of the trial, yet he had not doubt that it was all right; that it was for the best purposes, and that it was in strict accordance with what was best. It was because God saw that there was some good reason why it should be done; that there was some evil to be checked; some improper conduct to be corrected; some lesson which he would be the better for learning; some happy influence on his life here, and on his happiness in heaven, which would be more than a compensation for all that he would suffer.

God's judgments are right because they reflect His character which is right.

Even in His affliction, whatever it was, David could praise the Lord. He knew that God never did anything out of hate or spite but from a heart of love and compassion. David knew that God had dealt with him "fairly". So often we think it either unfair to us or that God is picking on us, when in truth God is dealing with us from His justice and righteousness and it is for our own growth in Him.

76 O may Your lovingkindness comfort me, According to Your word to Your servant.

LOVINGKINDNESS: this is that word which has several meanings and no one word can be tied to it. It can mean the love of God, the grace of God, the compassion and care of God, the mercy of God, or it can mean all of those combined.

The lovingkindness of God can be made real to us in many different ways:

Through the ministry of other brothers and sisters in Christ;

Through His word by the Holy Spirit;

Through experiences that God allows us to experience;

the way God deals with us and treats us is in line with His character, and that is a great source of comfort regardless of the situation we may be in.

God's Spirit through His word is our counselor and comforter in times of distress and anguish. All we have to do is read, meditate on his word, and listen to His voice and we will be comforted.

[Bridges] Unless the Lord meets us, and blesses us with his merciful kindness, his lovingkindness for our comfort, it is a thirsty land where no water is. All the candles in the world, in the absence of the sun, can never make the day.

77 *May Your compassion come to me that I may live, For Your law is my delight.*

Were it not for the compassion of God we would all be consumed. It is because of the compassion of God that we live and should be the focus of our praise every day. Our lives are, or at least should be, a testimony of praise to God because of His love and compassion so freely demonstrated to us.

This is the psalmists desire to experience the compassion of God. Compassion is the pity and tender-hearted care God has for His children, Since God made him and fashioned him, the psalmist is appealing to God's heart for something that is precious to him.

Notice that in these two verses the psalmist is seeking the lovingkindness and compassion from the same God that had also afflicted him.

78 *May the arrogant be ashamed, for they subvert me with a lie; [But] I shall meditate on Your precepts.*

The shame of the arrogant is their ignorance of God and His word.

79 *May those who fear You turn to me, Even those who know Your testimonies.*

TURN TO ME: this is the fellowship of believers

[Bridges] It is painful to see Christians often walking aloof from each other, and suffering coldness, distance, differences, and distrust to divide them from their brethren.

80 *May my heart be blameless in Your statutes, So that I will not be ashamed.*

BLAMELESS: the divine standard that men must attain; morally and ethically sound.

Later on in v. 105 the writer will write, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." If God's word was not part of his life then he wouldn't care if he was embarrassed to know God's word or not. But since he has already proclaimed that he took delight in the Lord he was not going to be embarrassed by not knowing God's Word.

God's Word convicts us and leads us to godly living. It is when we stray from His Word that we get off the narrow path, leading to a life that will be ashamed because of straying from His Word.

The "blame" comes from not reading and obeying the word of God. when we turn away from God's word we lose our direction. The "shame" comes from realizing how far we have strayed when we are convicted in our hearts.

[Bridges] Beware of that satisfaction in the world which draws you away from the fountain of living waters. Learn to prize the comfort of the Lord supremely, and not to be content without some enjoyment; but rather let every day's refreshment be made a step for desiring and attaining renewed and sweeter refreshment for tomorrow.

Watch your heart because of its proneness to live upon itself—its own graces or fancied goodness instead of living by the faith of the Son of God. Examine your own settled judgment, your deliberate choice, your outgoing affections, your habitual, allowed practice, applying to every detection of unsoundness the blood of Christ as the sovereign remedy for the diseases of a deceitful and desperately wicked heart.

There are book ends here :

v. 73: you made me, so I need you to also give me understanding;

v. 80: may my life/heart be blameless [because of v. 73, being given understanding] and not ashamed because I asked for understanding, received it, but didn't live it.

PSALM 119.81-88

(message delivered by Doug Forbes)

*81 My soul faints with longing for your salvation,
but I have put my hope in your word.*

*82 My eyes fail, looking for your promise;
I say, "When will you comfort me?"*

*83 Though I am like a wineskin in the smoke,
I do not forget your decrees.*

*84 How long must your servant wait?
When will you punish my persecutors?*

*85 The arrogant dig pits to trap me,
contrary to your law.*

*86 All your commands are trustworthy;
help me, for I am being persecuted without cause.*

*87 They almost wiped me from the earth,
but I have not forsaken your precepts.*

*88 In your unfailing love preserve my life,
that I may obey the statutes of your mouth.*

81. My soul languishes

82. My eyes fail

88 Revive me

David knew exactly where his source of strength and comfort came from: not from the world, not from other men, but from the Word of God and from the God of the Word!

83. Though I have become like a wineskin in the smoke, I do not forget your statutes.
A wineskin in smoke becomes dry and brittle and of no use. And we can feel like that at times—dried up and of no use to God or anyone else. Yet God's word gives us hope and revives us (v. 88). All we have to do is read His word and apply it, let it minister to us.

84 How many are the days of your servant? When will you execute judgment on those who persecute me?

The Bible is clear: PS 139.16 tells us by the moment we are born all our days are written in God's book. So the Bible teaches us to number our days and live wisely for the Lord.

WHEN WILL YOU – Similar to PS 37 & 73 on God's knowledge of the wicked and His ultimate victory over evil and the vindication of the saints.

85-86

The arrogant have dug pits for me . . .

They have persecuted me with a lie . . .

It is obvious through this entire psalm that David was being pursued. He could have been hiding in a cave or somewhere in the wilderness, but regardless he was on the run. And at times we may feel like we are being pursued by the enemy too, and we cry out like David, "help me". God is our constant companion and he is always there. Our strength and comfort comes from Him. While we may feel like others are out to get us, God is always there to comfort and strengthen us.

87. They almost destroyed me on earth, but as for me, I did not forsake your precepts.

When we are mistreated by the world, or even by so-called

"fellow brothers and sisters in

Christ", we must decide how we will respond. If we are living by the word of God, then God's word will guide us in the proper way to respond. If we are living outside the word of God we will respond like the world. Let us not forsake the precepts of God and respond based on His word, that's how God's honored.

88 Revive me according to your lovingkindness. The lovingkindness of God in the OT is similar to the grace and mercy of God in the NT. God's mercy and grace towards us and in us revives us, brings us back to life again as nothing else can.

[HCS] give me life according to your faithful love.

It is because of God's faithful love in Jesus Christ that we are made alive when we trust Him as Savior.

Sep 11, 2011. On the 10th anniversary of Sep 11, 2001, vv. 8188

are very fitting because we

read how David asks of God when judgment will come on those who persecute him, and that because of his enemies he felt like he was almost destroyed. These verses only serve to verify PS 37 and 73, that although from our viewpoint it may seem the wicked attack us at will with no retaliation, in fact God is not ignorant and God is well aware, and in the end justice, the true justice of God, will prevail. What God calls us to do is exactly what David proclaimed: I will not forget who you are God, and I will not forsake our word. Revive us so that we may glorify in our lives.

THE STRENGTH OF GOD'S WORD
Psalm 119.89-96

INTRODUCTION: there is a world-wide competition which began in 1977 called the World's Strongest Man. This competition consists of nine different strength challenges, and each contestant is scored on how quick they can complete the task, if they can even complete it. Last year's winner from Lithuania is simply known as "Big Z" (his name is hard to pronounce). He has also won the title in 2009, 2010, and 2012. His personal strength records include:

Squat: 937#

Bench press: 600#

Dead lift 898#

Yet for all his strength, and for all the strength of those who compete, they could all be put out of commission by a virus that can only be seen through a microscope. They are strong, no doubt, but their strength is limited, and unless they continue to train they will lose that strength. And although Big Z is in his 50s, sooner or later he will be unable to compete anymore simply because of the effects of age. We may not associate the word "strength" with the word of God, but when we read the psalms, and especially the verses we will study tonight, we find out that God's word has strength. In fact God's word has more strength than we realize. Tonight as we continue in Psalm 119 we will discover that God's word is stronger than life itself.

[SCRIPTURE]

We're talking about the strength of God's word.

I. God's word is stronger than physical life (vv. 89-91)

To say that God's word is stronger than physical life means that it is:

a, ETERNAL

nothing about our physical earth or physical bodies will last eternally; now we have an eternal spirit ECC 3.11 tells us that God has set eternity in man's heart

But physically speaking there is nothing on this earth, and in fact there is nothing physical in this entire universe that will last eternally.

v. 89

[HEB: To eternity . . . your word is standing firm]

FOREVER: eternally, no beginning and no end. As God is eternal so is His word. It has 2 directions: backward into the past and forward into the future. God's word is as eternal as God is because God's word IS God Himself.

God's word did not come into existence when it was written down, God's word is as eternal as he is; His Spirit inspired men to write down His commandments

EX 17.14 is the first instance where we read that God commanded Moses to write down His words as a memorial;

Many times throughout the Gospels we read of Jesus saying, "It is written" referring to the Word of God. But God's word existed before it was every written down because God is eternal.

SETTLED: the primary usage of this word is seen in the Old Testament when people would move into a new land and live their or settle there. It gives us the picture of something being firmly established. The psalmist gives us the picture of God's word being firmly established in heaven and it will not change, it will not go away, it will not fade away.

There is nothing in the earth below that can alter the eternal word of God established in heaven above.

MATT 24.35: Jesus said heaven and earth would pass away but His words would never pass away.

We can take comfort knowing that God's word will remain after everything on this earth and even the world itself has been destroyed.

ILLUS: The Great Wall of China was begun in the 7th century B.C. and still stands today but it is not eternal and one day it will be destroyed;

The Eiffel Tower was built in 1889 and is one of the most recognizable landmarks in the world but is not eternal and one day it will be destroyed;

There is nothing on this earth of nature or manmade that will last forever, one day everything will be destroyed

2 PET 3.7 [read] God, by His word, is preserving this world for the coming destruction by fire.

REV 21.1: then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.

God's word is settled because it is God who settled it; God is eternal and His word is eternal.

Just as heaven is eternal so is God's word.

This one verse confirms the unchangeable nature of both God and His word. To say His word is settled means it is done – completed – there is nothing else that can be added nor can anything be taken away. It also tells us His word will never perish and that it is everlasting. Which means if God says He will bless, then He will bless. If His word says He will save, then He will save. And if His word says He will pardon, then He will pardon. All we have to do is take Him at his word.

[CHS] God's word is not fickle or uncertain; it is settled, determined, fixed, sure, immovable. Man's teachings change so much there is never time for them to be settled; but the Lord's word will remain unchanged eternally.

JOHN 3.16: whoever believes is still valid today, it has not changed;

JOHN 6.37: Jesus said he will not cast out those who come to Him and that has not changed;

JOHN 10.29: we are in God's hands and are protected by His power and that has not changed

What God has legislated will always be law;

What God has affirmed will always be true;

What God has promised will always be sure forever.

SO NOT ONLY IS GOD'S WORD ETERNAL, IT IS ALSO:

b. ESTABLISHED

v. 90

ESTABLISHED: created, brought into existence and will be here until God gives the word for all things to come to an end according to His plan. We are only here by God's express will.

The earth and all the planets and solar systems in the universe hang in the vacuum of space perfectly, all held there by the power of God. If the earth were to slip from its place in space life would cease to exist.

FAITHFULNESS: God's faithfulness is as established and firm as His Word. The faithfulness of God means He can be trusted, He can be counted on to keep His word.

Just as God's word is settled and permanent in heaven and will never fade away, so too is God's faithfulness – it is settled, it will never change

The earth stands only because God holds it in its place in the heavens. One day the earth will be destroyed but for now the earth stands in its place in the universe by the power and will of God.

ECC 1.4: a generation goes and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever.

SO GOD'S WORD IS ETERNAL, ESTABLISHED, AND IT IS:

c. ENDURING

v. 91

'They' are God's word (v. 89), His faithfulness (v. 90), and the earth (v. 90). Everything in this universe and on this earth stands only because of the power and spirit of God. were He to take away His spirit everything would perish.

"For all things are your servants."

13 times in Ps 119 the writer refers to himself as God's servant.

COL 1.16 tells us we were created both with purpose and by design. So when David writes that all things are your servants, we can clearly see that God has created us for His glory. We serve God because He is our creator. At the same time He is not an evil puppet master making us live and act against our will. His desire is that we know Him through Jesus Christ and not perish (2 PET 3.9) and His desire is that we serve Him so that others will come to know Him.

1 KINGS 17.4 tells us that God commanded the ravens to provide food for Elijah. V. 91 gives us yet another example of God's providential care of us in all aspects of life. Nothing happens apart from the express will of God nor does anything happen apart from the knowledge of God. Everything in history is working towards God appointed end.

To say that God's word is stronger than physical life means that His word is ETERNAL, ESTABLISHED, AND ENDURING.

II. God's word is stronger than our afflictions (v. 92)

The word of God was more than just a source of information for the psalmist, it was his comfort, his strength, his source of knowledge about God. If God's word had not been his delight he would not have known about the lovingkindness of God, he would not have known about the forgiveness and mercy of God, he would not have known about God's abiding presence, he would not have known about the wonderful ministry of prayer, and on and on it goes. How powerful and how irreplaceable is the word of God in our lives.

The psalmist knew that God's Word was truth and life to him, and we must be the same way. God's Word tells us about sin and about our sinful condition. God's Word tells us how we can be forgiven

and receive eternal life. God's Word tells us about our Savior, the Savior of the world Jesus Christ, and how we can know Him personally. His Word must be our delight for life.

There have been times in my life when God's word became a very real companion and delight because I was going through a very difficult time. God's word helped counsel me, guide me, comfort me, and still does. Before the difficult times is when we are to be established in His word so that when the difficult times do come, and they will, we will not have a problem with going right to the source of strength and comfort – the word of God. and when we go to His word in the difficult times we are really going to Him because His word lives.

JOHN 6.63: Jesus said his words were both spirit and life.

STRONGER THAN PHYSICAL LIFE

STRONGER THAN OUR AFFLICTIONS

III. God's word is stronger than our opposition (vv. 93-95)

v. 93

I WILL NOT FORGET: in other words, the psalmist was not going to let those who opposed him make him forget God's word. God's word IN him was stronger than those who had raised up AGAINST him.

v. 16: I shall not forget your word

v. 83: I do not forget your statutes

REVIVED: we live by the very word of God; they made him live, they brought him back to life

DT 8.3: man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

It is exactly when we forget the word of God that we run into trouble. Just as the king who tore his clothes in distress in 2 KINGS 22.8-13 because he knew how far the nation of Israel had strayed from God's Word, we too must keep close to God's word or we will stray, and when we stray we give Satan an open door to attack, and he will!

By the word of God, the psalmist declared he had been revived. Earlier (v. 83) the psalmist declared the mercy and grace of God had revived him. it is clear that God's word, when properly applied to our lives, revives us and saves us, it brings us back to life.

v. 94

SAVE ME: originally this word meant to be rescued from physical distress and harm; later it came to mean the salvation of God. The root word from which this is derived is the name of Jesus.

I AM YOURS: the writer 13 times in this psalm refers to Himself as the servant of God;

v. 95

CONSIDER: to understand, to pay attention, not just to gain information but to understand what you have.

THE WICKED WAIT: they are waiting, watching, listening for that perfect opportunity to strike, to make an accusation, to bring a false charge, to cause a distraction

6x in Ps 119 the writer comments about the wicked and how they were against him. But He knew he belonged to the Lord and it was the word of God that was his strength and companion.

53: he was angry because of the wicked;

61: the wicked tried to ensnare him;

95: the wicked waited to destroy him;

110: the wicked had set a snare for him;

119: God will remove the wicked;

155: salvation is far from the wicked

[Bridges] This is the constant character of the believer's walk – enduring the enmity of the ungodly, and seeking his refuge in the word of God, in that hiding place of safety to which the word directs him. We hear indeed the roaring of the winds and waves; but we hear also the voice hushing the storm to rest, "Peace be still."

STRONGER THAN PHYSICAL LIFE

STRONGER THAN OUR AFFLICTIONS

STRONGER THAN OUR OPPOSITION

IV. God's word is stronger than our limitations (v. 96)

All of us have our limitations, even the world's strongest man has his limitations – there is only so much he can do before his body breaks down or before he tears or breaks something.

ILLUS: I remember the pitcher of our high school baseball team was working on perfecting his curve ball. One day at practice he was throwing and throwing, trying to get it perfected, and he threw harder and harder, and in the process of his pitching he broke his arm. You see to throw a curve ball you have to rotate your pitching arm to give the ball a twist and he has thrown so much his arm had become weakened and he pushed it beyond its limits and it broke.

The last time I played basketball I wound up in a cast for 7 weeks. I jumped up for the ball and came down on my ankle that had turned sideways – all my weight on my one ankle and it was stressed beyond its limitations.

All of us have our limitations and yet the Word of God is not limited to time or space,

God's word is not limited to one particular generation;

God's word is not limited to one particular situation;

God's word is not limited to one particular denomination

God's word is timeless and relevant regardless of the situation or generation that reads it and applies it to their lives.

BROAD: the concept of this word goes back to v. 89: forever O Lord your word is settled in heaven.

Forever is the principle of broad – in every direction God's word covers our lives, both the past and the future. We never grow out of God's word, we never get too smart for God's word, and God's word never becomes obsolete.

^{NET} **Psalm 119:96** I realize that everything has its limits, but your commands are beyond full comprehension.

CONCLUSION/CALL TO ACTION

The winner of the 2014 world's strongest man competition was a Lithuanian known as Big Z; and he has won on 3 previous occasions over the last 6 years. But he has to constantly train to keep his strength up, and his strength has limitations because he is human.

But God's word is not limited, it is as strong as it needs to be.

God's word is stronger than life itself, that's why we can trust it, rely on it, believe in it because it is the strength of our life.

**INVESTING IN ETERNITY:
The impact of meditating on God's word
Psalm 119.97-104**

INTRODUCTION: the word INVEST means to make use of for future benefits or advantages. We understand the word invest to mainly involve depositing money into some type of account for long term results, like a retirement account. We also use invest to mean spending time with someone in training or teaching and say we are investing in their lives for the future.

The study of God's word is no different; when we read and study God's word we are investing not in the future but we are literally investing in eternity because God's word is eternal.

Just last week we discovered PS. 119.89: forever, O Lord, your word is settled in heaven

Reading God's word and studying God's word is an investment in eternity because through God's word we learn about the God of eternity and about His son the Lord Jesus Christ.

So tonight as we continue this journey of discovery about God's word through Psalm 119 we will discover that we gain tremendous benefits from meditating on God's word which is investing in eternity.

[SCRIPTURE]

We're talking about how meditating on God's word is an investment in eternity.

I. MEDITATING ON GOD'S WORD ESTABLISHES A FRAMEWORK FOR OUR LIVES (v. 97)

This section of Ps. 119 begins with what some commentators have called a surprise:

O HOW – as if the psalmist is surprised at how much he loved God's word. It may have been because of what God had done in his life, it may have been because of the life he had lived at some point.

Whatever the case the writer is simply thrilled with the fact that God's word was very powerful in his life.

It is evident that he loved God's word because he would wind up writing 176 verses simply because he did love God's word. Twice before in PS 119 the writer explained how he loved the commandments of God and now he is proclaiming his love for the law of God.

MEDITATION: means to reflect or be devoted or to go over something in your mind; to study something and allow it to occupy your mind.

v. 11: your word I have treasured in my heart that I might not sin against God

In other words the psalmist was so devoted to the word of God and had so immersed himself in the word of God that it occupied his mind at all times and affected everything he did.

Now let's think about that for a moment – what occupies our minds during the day? Does God's word occupy our minds, or does the world occupy our minds? Now no doubt the psalmist thought about many things during the day but it was the word of God that had primary place in his life and it was on the word of God that he meditated on. God's word had a place of prominence in his life.

What place does God's word have in our own lives? Does it occupy a place of prominence in our lives, or is it something we just dabble in every so often? Sure we go through our days and we have all sorts of thoughts that go through our minds, on how to deal with this situation or that problem, or how are we going to pay for this or what to make for supper, and the list goes on and on – that's just part of life. But ultimately is it God's word that guides our decisions, is it God's word that we study and meditate on that helps shape our lives, that helps in our decision making process?

For the psalmist God's word had so occupied his mind that it affected every part of his life, as it should. Good lesson for us.

Just look down at v. 105 and we can see how God's word had so affected his life: a lamp and a light. How do we get into a habit of meditating on God's word? After our daily quiet time with the Lord in His word and in prayer, how does God's word become part of our thoughts?

I once heard a man talking about learning a foreign language. He said the key to learning any foreign language was learning to think in that language. For instance if you go to a fast food store and order a hamburger, instead of thinking 'hamburger' in your mind you should be thinking the word 'hamburger' in whatever language you are trying to learn. [Am-bor-gay-sa] in Spanish for instance instead of hamburger.

Meditating on the word of God means I am allowing God's word to address whatever issues that confront me and that is what is on my mind because I have been reading and studying and trying to live God's word to the point it affects my thought process.

And this is a matter of spiritual maturity that God does within each of us as we grow with Him and as we allow the Holy Spirit to work in us and through us.

The process of meditating on God's word is simply the events that we encounter on a daily basis that must pass through the filter of God's word as it becomes more and more a part of our lives.

II. MEDITATING ON GOD'S WORD GIVES US ADVANTAGES

1. We gain the advantage of wisdom (v. 98).

Wisdom has been defined simply as learning how to live God's way.

Listen to just the first 7 verses of Proverbs 1 on wisdom:

PROV 1.1-7 [READ]

So just from reading the first seven verses of Proverbs we understand that is the reading and studying of God's word that we gain wisdom

Notice v. 98: your commandments MAKE ME wiser

Although it may seem on the surface the writer has been all puffed up and egotistic, we can't miss what he has written: it was the commandments of God that made him wise; he was not wise on his own.

God's word gives us wisdom because God's word gives us what God requires of us to live in a specific way for his glory. God would not hold us accountable for how we lived if we did not have the guidelines given to us. For instance:

EPH 4.29-32 [READ]

The enemies of God would not pay attention to his word, wouldn't read his word nor try to live by his word, this is why the man or woman of God that mediates on God's word will have more wisdom than their enemies because of what God is doing through His word.

So just from those few verses of Scripture I have learned how my speech is supposed to be towards others, that I am to be forgiving, I am not supposed to hinder what the Holy Spirit wants to do in my life. Jesus is the perfect example of all this and it is him I have been called to follow as all Christians have been called to follow and imitate Christ.

As we meditate and think on and ponder God's word, as it more and more becomes part of our lives we understand that it is God's word that gives us wisdom on living.

2. We gain the advantage of insight (v. 99).

INSIGHT: good practical common sense is one way to understand this word; another meaning of this word is to have success.

Now this is an interesting verse because we don't know how old the writer was and we don't know what he was taught. We do know from Deuteronomy that religious instruction was part of everyday life in a young Hebrew boy's life but how long had the writer been taught and what he had been taught is not elaborated on. But the writer thought of himself as having more insight and more understanding of the practical side of God's word than his teachers did.

TESTIMONIES: these are facts about God and specifics about something God has done.

As we live for the Lord and as we walk with the Lord we will begin to have a solid testimony for how God works. Probably the first testimony you and I will have about God is how he saved us. Then as we

look back on our lives we can see where God has worked and is working and that should give us a strong testimony to a lost world trying to figure out if we really do behave what we believe. Now the writer is not saying he was smarter than his teachers nor did he say he did not need his teachers any more. What he is saying is that he had progressed in his walk with the Lord and God's word by God's spirit had given him valuable insight into God's word that maybe his teachers did not have.

3. We gain the advantage of understanding (v. 100)

The writer is not disregarding the wisdom of his seniors. Those who are older and have walked with the Lord for many years have a passion for his word and for serving him. And their experiences and their stories are very important as lessons we can learn from lives lived through an obedient walk.

So we must not disregard the wisdom of those who are older than us because we will be in their shoes one day and we would not want to be disregarded

But as we study and live and learn God's word through the avenue of daily life, just as the aged who have lived for the Lord a long time and have learned the lessons of faithfulness, we learn those lessons that Jesus wanted instilled in them.

So right up front we have learned that we gain at least three specific benefits from meditating
We gain wisdom, insight, and understanding. More than our enemies, more than our teachers, and more than the aged.

III. MEDITATING ON GOD'S WORD PUTS US ON THE RIGHT PATH (vv. 101-102)

So often people think that if they simply try to straighten up their life or reform their life then that's all they need and they don't really need all the church stuff and all that Jesus stuff. Others treat a relationship with Jesus like sugar in unsweet tea – just add a little Jesus to our lives and everything will be ok. But the truth is we can't clean ourselves up enough, we can't straighten our lives up enough, and we don't just add Jesus to our already mess up lives to make everything better.

In v. 101 the writer says that it is because he meditates on God's word that he has been put on a specific path in life.

RESTRAINED: kept from doing something.

v. 3: they do no unrighteousness, they walk in his ways;

v. 9: how can a young man keep his way pure

It was God's word that gave him a standard, it was God's word that gave him the understanding what was right and wrong and it was God's word that led him to choose the right over the wrong.

The only way he was going to keep God's word was to stay away from evil.

It was God's word that defined evil, it was God's word that gave him the clear difference between good and evil.

Jesus spoke this same truth when he preaching in the sermon on the mount:

MATT 7.13-14 [READ]

The wide gate and the broad way is the way of evil and it is from that path that God saves us and puts us on the narrow path.

Very similar to PS 1 and Prov 1.15, blessed is the man that does not walk/stand/sit with the evil and sinners. Again, our company defines who we are and effects what we do and how we think (vv. 57,64). "I have restrained my feet."

In our lives we can either live restrained or unrestrained. The unrestrained life says, "anything goes, I just want to have fun. And besides, what's the harm as long as no one gets hurt?" The restrained life, on the other hand, knows that God is watching and God desires us to live lives for His glory and not for our selfish ends. Restraining ourselves is to hold back from the world and in turn give ourselves without reservation to the Savior who died on the cross for us. He did not hold back from us and we dare not hold back from Him! This is the intentional life, not simply going through life with no aim or purpose.

SPURGEON: if we want to keep God's word then we have to let go of evil.

So true!

v. 102

It is because he meditated on God's word, knew God's word, lived and loved God's word that he could discern between good and evil. He decided not to walk in the evil way and he decided not to turn away from God's word.

One man put it this way:

When we take the first step in turning aside from God and His word we never know how far or where that will lead us, and it is never good.

And that is so true. We will choose a path to walk down but we never know where that path will lead nor do we know how long we will be on that path.

IV. MEDITATING ON GOD'S WORD SUSTAINS US (v. 103).

God's word nourished and sustained the writer and filled him up. To say that God's word was sweeter than honey to him meant that it was delightful, it was desirable, and he enjoyed reading it and meditating on it.

Honey is naturally sweet; you don't have to add anything to honey to make it sweet. God's word, for the writer, was more desirable than even the sweetness of honey.

V. MEDITATING ON GOD'S WORD KEEPS US IN THE TRUTH (v. 104).

I HATE EVERY FALSE WAY: the reason the writer would say he hated every false way was because it was God's word that showed him what the true and false way was. It was the word of God that showed him the difference between truth and a lie, between life and death, between what was acceptable to God and what was not.

The false way is against God and His holiness.

Looking back on vv. 97-104 it would seem the writer of this section of the Psalms has become conceited and puffed up about himself. He wrote he had more wisdom than his enemies, more insight than his teachers, and more understanding than the aged. He also stated that he did not walk in the evil path and he had restrained himself from any type of lifestyle that dishonored God.

The truth is it was God's word that gave him wisdom, insight and understanding. It was God's word that gave him a clear choice between the right path to walk in life and the wrong path to walk in life. It was God's word that he enjoyed meditating on to the point that, to him, it was even more enjoyable than even honey. God's word helped him understand what was evil, and because of that he hated evil even more and came to love God's word even more.

So how can we, as Christians, improve our meditating on God's word?

1. Don't be a stranger to it;
2. Allow God's word to affect your daily decisions;
3. Learn how to read God's word:

Devotionally – LOVE IT (let it minister to you, lead your prayer life);

Theologically – LEARN IT (go beyond the devotion to understand it, dig in a little deeper);

Practically – LIVE IT (put it into your life)

OUR GUIDING LIGHT

Psalm 119.105-112

INTRODUCTION

I. THE LIGHT OF GOD'S WORD GIVES US A CLEAR PATH (vv. 105-107)

a. A clear path for our travels (v. 105)

“A lamp” and a “light”. There is no better and profoundly simpler description of God’s word than a lamp and a light. God’s word guides us, shows us the way, illuminates trip hazards, gives us warmth and security even in the darkest of days. The night is not so dark and the night no so lonely with God’s word to shine the way for us to go.

The Bible refers to our life as a sojourn or a journey.

1 CHRON 29.15: *for we are sojourners before you and tenants, as all our fathers were.*

This sojourn or journey is one of love and revelation. God’s love for sinful man and God’s revelation of himself to sinful man. When man responds to God’s invitation God’s word becomes his light and lamp. And for the rest of his life the man who allows God’s word by God’s spirit to guide him will walk the path of truth and righteousness for the glory of God.

In the Old Testament the lamp was made exclusively from clay pottery and consisted of a shallow bowl with a pinched spout for the wick. The Old Testament lamps burned olive oil exclusively. For outdoor lighting a torch was used.

The lamps were the portable lighting instruments, the flashlights so to speak, of the Old Testament.

The light was produced by the lamp.

The key is, we don’t make God’s word a lamp and a light, it IS a lamp and a light; the question for us is, will we allow it to be a lamp and light for our own lives?

For the psalmist he allowed God’s word to be his guide in life, he took it with him everywhere he went.

PROV 6.23: *for the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is a light; and reproofs for discipline are the way of life.*

I can remember growing up we had an old kerosene lamp called a hurricane lamp with a glass reservoir on the bottom and a wick that was let up through an opening that you lit and it had a tall glass globe. The first church I pastored had several old hurricane lamps of the same sort that were lit and placed in the windows for our yearly Christmas candlelight service. they don't give off much light in large places and are a little awkward to carry around. There were also smaller versions of hurricane lamps made to carry around, some had a polished brass plate on one side of the lamp to reflect the light.

God's word serves as a lamp in at least five different ways:

1. God's word is the lamp of revelation – it tells us about the person of God, who He is and about His son the Lord Jesus Christ. It tells us of God's eternal plan, and that one day He will bring all things to a close according to His perfect plan.

LUKE 24.27: then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

2. God's word is the lamp of redemption – it tells us that we are sinners and that we must call on the Lord for forgiveness and salvation. God's word tells us there is a savior who is Jesus Christ, who went to the cross and shed His blood to pay our sin debt. It also tells us that God's plan from the beginning was for man to be reconciled to him through Jesus Christ, and that God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked.

ISA 45.22: turn to me and be saved all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is no other.

As the word made flesh Jesus is the light of the world

JOHN 1.4-5: in Him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

JOHN 8.12: then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in the darkness but will have the light of life."

3. God's word is the lamp of relationships – God's word shines the light on how we are to treat our fellow man based on how God as our heavenly father treats us.

EPH 4.32: be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other just as god in Christ also has forgiven you.

4. God's word is the lamp of restoration – God's word gives us comfort and strength in difficult situations by telling us of God's redemptive love for us.

PS 119.50: *this is my comfort in my affliction, that your word has revived me.*

5. God's word is the lamp of response – it shows me how I am to respond to the God of creation and the God of salvation.

PS 107.1-2: *oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for his lovingkindness is everlasting. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He has redeemed from the hand of the adversary.*

ACTS 2.38: *Peter said to them, "Repent and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

As a lamp and a light God's word doesn't remove obstacles or make them go away, but it does shine light on them so we can see them and avoid being affected by them.

[Barnes] He who makes the word of God his guide, and marks its teachings, is in the right way. He will clearly see the path. He will be able to mark the road in which he ought to go, and to avoid all those by-paths which would lead him astray. he will see where those by-roads turn off from the main path – often at a very small angle, and so that there seems to be no divergence. He will see any obstruction which may lie in his path; any deep ravine which may be near, and down which, in a dark night, one might fall. Man needs such a guide, and the Bible is such a guide.

In the military, the Navy to be specific because it is what I know, there were definite paths to follow if you wanted to get promoted; there were schools you had to attend, there were certain types of duty stations you had to be assigned to, there were certain special qualifications you had to achieve if you wanted to be competitive for promotion. The same is true of the secular world. When I worked at Home Depot, if you wanted to advance up the ladder of management there was a track of work that you had to be involved in; you could advance if you were willing to pay the price.

The writer of Psalm 119 was saying that there was a path to follow too, and the word of God gave light to that path. If he wanted to live God's way, if he wanted to honor God in his life, then he needed God's word as a lamp and light to give him clear direction on what to do and what to avoid.

A CLEAR PATH FOR OUR TRAVELS THROUGH LIFE

b. A clear path for our testimony (v. 106)

Our testimony is what we have experienced about God, what God has done in our lives personally. CONFIRM IT – The writer of Ps 119 could say beyond a shadow of doubt that because he lived the word of God it had become his lamp and light.

The psalmist wrote God's ordinances were not just ordinances but "righteous ordinances".

ORDINANCES are God's standards for fair dealings between men.

And he made a commitment to keep them, to live by them. It's one thing to read the word of God and have knowledge of the word of God – it's another to live it, to have it guide you in your life. Because God's word is our lamp and our light, it does guide us and show us the way, the right way, the only way to live and especially when it comes to dealing with our fellow man.

If God's word was truly a lamp and a light in his life then why wouldn't he want to keep God's ordinances? Why have a flashlight to light your way and not want to use it and follow it?

c. A clear path during our trials (v. 107)

God's word was a source of strength and comfort in times of difficulty. Whatever had afflicted the writer he knew God's word to be the source of peace and hope. Affliction can often rob us of hope and joy, at least it can sure try. The Bible never tells us the child of God will never encounter difficulties in life. But it does tell us no matter what we experience God is always there to love you and comfort you and strengthen you.

One of the great verses of Scripture that deal with God's presence through our trials is Ps. 23.4:

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for you are with me, your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

None of us are exempt from the valleys in life, but here are 5 great truths about the valley:

1. Valleys are places we pass through not hang out.
2. Valleys are places of shadows, and shadows have no substance.
3. We can take confidence in knowing the Lord has gone through the valley ahead of us.
4. Valleys strengthen our faith.
5. Every valley is different, but God remains the same.

[CHS] SHADOW: the shadow of a dog cannot bite; the shadow of a sword cannot kill; the shadow of death cannot destroy us.

AS A LIGHT AND A LAMP GOD'S WORD GIVES US A CLEAR PATH IN LIFE

II. THE LIGHT OF GOD'S WORD GIVES US A CELEBRATED PRAISE (v. 108)

Freewill offerings of our mouth – praise and worship, thanksgiving and adoration.

What is the purpose of the offering? To express devotion, thanksgiving, or the need to be forgiven.

FREEWILL offering: given willingly, joyfully, voluntarily, out of love for what God in Christ has done.

PS 19.14: *Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.*

Because God's word is both a lamp and a light we can offer praise and thanksgiving to God for how it keeps us from the snares of life.

And what was his request? Teach me. God's word was a lamp and a light; he used it and he also wanted to know more about it.

III. THE LIGHT OF GOD'S WORD GIVE US A CONFIRMED PATTERN (vv. 109-110)

v. 109

One man has said our lives are the results of our choices. Because God has given us free will we choose each day how to live our lives (in my hand). And yet, as children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, we must make sure the choices we make honor God and glorify Him (I do not forget your law). God's word is our guideline for living, we choose whether or not we will live within those guidelines for His glory.

While our lives may be in our hands in terms of the choices we make, our days in in God's hands based on His eternal plan.

Psalm 139.16: *Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in your book were all written the days that were ordained for me when as yet there was not one of them.*

v. 110

The wicked will always lay a snare for the children of God. but as long as we keep the word of God, as long as His word is both a lamp and a light then His word will illumine the dangers that lie ahead and we will be properly armed to walk through this world.

And what did he say in response?

He had not gone astray from God's precepts.

PRECEPTS: specific instructions given by God

JOHN 15.18-20 [READ]

IV. THE LIGHT OF GOD'S WORD GIVES US A COMMITTED PURPOSE (VV. 111-112)

v. 111

One of the hot button political topics in the past years has been what is known as the inheritance tax. The inheritance tax is tax imposed on money or property inherited from someone. These taxes can be anywhere from 1% to 20% depending on the state. There are currently 8 states that have inheritance taxes: Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Nebraska, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee. Do not confuse the inheritance tax with the estate tax which some have referred to as the death tax. An estate tax is tax levied against the estate of someone that has died and that estate has been transferred to another person because of their will.

So often an inheritance is seen as something of monetary value, and whole families have been destroyed because of greed caused by an inheritance. As well, much good has been done because of what someone has inherited. As Christians, our inheritance is not only the Word of God which is to be the joy of our lives, but also it is being adopted into the family of God. The Bible tells us our inheritance is incorruptible, undefiled, and will not fade away, protected by the power of God (1 PET 1.3-5). No court in the land can touch the inheritance of the child of God!

A heritage is what we pass down to succeeding generations. To have God's Word, His decrees, as our inheritance and as our heritage means God's Word has not only been faithfully passed down to us through the centuries, but we also have a tremendous responsibility to pass on the great truths of God's Word to the generation coming behind us. The less God's Word is valued in our lives the less it will be valued in the generations to come.

Are the decrees of God really the joy of our hearts? We derive our joy and we take joy from many things in this world, and there is nothing wrong with that. We may have great joy in our families, our jobs, our hobbies and past times. But is God and His word a source of joy in our lives? The Bible says that salvation brings joy and that our joy is made full and complete in Jesus. His word is joy because it brings life, it comforts us, it strengthens us, it guides us and as v. 105 tells us, it is our lamp and light in a world dark with sin. And it is that light, that light of salvation, that brings true joy into this world.

v. 112

This is a conscious decision of the will, to make a decision to follow and obey the word of God. "To the end" means until the day God called him home.

As a light and a lamp, God's word gives us a:

Clear path to walk through life;

Celebrated praise because of His goodness;

Confirmed pattern to live in life;

Committed purpose for our lives

I want to go back to a statement I made earlier in the beginning of this sermon so that you will not forget it:

We don't make God's word a lamp and a light, it already IS a lamp and light. Our part is to use God's word to guide us through life and to shine a light on the path God would have us walk for His glory.

With God's word as your guide you will never go wrong. The moment we set aside God's word, or the moment we forget or ignore God's word, that's when we will go astray every time.

A SERVANT'S STANDARD OF LIFE

Psalm 119.113-120

INTRO: Thirteen times in Ps 119 the writer refers to himself as, “your servant.” He was in the service of God and for God. The word ‘servant’ can mean servant or attendant. What we read throughout this one Psalm is a man who loved the Lord, loved the word of the Lord, and served the Lord with all he had; he simply wanted to bring honor and glory to His Lord. And in the eight verses we will look at tonight we will find out a little bit about the standard of life he set for himself.

Now the standard of life he set for himself was based on God’s word.

According to the business dictionary the definition of standard of living is, “the *financial health of a population, as measured by per capita income and consumption of goods and services by individuals or households*. The simple definition is what it takes for a person to live in any given area of the world.

In the first quarter of 2015 the state with the lowest cost of living was Mississippi and the highest was Hawaii; Illinois came in at no. 24 while Missouri came in at no. 11 just under Georgia at no. 10. Now these numbers are based purely on economic data, and based on the economy we will normally set a standard of living for ourselves. It is always much easier to live a little below your standard of living and it is always harder to live above it. And there are some people who think they have to keep up with the in-crowd, whatever that is, and thus try to adapt to a higher standard of living. But the truth it is much harder to go down to a lower standard of living than it is to go up to a little higher standard.

The Bible gives us standards too, but these standards are not based on the economy but rather on the word of God. The Bible does give us wisdom on using material goods about standards that we have to pay close attention to:

MATT 6.25: Jesus taught that life was more than the food we eat and the clothes we wear;

MATT 6.24: Jesus taught that you cannot serve both man and wealth, you will wind up clinging to one and losing the other.

LUKE 18.25 Jesus said it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

So our standard of living as children of God cannot be based on the economy but rather must be based on the word of God, and that is where we are tonight in Ps. 119 as we discover THE SERVANT’S STANDARD OF LIFE.

[TEXT]

We're talking about the standard of life the psalmist had set for himself, how that affected his life and what that means for us.

I. THE SERVANTS STANDARD OF LIFE IS A LIFESTYLE (vv. 113-114)

v. 113

HATE: to desire to have no contact with or to have nothing to do with those who are double-minded

1 KINGS 18.21: Elijah asked this question of the prophets of Baal on the mountain, "How long will you waiver between two opinions?"

JAS 1.8: the doubting person and the double-minded person is like a wave being tossed about on the surface of the ocean;

DOUBLE-MINDED: the divided or skeptical mind; the divided in heart

The double-minded person is unstable, no firmness of heart, no convictions, wavering, doubtful, skeptical

The psalmist had sought to be firm in his convictions about God and His word, and he valued the same trait in others.

The psalmist had set a standard for his life. HATE is a strong word. Webster's Dictionary defines the word as, "an intense hostility and aversion usually deriving from fear, anger, or a sense of injury.

The word the psalmist uses here means to have no contact with or to have nothing to do with, to distance yourself from something because of what it is. The psalmist uses this word three other times in PS 119:

vv. 104 & 128: I hate every false way

v. 163: I have and despise falsehood

For the psalmist he had set a standard for his life based on the word of God. The double-minded person has no clear moral compass, they waiver between two opinions. A good example can be seen in 1 KINGS 18.21 when atop of Mt. Carmel, Elijah asked the prophets of Baal, "How long will you waiver between two opinions?" The psalmist was clear and solid in his beliefs and had no time for those who wavered in their beliefs, he had no time for those who were not sure about what they believed.

JAS 1.8 tells us the doubting person, the person whose mind is divided, is like a wave being tossed about on the surface of the ocean.

ILLUS: the only tractor I ever learned to drive was a MF 135. This tractor had individual brakes, one for the left tire and one for the right. One day I put my foot on the right break but I turned left – the tractor just lifted up on the front end and went nowhere – it didn't know what to do.

That's what happens with a double minded person, they don't know what to do – they try to go both directions at the same time.

Not only did the psalmists have no time for those who did not know what they believed but he was drawn to those who were firm in their convictions, he valued it in others lives.

Jesus put it this way in the sermon on the mount:

It has been famously said that if you don't stand for something you will fall for anything, and that is true. As Christians our guidelines for life, our standard for living should come from the word of God. God's word will never lead you astray and will give you clear instructions on how to live for the glory of God.

Notice there is a contrast here in v. 13:

The psalmist HATED the double-minded; but
He LOVED the law of God.

This goes without saying, you cannot be double-minded and claim the love God's law; conversely you cannot claim to love the law of God and yet be double-minded.

JOHN 14.15; 14.21, 23; 15.10 Jesus told his disciples if they loved him they would keep his commandments; and the opposite is true too, if we keep God's commandments it means we love him. The double-minded person is not going to keep the word of God and love the word of God because they will be torn between the world and God.

Let's go back for a moment to v. 109: *my life is continually in my hand, yet I do not forget your law.* Three times previously in Ps. 119 the writer has stated how he loved the word of God or the law of God. If he did not love the word of God, the law of God, then he would not have written 176 verses about it. For the psalmist to say his life was in his hands means the life he lived was largely a matter of the choices he made and his choice was to love and live and honor the word of God through his life. The double-minded he had no time for because they could not be trusted.

Think about it this way:

God's law, God's word is forever settled in heaven (v. 89). Which means it will never change. The double-minded person is the one who cannot be trusted because they will say one thing and do another. They have no solid foundation but are like shifting sand to the waves on the beach. JAS 3.17: wisdom from above is unwaivering: solid, firm, not double-minded.

We can't be double-minded about God; we either trust him or we do not, we will either abide by His word or we will not. The double-minded person tries to play both ends against the middle and winds up lost in the middle not knowing what he believes.

114

HIDING PLACE: protection

SHIELD: a smaller shield used in hand-to-hand combat

WAIT FOR YOUR WORD: either to be fulfilled or to hear from God

PS 27.14: wait for the Lord; be strong and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for the Lord.

Five times in PS 119 the psalmist wrote, "I wait for your word;" he knew the word of God revived him and was a comfort to him and gave him strength and protection against his enemies. So he waited on the comfort and strength and encouragement that the word of God provides. What a great and important lesson for us today:

For the double-minded person the Lord will not be his hiding place and shield, the world will be. Oh he will claim the Lord is his hiding place, which would mean he would take refuge in the word of God and trust in the Lord, but in truth he goes to the world to take refuge, in another relationship or whatever he feels the world has to offer.

This is a subtle yet powerful encouragement and a great piece of spiritual advice. When we are faced with decisions, or when we need clarity about a situation, the word of God is that shelter we must go to, to immerse ourselves until the answer and/or direction become clear. David wrote he waited for the word of God. I don't wait so well, but in waiting on God's answer God strengthens our faith to trust in him, believe in him. While we are waiting God is working, and His answer is always on time and in His way.

II. THE SERVANT'S STANDARD OF LIFE IS A COMMITMENT (vv. 115-117)

115

The psalmist's standard of living in these next three verses is described in three requests.

The first is: DEPART

EVILDOER: a person who rejects God's authority

Nothing was going to keep him from serving God.

There is an implied message here: the evildoers may have been the ones trying to keep him from observing or living the commandments of God. It was the psalmist's desire to stay away from the ungodly so that he would not be prevented or tempted to stray away from God and His word.

The double-minded person will not observe the commandments of God, he will talk about them and make a big deal about them but in truth he will observe the ways of the world while talking about loving the word of God.

116

This is the second of three requests from the psalmist: the first was for the evil doers to go away. The writer knew the power of the word of God. whether he had access to some portion of the written word or that he was relying on the oral tradition is unknown. But it is clear that God's word was his source of comfort and strength. and because his confidence was in the word of God he knew if God's word failed it would be a source of embarrassment for him. But God's word – written and spoken – never fails because God never fails.

Now he is asking to be sustained which means to rely on and rest on.

God's word sustains us with::

- 1, Wisdom – learning how to live God's way;
2. Truth – we can always count on the word of God to give us the truth because it IS the truth;
3. Knowledge – in example after example we read of how God works and of God's great love for us in Jesus Christ.

The double-minded person will not allow himself to be sustained by the word of God but rather he will rely on himself to sustain him. He will, again, talk about the Lord and about his love for the Lord but he will not allow the word of God to sustain him because he doesn't trust in it.

117

The third request here is for God to UPHOLD him.

UPHOLD: one man has said that the first lesson a vine learns is to cling because without a supporting branch on which to cling the vine cannot hold itself up. The same is true of our relationship with God, unless we cling to God for strength there is no way we can hold ourselves up.

The double-minded person will not have regard for the word of God.

So here are three requests from the writer:

- 1, Depart;
2. Sustain;
3. Uphold

III. THE SERVANT'S STANDARD OF LIFE IS A REALIZATION (vv. 118-119)

118

REJECTED: there are three pictures give to us about what this word means:

- 1, To toss aside as being worthless
2. To reject;
3. To treat as worthless.

I had a friend of mine whose dad was a farmer. And his dad grew peanuts and cantelopes. I helped him one year pick cantelopes and it was interesting. Cantelopes grow on a vine. So when it came time to pick them he would set up a conveyor belt on each side of his tractor with a trailer in between. We would walk behind the conveyor belt, pick the cantelopes from the vines, and put them on the belt. The belt would carry the cantelope to the trailer where others would sort them in baskets or pile them in the back of a truck. Now sorting would take place right when we put them on the belt and again before they were placed on the truck. We would normally only reject those that were really mushy and starting to rot, and it was pretty easy to tell because normally your hand would go right into the cantelope and it was really messy and stinky. On the truck there was other culling based on whether they thought the cantelope was up to their standards or not.

The double-minded person actually lives away from the word of God, he has already wandered from the statutes of God because he is double-minded.

ZECH 7.14 is a perfect example of what happens when God rejects those who wander from his word

119

First God rejects, then God REMOVES

YOU HAVE REMOVED: the verb shows that it is God who does the removing. Now this is not to say that all the wicked had been removed from the earth at the time of this writing, but that when the evil are removed God is the cause of it.

DROSS: impurities in metal that rise to the top and are skimmed off when it is heated to liquid.

This gives us a picture of the refining fire of God that tests us and tries us for the purpose of strengthening our faith. The strong faith is tested in the refining furnace of God. and as His Word clearly states, those who persevere will be saved (MATT 24.13).

REJECTED – REMOVED

But there is a third we cannot forget:

RESTORE – God will restore us when we return to him.

IV. THE SERVANT'S STANDARD OF LIFE IS AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT (v. 120)

All of us should have a healthy fear of God. not a fear that He is going to take us out or hurt us if we don't do what He says, but rather a fear that leads to worship and reverence and awe because of who He is.

And absolutely we should be afraid of His judgments. He will come one day and bring His wrath to bear on this sinful earth. And before that day—today—we had better be right before Him. and the only way that will happen is through the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

The double-minded person doesn't trust in the Lord enough to fear him.

The contrasts in vv. 113-120 between righteous living and unrighteous living that challenges us in our own daily lives:

RIGHTEOUS LIFE

UNRIGHTEOUS LIFE

Loves God (113)

double-minded (113)

Waits on God's Word (114)

evil doer (115)

Takes comfort in His Word (114)

wanders from God's statutes (118)

Observes the commandments of God (115)

deceitful (118)

Sustained by God (116)

wicked (119)

Regards God's word highly (117)

Loves God's testimonies (119)

Fears God (120)

THE LIFE OF THE LORD'S SERVANT Psalm 119.121-128

INTRODUCTION: last week we looked at the standard the servant of the Lord used for his life, and that standard is the word of God. We discovered that a standard of living is simply what a person adopts as their way of life based on their income and what they can afford or what they decide to do without.

Tonight we are going to continue looking at the servant's life from a more practical viewpoint.

[SCRIPTURE]

I. The servant of the Lord LIVES God's word (v. 121).

Thirteen times in Ps. 119 the writer refers to himself as the SERVANT of the Lord, but only here in these 8 verses does he do so three times.

SERVANT is an important word because it can mean an individual working for someone, it can mean a person serving the Lord, it can also refer to the nation of Israel as the servant of the Lord. The latter chapters of Isaiah refer to the Messiah as the servant of the Lord, or the suffering servant.

So here the writer of Psalm 119 sees himself as serving the Lord, being obedient to God and His word, serving him in a religious sense and serving him in whatever capacity God had called him to serve.

And so this entire section of verses deals with how the writer viewed himself as the servant of the Lord and what that meant for his life.

I HAVE DONE JUSTICE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS: the writer of Psalm 119 is not bragging on himself and putting himself above others, he is simply stating that he had done his very best to live a righteous and upright life. God's word was the rule of his life and he had done his best to live it and keep it.

The writer really hones in on two important aspects of God's word: JUSTICE and RIGHTEOUSNESS.

JUSTICE means fairness, treating people equally, not playing favorites. God is the God of justice and he deals with us in a fair way.

PROV 20.10: *differing weights and differing measures , both of them are abominable to the Lord*

PROV 20.23: *differing weights are an abomination to the Lord, and a false scale is not good.*

He was simply saying he had tried his best to treat people fairly as God treats them;

RIGHTEOUSNESS is simply living a life that is right before the Lord. He was not perfect and did not hold himself up to be perfect

The prophet Micah writing in the 8th century BC wrote this:

MIC 6.8: he has told you, o man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Whenever this Psalm was written, the author wanted to make sure that his life was being lived as much as possible to conform to the word of God. He considered himself the Lord's servant, in service to the Lord for the Lord's purposes.

Every one of us who have placed their faith and trust in Jesus Christ have become servants of the Lord, doing his will through our lives for His glory.

The second part of this verse, DO NOT LEAVE ME is simply a humble request based on his attempt to live the word of God to the best of his abilities.

To live the word of God doesn't mean we walk around with a Bible checked our life against every scripture in God's word, that turns to legalism real quick. But it does mean that I have submitted my life to God to be led by His holy spirit, and as I study God's word on a daily basis I will learn more and more about how God would have me live.

II. The servant of the Lord RELIES on God's word (vv. 122-123)

RELY: to be dependent on something

We rely on the weather forecast for anything we do outside, or for getting our crops in or getting them harvested;

People who live in very busy urban areas rely on traffic reports on the radio to find out where the trouble spots are to avoid on the morning and evening commutes;

And whether it is good or bad, we rely on the internet for almost everything in life.

So what does it mean to rely on the word of God?

v. 122:

SURETY: to be the surety of another means you have agreed to assume their legal obligations if they are unable to. He is asking God to stand in for him and to take up his cause on his behalf because the evil and the arrogant are oppressing him.

v. 123:

FAIL means to grow dim or to strain. In other words he was looking for the salvation of the Lord. while our eyes may fail and grow dim, the Lord's never does. While we may grow faint and weary waiting on the Lord, the Lord never grows faint and weary waiting on us.

Let me say that again, while we may grow faint and weary waiting on the Lord to answer, God never grows faint and weary waiting on us.

The psalmist was under attack. In fact if you back up and take these 8 verses as a whole you get the impression that he is either being pursued by his enemies or he is in some type of danger. He relied on the word of God and on the God of the word to be his strength and his assurance during those difficult times.

The same is true of us; if we can't rely on the word of God to guide us and sustain us during the difficult times then we are going to have a hard time.

He was waiting for and looking for deliverance from the Lord;

He was depending on the word of God to strengthen him and be his comfort and strength.

III. The servant of the Lord TRUSTS God's word (v. 124)

TRUST: to have confidence in

We have used U-Haul trucks to do our moving and for the most part they have been in pretty good condition, and have been where we needed to pick them up. On the other hand our daughter Kris used the U-pod system, where you get a large container from U-haul, pack it with your household stuff, and they deliver it to your destination. However, for Kris, she packed up her stuff a few days before the wedding, and when they got back from the honeymoon and to their apartment in Greensboro, NC, she called U-haul to have the pod delivered, and they had no idea what she was talking about. The pod was still sitting in south Georgia, they had never shipped it! So from the time she packed up her goods to the time they finally received them was almost 2 months! Well, it cost U-haul a lot more money, they had to pay Kris, and now Kris has no trust in U-haul whatsoever.

The writer of Ps 119 was not just trusting in the word of God, he was also trusting in the God of the word.

God's word gave him insight and knowledge about who God was, about the character of God. So when he requests of God to, "deal with your servant according to your lovingkindness", he is asking God to treat him according to what God's word proclaims about God himself.

Then he has a request of the Lord: teach me your statutes.

The writer of Ps 119 makes this request: teach me your statutes.

Now 7 times in Ps 119 the writer makes this specific request; actually once he requests to be taught God's ordinances, the other 6 to be taught God's statutes.

STATUTE: the binding force of God's word written down.

Did the psalmist have a portion of God's word, some scrolls that had already been written down? We don't know, but what we do know is that he had a high regard for the word of God, he knew the word of God and that he trusted the word of God.

Not only did he love the word of God but at least seven times he requested to be taught the word of God which meant he was a serious student of God's word.

And this must be us. When we come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ not only do we become the servants of God but we also become students of God's word, life-long learners of God's word. And it doesn't do us any good to study God's word and be taught God's word if we don't trust in God's word. And if we don't trust the word of God then in essence we don't trust in the God of the word.

Martin Luther said this about the word of God:

The Bible is alive, it speaks to me; the Bible has feet, it runs after me; the Bible has hands, it lays hold of me.

IV. The servant of the Lord STUDIES God's word (v. 125)

The only way we will ever know God's word is to study it.

GIVE ME UNDERSTANDING: this should be the prayer of every saint of the Lord: give me understanding. It is only through the person and ministry of the Holy Spirit that we can understand the word of God.

LUKE 24.32: *they said to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?"*

EXPLAINING means to open the mind to understand the meaning

We do not become servants of the Lord until He draws us to himself and we trust and believe in Jesus Christ. A good example would be the disciples when Jesus called them:

MARK 1.17: *follow Me and make you become fishers of men*

The disciples had to learn what it meant to a disciple, a follower of Christ.

We can see this in the encounter Jesus had with Nicodemus:

JOHN 3.10: *you are the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things?*

Nicodemus was a Pharisee and Jesus gave him a hard time because as someone who was supposed to know the word of God, apparently Nicodemus did not pass the test.

The Pharisees were professional students of the scriptures but many had ordinary jobs. They believed that God expressed himself through the Scriptures and granted humanity the gifts of responsible moral

choice and reason in order to apply Scriptures to life. They interpreted and adapted the Mosaic law to the conditions of their own time to maintain a sense of purity among the people. They saw themselves as heirs of the vast body of interpretive tradition that enabled them to act as spiritual guides for the Jewish people. They rejected Jesus on the grounds that He taught on his own authority¹.

The great Baptist preacher Charles Spurgeon put it this way about the servant's study of the word of God:

A servant should not be ignorant concerning his master, or his master's business; he should study the mind, will, purpose, and aim of him whom he serves, for so only can he complete his service; and as no man knows these things so well as his master himself, he should often go to him for instructions, lest his very zeal should only serve to make him the greater blunderer. [CHS]

First we become his children by faith;

Then we become servants as we read and study his word.

To study God's word means to make your life one of study and application; not to be a biblical expert but to know more about the Lord.

But we must also be careful about acquiring knowledge about the Lord:

1 COR 8.1b: *knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies.*

We study God's word to learn more about the God of the word, about how to live according to his standards and not so we can allow that knowledge to puff us up and make us think we are better than everyone else.

V. The servant of the Lord TREASURES God's word (vv. 126-128)

How valuable is God's word to us?

v. 126

you can get a sense of how serious the writer was in his relationship with the Lord. He loved the word of God and he loved the God of the word so much that he was offended when others broke God's law, when others did not treat God's law as they should.

This is why he makes this statement in v. 126: ok Lord, I have had enough of people breaking your law and not paying you any attention, so it's time for you to vindicate yourself, it's time for you to do something about it.

¹ "Pharisees", *The Holy Bible – Archeological Study Bible, New International Version* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 1566 under "Pharisees".

And this is probably where we are at times, maybe even in our world today.

We see a nation steadily slipping away from decency and morality, and sinking deeper and deeper into immorality and sinfulness. When you can get a group of people that can casually talk about selling the body parts of aborted fetuses and about trying to get the most money for them as if they were going to a swap meet, you know our nation has crossed a line that is hard to understand. Now to be sure it obviously has been going on for some time and there may be those in Washington that knew about for a long time and said nothing, but we look at this or any other issue in our world today and wonder if or when God is going to set things right.

And what we have to remember is that God knows and God cares and one day God will come and set everything right. And we can, as children of God, either sit and wring our hands and be quiet, or we can stand up for the truth and for life and for the honor of God. Standing up is harder because it may cost us something, but what this type of living is costing America is a far greater cost that we may not be able to come back from.

v. 127

there is a show on TV called, "Antique Road Show", and it is about a traveling antique show that goes from town to town and assessing the value of stuff that people bring in; sometimes they have junk and sometimes they have treasure. They want to know how much it's worth and if they can sell it.

the writer here makes a simple statement: God's word was more valuable than anything; in fact you can't put a price or a value on the Lord's word.

v. 128

ESTEEM: means to hold up and hold to and believe that God's word concerning everything was right. And because he had such a high view of God's word he hated every false way because the false way was the complete opposite of God's word.

VI. The servant of the Lord REFLECTS God's word.

The perfect example of the servant of the Lord, the one place we can go to see what the true servant of the Lord looks like, is the Lord Jesus Christ.

MATT 20.28:*Just as the son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.*

Jesus lived God's word because He was the word made flesh;

Jesus relied on God's word because always pointed the people to the word;

Jesus trusted God's word by saying that everything in the word of God would be accomplished before the end would come;

Jesus studied God's word by his example even at 12 years old sitting with the religious leaders:

LUKE 2.46: *then after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers both listening to them and asking them questions;*

LUKE 4.15: he began teaching in the synagogues;

LUKE 4.17-18: he opened the scroll of Isaiah to the portion that spoke of him

Jesus treasured God's word because he was the word;

Jesus reflected God's word because it was His life.

We look at Jesus and we see the embodiment of the word of God; God's word was who Jesus was, it was His life. Jesus was not like the religious leaders who simply followed the rules they had adopted as their measure of righteousness, Jesus simply lived the word of God.

Jesus is our example of what a servant of the Lord looks like.

WHAT DOES GOD SEE? Psalm 119.129-136

INTRODUCTION: most birds of prey, including eagles, hawks, and falcons, have eyesight 8x sharper than humans. In fact the golden eagle can see a rabbit a mile away. Birds of prey have sharp eyesight because their eyes are larger in proportion to the rest of their heads than other birds. Birds use their eyesight for orientation, this is why a blindfolded bird cannot take off in flight because it cannot orient itself.

In the military there are several jobs that require you to have normal color vision; a color blind person would not be qualified for those jobs. When I was being processed in the Navy I was given a color blind test. This test simply consisted of an image made up of colored circles of one color, and imbedded in that image was a number of a slightly different color. A person with normal color vision would be able to see the number while the person who was color blind would not be able to pick out the number from the other colors around it.

When the weather is foggy your vision can be limited to a few feet depending on the density of the fog. There are times when foggy conditions result in what is known as a “white out”, where the sun above is shining through the fog and it causes the fog to be bright white and impossible to see anything. The same happens in snow when it is snowing so hard all you see is white and you can’t get your bearings. When it comes to our own eyesight we sometimes take our eyesight for granted. In fact we never think about poor or failing eyesight until we begin to notice it is harder and harder to read. I have been wearing glasses since I was in the 3rd grade and have even had eye surgery on my right eye because of a partially detached retina.

In Psalm 119.130 we read: *the unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.*

The psalmist was rejoicing because as God made his word understandable the writer lived it and desired it. And as God revealed his word to the writer, what did God see this writer doing in response? This is the focus, so to speak, of our message tonight: WHAT DOES GOD SEE?

[scripture]

We’re talking about what God sees when he looked and the psalmist and what God sees when he looks at us.

2 CHRON 16.9: *for the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.*

JOB 31.4: *does he not see my ways and number all my steps?*

PROV 15.3: *the eyes of the Lord are in every place, watching the evil and the good.*

HEB 4.13: *and there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.*

I. GOD LOOKED AT THE PSALMIST AND SAW:

1. A MAN WHO LIVED HIS WORD (v. 129)

TESTIMONIES: facts about God; something that refers to God and what He has done

WONDERFUL: the extraordinary way God deals with man as if a miracle were involved; beyond human capability.

God has and does deal with us in a wonderful way. When we read the Biblical record of how God has dealt with man we see what only God can do:

First and foremost the creative power of God in bringing into existence this entire universe and planet with the power of His word;

The creation of man;

The bringing of the flood;

The cessation of the flood;

The plagues that came upon Egypt but did not harm the Hebrews;

The parting of the waters of the Red Sea;

The provision of water and manna in the desert for 40 years;

And on and on we could go to demonstrate God's wonderful works towards sinful man

Then think about the salvation of God:

Not only has he created us physically but when we trust and believe in Jesus Christ he creates us new creatures in Christ;

He fills us with His holy Spirit;

He gives us a special ability to serve Him;

And so the way God has dealt with sinful man, the writer has said he will follow and live God's word because God could be trusted based on his previous actions with man.

You see to live God's word means you have to love God's word because apart from loving God's word we will never live it.

The writer understood who God was and his power to affect change.

2. A MAN WHO WAS TEACHABLE (v. 130, 135)

v. 130

UNFOLDING: disclosure or revelation of God's word, as a door that opens and lets us in so when God opens his word He invites us in to live and learn

The Holy spirit of god helps unfold God's word. He helps give us understanding and application, and he brings the word to mind when we need comfort and assurance. The Holy Spirit gives understanding to all who seek it.

Unfolding God's word also gives us a picture of one layer at a time, as we continue to read the word of God and study it he reveals more of it to us, layer by layer.

SIMPLE: open to teaching.

So if the unfolding or the disclosure of God's word brings light, does anything hinder the unfolding of God's word to us?

Sin, pride, unwillingness to learn. Spiritual insight and spiritual understand are open to all who will willingly cooperate with the Holy Spirit, and that is the key. If we refuse to cooperate with what God wants to do in our lives then we will not learn anything. God's Spirit will open our hearts to understand His word if we let Him. But if we are not open to understanding we will not know nor will we grow.

The most mature believer is most ready to acknowledge how much of the word yet remains unexplained before him. [Bridges]

John Phillips:

Light reveals DIRT: sunlight reveals dirt and dust in corners that were previously hidden by the shadows;

Light reveals DISORDER: sunlight reveals how out of place everything can be;

Light reveals DIRECTION: we will wander around in the darkness and off the right path and into danger without light to guide us.

v. 135

This verse echoes the blessing of Aaron in Num. 6.25, and it tells us a great truth: God's face, God's presence should be our desire at all times. As we take delight in the presence of the Lord we learn His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances—and we are drawn closer to him.

A MAN WHO LIVED GOD'S WORD;

A MAN WHO WAS TEACHABLE

3. A MAN WHO HAD AN INTENSE DESIRE FOR HIS WORD (v. 131)

You no doubt have had those medical tests where you can't eat or drink anything after midnight, and by the time you get to the doctor's office or the hospital you are really thirsty and would love something to drink.

The psalmist here writes that his desire for the word of God was so great he was like an animal in the woods that was desperately looking for a drink of water.

Other places in the psalms where we read about this picture of a desire for the word of God:

PS 42.1: *as the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for You, O God.*

PS 63.1: *O God, you are my God; I shall seek you earnestly; my soul thirsts for you, my flesh yearns for you.*

PS 143.6: *I stretch out my hands to you; my soul longs for you as a parched land.*

Why did the writer have such an intense desire for the word of God?

He knew God's word guided him, it encouraged him, it comforted him. In God's word he could find the salvation of God and read of God's great mercies and grace and forgiveness what was available to all. His love for the word of God was created in him a desire to know more of it and to spend more time in it.

This is another example of the truth of DT 6.4-5 – loving God with all you have and with all you are.

John Phillips on the Bible: Martyrs shed their blood to make it available to us and scholars gave their lives to translate it for us, and yet we yawn over it or let our thoughts wander when we read it

A MAN WHO LIVED GOD'S WORD;

A MAN WHO WAS TEACHABLE

A MAN WHO HAD AN INTENSE DESIRE FOR IT

4. A MAN WHO UNDERSTOOD HIS GRACE (v. 132)

TURN TO ME: a request made by the writer because of his relationship with the Lord. He felt comfortable enough to make this request of God, but he could only do so because he had spent so much time before the Lord he was comfortable in doing it.

One of the great benefits of having a daily time of prayer before the Lord is that we become a little more comfortable in bringing our concerns and needs before the Lord. God already knows what we need but he allows us to bring our requests to Him.

Now this does not mean we treat God like some cosmic bell-hop to do our bidding. Absolutely not. God is a holy and righteous God and prayer is the privilege we get to come before Him and spend time in His presence.

GRACIOUS: to be favorable toward. This give us the picture of someone who is in a superior position stooping down to help someone in an inferior position, knowing there is nothing in the inferior person that would warrant this favorable dealing.

AFTER YOUR MANNER: the same way you treat others who trust in you.

To “turn to me” is writer’s way of asking God to pay attention to him, as if God had turned His back on him. When we read the word ‘forsake’ it means to turn the back on someone. The writer may have felt God had turned His back on him. When we sin or when we are in difficult times there are times when we may feel like God has turned His back on us. We want God to be gracious to us. In truth God is always gracious, he can be nothing but gracious because of who He is.

The gracious dealings of God toward man are critical in our relationship with God. If we begin to ponder just how wonderful and gracious God has been to us it will make us more humble towards Him, and it will absolutely change our worship of Him.

It has been said that if the stars only came out once every 500 years we would stay up all night just to look at them. But because they are always there we don’t much attention to them.

The same is true with God and how he has dealt with us and how He deals with us. If God was only gracious to us once in a while, if God only poured out his grace and mercy and blessings on us once in while we would be more aware and more sensitive to that. But because God is a good and gracious and loving God who continually pours out His grace and blessings in our lives. we have to be careful we don’t the grace of God for granted, we have to be careful we do not forget how gracious God has been and is in our lives 24-hours a day. There is never a day that doesn’t go by that we are not the recipients of God’s gracious dealings in our lives.

In other words, the psalmist is saying: God you were gracious with Moses, you were gracious with Job, you were gracious with Jonah, you were gracious with David – God be gracious to me in the same way!

A MAN WHO LIVED GOD’S WORD;

A MAN WHO WAS TEACHABLE

A MAN WHO HAD AN INTENSE DESIRE FOR IT
A MAN WHO UNDERSTOOD THE GRACE OF GOD

5. A MAN WHO DESIRED TO BE GUIDED BY HIS WORD (v. 133)

To be ‘established’ means to firmly place. The writer’s desire was to be firmly placed in the Word of God so that sin could gain no foothold. If we want to live lives that bring honor and glory to God we must not only be firmly placed in God’s Word but we must stay there!

This should ever be the prayer of every Christian, that we take every thought captive to Christ and that we strive to not let sin dominate us. This can only be done in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Do not let any iniquity have dominion over me. (NASB)

The dominion of God is His rule and reign over all the earth and the entire universe. There is no place on the earth nor in the universe that is not under the control of God.

v. 133b challenges us to make sure there is no part of our lives that sin has control of or is gaining control of. It is a constant battle that can only be won in the power of the Holy Spirit.

^{NLT} **Psalm 119:133** Guide my steps by your word, so I will not be overcome by evil.

If our footsteps are not established in the word of God then iniquity will have dominion over us.

To expect the favor of God without the habitual desire to be conformed to His image is one of the many delusions of the self-deceiving heart. [Charles Bridges]

6. A MAN WHO WANTED TO REMAIN OBEDIENT TO HIS WORD (v. 134)

A plea to God to give aid so he could keep the word of God.

REDEEM simply means to be delivered or rescued or purchased with a price. The writer of Psalms here is making a request of God to be delivered from his enemies.

His desire was to do God’s word, to live it, and he knew if he was being persecuted or pursued by the enemy he might have a difficult time in keeping God’s word.

OPPRESSION: the root meaning of this word means the abuse of power by those in authority towards those who have no power or authority.

Basically it means to mistreat someone, and for Israel, God had stern words on how they were to treat their fellow man. In fact with the 10 Commandments, while the first 4 deal with man's relationship with God, the last 6 deal with man's relationship with his fellow man. There were especially two distinct groups of people the Hebrews were told to pay close attention to and to care for – widows and orphans.

In Matt 5-7, the Sermon on the Mount, the primary teaching of Jesus was about the disciple and his relationship with his fellow man.

The New Testament and the teachings of Jesus give us a clear picture that we will always be oppressed by the world as we serve the Lord:

JOHN 16.33: *In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.*

The New Testament is clear that oppression and tribulation are just par for the course in the life of the Christian and we are to persevere through it and serve and be faithful regardless of what the world tries to do to us or with us.

A MAN WHO LIVED GOD'S WORD;

A MAN WHO WAS TEACHABLE

A MAN WHO HAD AN INTENSE DESIRE FOR IT

A MAN WHO UNDERSTOOD THE GRACE OF GOD

TO BE GUIDED BY HIS WORD

TO REMAIN OBEDIENT TO HIS WORD

7. A MAN WHO WANTED OTHERS TO KNOW HIM TOO (v. 136)

THEY: the ungodly, wicked, the arrogant

It has been said that this is the essence of revival. The writer is not just distraught because the wicked were not keeping the word of God, he was distraught because they were not keeping the word of God and were thus keeping themselves from the mercy and forgiveness of God. His tears were from a heart of compassion knowing the extent of God's grace and forgiveness and yet knowing there were some who intentionally kept themselves from loving and serving God. The hard heart is the most dangerous of conditions for man, for until the heart is softened he will not yield his life to the Lord of glory.

He is weeping because they have decided to remain in the dark.

We see this in the prophet Ezekiel:

EZ 33.11: *say to them, "As I live!" declares the Lord God, I take no pleasure in the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways. Why will you die, O house of Israel!*

And in the apostle Paul of his love for his fellow Jews:

ROM 9.2-3: *that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.*

Because the psalmist knew of the great grace and mercies of God his heart broke because he knew of those who wanted nothing to do with God, and he knew if they would ask for God's forgiveness God would absolutely and eternally forgive them and give them eternal life.

II. GOD LOOKED AT HIS SON AND WAS PLEASED.

In Jesus Christ we see the man who not only WAS the Word made flesh but he also loved the Word of God.

In Jesus Christ we see the man who was teachable, being taught by His earthly parents and being taught by His heavenly Father;

In Jesus Christ we see the man who had in intense desire for the Word of God;

In Jesus Christ we see the man who understood the grace of God;

In Jesus Christ we see the man who was guided by God's word;

In Jesus Christ we see the man who was always obedient to the word of God;

In Jesus Christ we see the man who wanted others to know God through Him.

On two occasions in the Bible, once at the baptism of Jesus and then on the mount of transfiguration God spoke from the heavens.

At the baptism of Jesus: *This is my beloved son in whom I am well-pleased.*

On the mount of transfiguration: *This is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased, listen to Him* God was pleased and well-pleased with His son because His son, the Lord Jesus Christ, did everything in accordance with the word of God. The Bible tells us that Jesus was not just obedient, but he was obedient to the death of the cross. This is why He is highly exalted as king of kings and lord of lords.

CONCLUSION/CALL TO ACTION: while birds of prey may have incredibly sharp vision, there is no vision greater than God's – he sees everything. God looked down and saw the writer of Psalm 119 as a man who loved him, loved His word, lived his word, and had a powerful zeal for his word.

When God looks at us what does he see? Does he see someone who has a desire for his word, does he see someone who loves him and serves him unconditionally? Or does he see someone who plays religion, who makes a show of obeying the word of God but in reality has nothing to do with it? Does he see someone that has no prayer life, and does not really believe the word of God? What does God see when he looks at us?

Let us strive to be the church and the people that God looks at and can be well pleased.

HIS RIGHTNESS AND OUR BLESSEDNESS
Psalm 119.137-144

INTRODUCTION: the atomic clock, which is located at the Naval Observatory in Washington, DC, is the official clock, it is the clock all other clocks set their time by. The atomic clock measures the vibrations or oscillations of certain types of atoms for time measurement. A second is determined by how many times an atom vibrates or oscillates in a certain period of time. A second is measured as 9,192,631,770 oscillations of the cesium atom. But as accurate as the atomic clock is, it is only accurate to 15 billion years until it will gain or lose a second. And you may not think that's a big deal because, hey, who will be around 15 billion years from now, right?

But think about it this way: suppose God was not always true to His word, suppose God would change every so often; suppose God would change once every 15 billion years, or 15 million years, or 15 thousand years? Suppose you were living on the day God changed, then it would be a big deal because who knows how God would change or what God would change.

One of the key characteristics of God is that God is immutable, which means God never changes. God is eternal which means he has always been, and in God's eternal being and existence God is immutable – He has never changed and never will change.

MAL 3.6: I the Lord do not change

God doesn't change which means you can count on Him to do what he says He will do, God is not going to change His mind.

We live in a world that is constantly changing. What is illegal one day is legal the next; what is unacceptable today is acceptable tomorrow; what is cheap and affordable one day is expensive and out of reach the next.

Look at gas prices, up 5 cents a gallon one day and down 3 cents a gallon the next.

If I had started seminary one semester earlier than I did I would not have had to take both Greek and Hebrew, but the requirements changed that required ALL M. Div students to take two semesters of Greek and two of Hebrew.

It would always be a bit frustrating working at Home Depot – a customer would buy a product they liked, they would come in to get more and the store wouldn't carry it any more. It would be discontinued because of poor sales or product reliability or a host of other issues. So you have to tell the customer you don't carry that particular item anymore and of course it's frustrating.

Grocery stores are no different – they carry a product you like and then one day it's not there anymore – they changed because it didn't sell or it became too expensive or because of a host of other reasons. We live in a world that is characterized by change. But praise the Lord we serve a God who never changes.

Not only is God the God who never changes, but He is also the God who is always right, and the rightness of God is also called the righteousness of God.

To say that God is righteous simply means God is the standard for ethics and morality; everything God does is right – his judgments are right, his dealings with sinful man are right. Nothing God does reflects negatively back on Him. God acts according to His nature and everything that God does bring glory to Him.

God treats us with love because He is a loving God;

God forgives us because he is a forgiving God;

God has mercy on us because is a merciful God;

God judges sin rightly because he is the standard for which everything is measured.

In the Psalm 119.137-144, our focal verses for tonight, the word “righteous” or “righteousness” appears 5 times, more than any other place in this psalm.

God deals with us in righteousness because He is a righteous God.

But what does that mean for us, how does that impact our lives on a daily basis?

Tonight we are going to discover how the RIGHTNESS OF GOD IS THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE CHRISTIAN.

[SCRIPTURE]

We're talking about how the righteousness of God or the rightness of God affects the lives of Christians.

The rightness of God results in at least four blessings for the Christian:

I. GOD IS RIGHT IN HIS PERSON (v. 137-138)

v. 137

The psalmist proclaims that God is righteous. How could he do that unless had a growing, personal relationship with God?

Because the psalmist spent time with God, spent time in the word of God, spent time in prayer, spent time in serving the Lord, he could with certainty proclaim that God is a righteous God, that God was right and that God was always right in his dealings with sinful man.

Experience is what gives us the right to proclaim something either good or bad. I can tell you about the health benefits of drinking a lot of water because I drink a lot of water; I can tell you the health benefits of exercise because I exercise. On the other hand I cannot tell you how fun and relaxing golf is because I don't play golf; I can't tell you how much fun camping is because I don't camp.

We don't really know anything about the author of Psalm 119 – some have speculated it was David but we really don't know. We don't know anything about the life of the writer of Psalm 119 except what we read. And when we read how the writer proclaims the rightness of God, we know the writer had a growing, personal relationship with God – how could he write about something he had not experienced?

Two examples from the New Testament:

ACTS 4.20: After Peter and John had been arrested, they were threatened not to preach the gospel; and their reply was based on experience:

For we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.

Their testimony was based on their experience with Jesus.

The apostle John wrote a similar truth years later:

1 JOHN 1.1-4 [read]

John said he was writing based on what he had experienced.

So the psalmist could write with certainty, “righteous are you, O Lord” because he had experienced the rightness of God personally.

God had dealt with him fairly, rightly, justly and there was nothing about the way God had dealt with him that would cause him to say anything else about God except that God was a righteous God.

AND UPRIGHT ARE YOUR JUDGMENTS: because God was right in his person and in his dealings with sinful man, the decisions of God were also right.

UPRIGHT means straight and blameless. In other words the judgments of God are his decisions, and his decisions are right and there is no fault that can be found in them.

Look at our legal system today – it seems like every day we hear the story of an immigrant in the states illegally that had been arrested and released numerous times and now they have been accused of murdering someone. And you want to say – where is the justice, how can a person be arrested and released numerous times, continues to come back here illegally, and the court just lets it happen? There is no sense nor rightness about that kind of decision.

Or of hearing about states that release hundreds of prisoners that had been convicted of minor offenses simply because the jails were overcrowded.

In 2011 the Supreme Court endorsed a court order requiring California to cut its prison population by tens of thousands of inmates to improve health care for those who remain behind bars. So what about the jurors and the lawyers that prosecuted those inmates – how is it fair to have a legal system that does its job and then turn it upside down simply for the sake of better health care for those still incarcerated?

The psalmist wrote that not only was God a righteous God, but that His judgments were right and true and straight too based on the person of God.

SPURGEON: God is always right and he is always ACTIVELY right.

In other words, God is always working and everything that God does is right.

v. 138

the commands of God are again based on who He is, and they are also based on His faithfulness.

the faithfulness of God simply means God is not going to change, He can be counted on to do what He says he will do and when He says He will do it. And just because God's actions don't necessarily fit into our neat little plan of life doesn't mean his actions are wrong. How we think about his decisions is what the problem is because we don't think like God thinks.

ISA 55.9: for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

God is right in who He is, he deals with us fairly and he deals with us impartially. We can always count on God dealing with us based on His rightness and that has never changed and that never will change.

When you look at the life of Jesus, no matter who he met he treated them based on the fact that He was and is righteous, He is right in his dealings with sinful man. Whether it was the woman at the well or the woman caught in adultery or those possessed by demons – or even Simon Peter who denied him three times, Jesus is right in his dealings with sinful man because that is part of who he is.

The rightness of God has been explained this way which I think is so powerful:

We can risk everything on God and He will not let us down.

BLESSING #1: God's rightness results in His fair and just dealings with sinful man.

II. GOD IS RIGHT IN HIS WORD (vv. 139-140)

v. 139

The psalmist loved the God of the word and he loved the word of God. His love for the Lord was a powerful force in his life, he was zealous for the Lord which meant he was a powerful advocate for both God and His word. Whoever the adversaries of the writer was, he was both sorry for them and upset at them because they had no time for the word of God.

People may forget the word of God, but the God of the word does not forget us.

v. 140

the writer loved the word of God because there was no impurities in it, there was nothing in it that he could find that was dirty or that offended him.

I had a seminary professor that said we should be reading books that make us want to throw them against the wall. Now I understand what he was saying, we should read books that challenge us, and if we don't agree with them, WHY – biblically, do we not agree with them. But books aren't cheap and I'm not a fan of buying books I don't like!

God's word is right and true because God is right and true.

God is right in his person which means God is right in His word.

PS 12.9: *the words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times.*

This means that you can put the word of God to the test and it will survive the test, there will be no impurities found in His word.

PS 19.7-11 [READ]

Now just take a moment and grasp the power of this statement – God is right in his word.

God is right and God is actively right in his person.

God is right and God is instructively right in his word. God's word gives us the guidelines for our lives, gives us the standard to live by because these are God's standards. We study God's word on a daily basis because we want to know how to live, we want to know how to treat our fellow man, we want to know what pleases the Lord – and if we distance ourselves from the word of God how are we ever going to know?

BLESSING #2: God's rightness results in the absolute trustworthiness of His Word.

III. GOD IS RIGHT IN HIS FAITHFULNESS (vv. 141-142)

v. 141

the psalmist considered himself insignificant and unworthy of notice; he may have felt like no one paid him any attention. Yet despite how he felt about himself he was not going to let that affect his love of God's word and his faithfulness to follow God's word.

The reality is though, that the prophets were despised, the Lord Jesus was despised, the apostles and early Christians were despised, and we will be despised too because the world is against us. But that is not excuse for stepping away from God's word but should drive us to adhere closer to the word of God and to the God of the word.

v. 142

the rightness of God is never ending. Now when you consider the enormity of that statement you begin to understand how faithful and right God is, and how secure our salvation is in Jesus Christ.

there is nothing on this earth that is going to last to eternity except the soul of man.

God is faithful to love and forgive and heal and save and we should never forget that.

Time will not alter the faithfulness nor the righteousness of God. Even as accurate as the atomic clock is, it still will have a problem once every 15 billion years.

But God is not going to eventually change his mind, you cannot go far enough in the future to find a time that God would change because he will never change, He is eternal.

BLESSING #3: God's rightness is not affected by time.

God is right and God is actively right in his person.

God is right and God is instructively right in his word.

God is right and God is eternally right in his judgments.

IV. GOD IS RIGHT IN HIS WORK (vv. 143-144)

v. 143

DELIGHT: great pleasure or satisfaction

There are laws we do not take delight in, there are rules and regulations we do not take delight in. For probably the majority of us, going to the doctor is not something we delight in; we don't take delight in taking medicine or paying our taxes. But the writer of Ps 119 could say he took delight in the commands of God because they were right and true and pure and he was not going to find anything in there that he would be afraid of.

Just through reading this psalm it is clear the writer was no stranger to trouble and adversity. But he also knew that his joy and his delight were in the solid foundation of the word of God. He knew he could always take refuge in the word of God, he could always find comfort in the word of God, no matter if he felt he had not one friend in the world. God's word was his faithful companion, just as it is for us. The troubles and anguish of this world do not affect the truth that God's word is a delight. When God's word is our companion and our delight, the troubles and anguish of this world are put in their proper perspective. They are no less troubling, yet they are seen from and dealt with in a totally different way—God's way.

What do we take delight in? we delight in our families, our children, our grandchildren. We take delight in our hobbies, our sports, our leisure activities. We take delight in our jobs, in cooking and eating and shopping and dressing well. And there is nothing wrong with any of those pursuits with which we take delight. However, do we, do I, take delight in the word of God, in the law of God, in the commandments of God? The psalmist did. In the midst of adversity, in the midst of all that was going on in his life, The writer could say in all honesty, "your commandments are my delight." Of all that we take delight in, God's word, God's Son, God Himself - must be our delight. When they are not, nothing in our lives will be right.

He took delight in the word of God because God's word is pure and right and will not lead us astray. the righteousness of God means His actions are in accordance with the law He has established.

PS 89.14; 97.2: righteousness and justice are the foundations of God's throne

v. 144

GIVE ME UNDERSTANDING TO LIVE: is like a car saying, "Give me gas so I can go" or a bird saying, "give me wings so I can fly", or a fish saying, "give me water so I can breathe." It is only as we understand the word of God that we are able to live. God's word give us the directions we need in life. The only way we can know HOW to live is by understanding the word of God.

The Bible tells us that God's Word is both truth and life and that by keeping His Word our lives will be filled with the joy of knowing Him and serving Him. To have an understanding of God's Word means to gain insight into wisdom for living God's way, and thus our lives will be pleasing to God.

BLESSING #4: God's rightness gives us clear guidelines for living.

THE POWERFUL PRIVILEGE OF PRAYER

Psalm 119.145-152

INTRODUCTION: where do we go for help these days?

Long ago and far away the popular place to search for help was a place called the yellow pages, and the yellow pages were found in any phone book.

Based on information I discovered, the name and concept of "yellow pages" came about in 1883, when a printer in [Cheyenne, Wyoming](#), working on a regular telephone directory ran out of white paper and used yellow paper instead.^[3] In 1886 [Reuben H. Donnelley](#) created the first official Yellow Pages directory, inventing an industry. (wikipedia)

I have a Fayette and Bond County phone book that has 168 pages of yellow pages.

The Yellow Pages were designed to look up, by category, different businesses or services depending on what kind of help you need.

For instance I looked up “plumbers and plumbing contractors” and found 10 different plumbers I could choose from.

I looked up “restaurants” and there was a page and a half of listings.

So the yellow pages have become a regular part of our phone books.

But we live in the digital world these days and carry with us small computers capable of enormous power in the form of smart phones and tablets.

And because we live in the digital computer age we have learned three simple words when it comes to looking for help that have revolutionized our world.

Those three words? JUST GOOGLE IT.

GOOGLE is the well-known search engine for the internet. According to Google's own statistics, the Google search engine is accessed over 40k times every second which translates to over 3.5 billion searches per day.

Google was founded in 1998 and started with about 10k search queries every day.

According to their statistics, 16-20% of daily searches have never been asked before.

Every query has to travel on average 1,500 miles to a data center and back to return the answer to the user.

A single Google query uses 1,000 computers in 0.2 seconds to retrieve an answer

So when we need help these days we just Google it.

Remember, Psalm 119 is all about the word of God and how the writer loved and lived by the word of God. The writer of Psalm 119 uses 8 different words to describe the word of God, and five of them are used here in these 8 verses.

These 8 verses are about the writer's ability to cry out to God in times of need and distress, and his joy in knowing God hears and answers. But his ability to cry out and the fact that God does answer are all grounded in his knowledge of the word of God. The five specific words he uses in these 8 verses are:

TESTIMONIES: facts about God; something that refers to God and what He has done

STATUTES: the binding force of God's word written down

COMMANDMENTS: obligations, a code of law

ORDINANCES: standard given for fair dealing between men

WORD: both spoken and written

So let's read what the psalmist had to say about this powerful privilege of prayer and how it will help us understand the powerful privilege of prayer in our own lives:

[SCRIPTURE]

We're talking about our great privilege to call out to God through prayer.

First we have to understand what was going on in the life of the psalmist and then we will learn some great lessons from his life about prayer.

The psalmist and his understanding of prayer in times of need:

I. HE CRIED FOR GOD TO HELP (vv. 145-46, 150)

The word MAYDAY is an international radio distress signal used especially by ships and aircraft.

Tradition has it the word is actually the English translation or version of a French word that means 'help me'. It is believed to have been chosen in 1923 by Frederick Stanley Mockford, a senior radio officer in London's Croydon Airport. Making a false distress call in the United States is a federal crime carrying sanctions of up to six years imprisonment and/or a fine of up to \$250,000, and restitution to the Coast Guard (oxforddictionaries.com; wikipedia)

When it comes to our request to God, our cry to God for help, we don't need to send out a MAYDAY we simply have to cry out to God through prayer and God hears us.

Notice in the first three verses of this stanza the writer uses the word "CRY"; he actually uses two different words for cry but they have essentially the same meaning.

v. 145

CRY: some translations use the word “call” while others use the word “cry”. This word first shows up in the Bible in GEN 4.26: *Then men began to call upon the name of the Lord.*

What this involved is not stated in the Bible.

GEN 12.8: [concerning Abraham] *and there he built an altar to the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord.*

Again we are not given the specifics of what Abram was doing when he called on the Lord’s name but it was an act of worship.

This word is not the act of weeping that we associate with the word cry; instead this word means calling on God as an act of worship, and it can also mean an urgent appeal for help. It is normally addressed to a specific person to elicit a specific response. In this case the psalmist is calling on God for help.

Now when you read down through these 8 verses here is what the writer is calling on God for:

1. Answer me;
2. Save me (v. 146);
3. Help me (v. 147);
4. Revive me (v. 149)

There is nothing we cannot call on the Lord for as long as what we are calling on the Lord to do honors God. God honors the prayers that honor Him.

The psalmist is not trying to strike a bargain with God, as if to say, “Hey if you answer me then I will observe your statutes.” He is simply making a statement of fact – he will observe.

In two separate psalms of David this is how he wrote of calling on God for help:

PS 17.6: I have called upon you, for you will answer me, O God; incline your ear to me, hear my speech.

PS 18.6: In my distress I called upon the Lord

Jonah discovered that he could call on God even from the belly of a fish in the ocean:

JONAH 2.2: I called out of my distress to the Lord.

v. 146

CRIED: same word as v. 145

God hears us, that we should hear Him. [Thomas Manton]

Just as he cried to God for help in times of need so too can we cry to God in times of need.

v. 150

We get a glimpse in this one verse of why the psalmist is crying out to the Lord for help:

The wicked were pursuing him for some reason, no doubt to kill him or cause him harm.

FOLLOW AFTER: literally to pursue which gives us the picture of a conscious will, a deliberate act done from desire and not an accident.

In our lives we will either follow the Lord or follow after wickedness. When we follow after wickedness we are going away from the Lord, and thus we are far from His law. But if we follow God, seek Him out (v. 147) we will find Him, hear from Him, and we will be comforted by His presence.

The psalmist cried to God for help because he knew he could. And his knowledge of being able to cry out to God came from the fact that he observed and kept God's word

And so too can we cry to God for help in times of need. We serve the God who never sleeps and is always attentive to the cries of His children.

PS 118.5: *from my distress I called upon the Lord; the Lord answered me and set me in a large place.*

Probably the most well-known verse of scripture that deals with calling on the Lord is ROM 10.13 which is a repeat of

JOEL 2.32: *and it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be delivered.*

HE CRIED TO GOD FOR HELP, AND SO CAN WE.

II. HE WAITED AND HE MEDITATED (vv. 147-148)

v. 147

CRY: different word than what is used in vv. 145 & 46. Here the word means a strong request for help, similar to the word used in v. 145

Who would pray if he had no hope that God would hear him?

He who is diligent in prayer will never be destitute of hope. [CHS]

To rise before dawn and ask for and plead for God's help gives us the picture of an urgency that is more important than rest. The writer was in such need for God to intervene that he willfully interrupted his sleep to petition God for help.

If we have something that is so important that we are pleading with God for help then if need be we will do whatever we have to do to pray about it.

This is one of the reasons why many churches do not see revival today is that while people want revival they are not willing to pay the price to bring about revival. And setting aside time in our day to pray when you could be doing something else is to pay the price for revival.

WHEN God hears prayer according to His lovingkindness he overlooks all the imperfections of the prayer, he forgets the sinfulness of the one praying, and in pitying love he grants the desire though the one offering be unworthy. [CHS]

v. 148

NIGHT WATCHES: a division of time. In the military to stand watch means to stand guard and keep watch at a certain place for a specific period of time.

For instance, in the Navy when a ship is in port the crew is divided up into duty sections. The purpose of a duty section is to be able to get the ship underway in an emergency situation if need be. And when you have duty you normally have to stand watch during a specific duty for a specific time. Those watches were 4-hours at a time. When you stood the quarterdeck watch, you would be at the brow – where people came on and went off the ship, checking id cards and receiving guests, for 4 hours at a time 24-hours a day.

With the psalmist using this term, “night watch” could indicate a military life, a military camp or at least an understanding of military life. They could have guards stationed around the camp keeping watch against intruders and these watches would be for a specified period of time.

The psalmist loved the Word of God and it is apparent it was so much of his life that both morning and evening the writer meditated on and lived the word of God. And so it should be with us that the word of God guides our every move every moment of the day and night.

The psalmist anticipated the time he could spend in prayer and meditation with the Lord. His love of God and His word created anticipation to be near and with God. Do we have that kind of desire to spend time with the Lord in our own lives?

Just as he meditated while he waited on God’s answer so too are we commanded to wait on the Lord and be faithful to serve while we are waiting.

HE CRIED TO GOD FOR HELP

HE WAITED AND MEDITATED ON GOD’S WORD UNTIL GOD ANSWERED HIS REQUEST

III. HE REQUESTED TO BE REVIVED (v. 149)

v. 149

HEAR MY VOICE is simply another way to call out to God for help.

His request was not only for God to hear and intervene, but he also requested that God REVIVE HIM. To REVIVE means to bring back to life again, or to make alive. Seven times in PS 119 we read this request from the writing to be revived, to be brought back to life again in his love for and dedication to the Lord and His word.

Only God can revive the weary soul, the one who has wandered, the one who has almost come to the end of his rope in terms of ministry.

v. 150

FOLLOW AFTER: literally to pursue which gives us the picture of a conscious will, a deliberate act done from desire and not an accident.

The writer was in distress, possibly from men chasing him (Saul?) to kill him. And in his anguish he continually cried to the Lord because he knew where his help and comfort came from. We need to take our cue from the Lord that our help and comfort, in both the good and bad times, comes from Him. We must be in the habit of crying out to Him and then waiting to hear from Him.

“I cried.” You can almost sense the desperation in his voice as he pours out his heart to the Lord. “I cried – answer me. I cried, save me. I rise and cry for help.” It seems as if he doesn’t know if God will help him or not. And while our circumstances change from day to day or from event to event, God never changes. He is always there, ever present, every powerful, all loving, all knowing.

In our lives we will either follow the Lord or follow after wickedness. When we follow after wickedness we are going away from the Lord, and thus we are far from His law. But if we follow God, seek Him out (v. 147) we will find Him, hear from Him, and we will be comforted by His presence.

CRIED TO GOD

WAITED AND MEDITATED

DESIRED TO BE REVIVED

IV. HE REMEMBERED THE HISTORY OF GOD’S FAITHFULNESS (vv. 151-52)

v. 151

YOU ARE NEAR: So often we forget that God is as near and as close as a prayer. Jonah discovered that truth in the belly of the fish. Elijah discovered that truth in the wilderness. Paul discovered that truth in jail. And so should we, that God is an ever-present God that hears the cries of His children and comforts them and strengthens them in their darkest hours and in their most lonely of places.

Think of the presence of God in this way: what if it were possible to be where God was not—how terrible a place that would be! In fact there is a place where He is not—hell. But for us here on this earth, we have this assurance from the word of God—He is an ever-present God.

God's word does not contain the truth, God's word IS the truth. If I believe that God's word contains the truth then I am saying it contains a lot of other things as well. Truth is not relative. Opinions change, truth never does. Our problem is we read the word of God and it reads us, and we don't like what we read. But if we truly take God's word to heart and allow it to change us, then we come to understand how wonderful that truth really is.

Near as the enemy might be, God was nearer; this is one of the choicest comforts of the persecuted child of God. [CHS]

Just as he knew of the faithfulness of God through the generations, we must never forget how faithful God is as we look back at our own lives. The record of God's faithfulness is what provides us with hope and insight into how God deals with prayer.

v. 152

OF OLD: long ago I learned about the testimonies of God.

Think about this: if God did not answer prayers, how ready would we be to pray to Him?

If God did not hear our prayers how quick would we be to bring our requests to Him?

We are soldiers in a battle and we dare not go to sleep while on duty. [WW]

May be what I have heard of all foregoing ages, their experience as well as mine. Our fathers trusted in thee; they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered; they trusted in thee, and were not confounded. [Thomas Manton]

Lessons about prayer we can learn from this stanza of Psalm 119:

1. Prayer is both the original in wireless communication and the most powerful search engine in the entire universe.

God is always on-line and waiting to hear from His children. God will never de-friend anyone. At the same time God never engages in idle conversation, He speaks with purpose.

2. We don't use prayer to make bargains or deals with God.

3. God's word gives us example after example of how faithful God is to hear and answer the prayers of His children.

4. While we are waiting on God to answer we are to be busy with serving Him in what He has called us to do.

WHEN GOD BRINGS US BACK **Psalm 119.153-160**

INTRODUCTION: we are entering into that time of year that many people struggle with when it comes to their health; or at least some people. As the days get shorter and the temperature begins to drop, outside activities start to decline and we have a tendency to become more sedate, less active. I can tell you it is much easier getting out the door and going to the Y at 5:15 in the morning when it is 75 outside than when it is 35 outside! And it is much easier and a lot more pleasant to go for a walk in the park when it is sunny and 85 than when it is cloudy, windy, and 45! We tend to eat more during the winter months because of all the holiday gatherings we get invited to, and for some there are the football games when we sit around and munch away while the game goes on. A football game has been famously described as 40k people desperately in need of exercise cheering on 22 men desperately in need of rest! And that's about right! So we'll get to the beginning of the new year and resolve to do better, get in shape, not eat so much or eat more of the right kind of foods – whatever those are. According to the University of Scranton, of the top 10 new year's resolutions made in 2015, two of the top are health related: the no. 1 was lose weight and the no. 5 was staying fit and healthy. Weight-related resolutions make up 38% of all resolutions, and only 8% of people who make resolutions actually fulfill them.

What does this have to do with Psalm 119? Well, nine times in Psalm 119 we writer uses the word REVIVE, and three of those are here in these 8 verses and are the last time we will read of this word in Ps. 119. Earlier in vv. 50 and 93 we read where the writer took comfort in the fact that God's word had revived him. In v. 50 it was his comfort that God's word had revived him, and in v. 93 it was the precepts, or the specific instructions of God that had revived him.

The word REVIVE means to make new or to refresh or to make alive again. When the new year rolls around many people want a fresh start, they want to have better health or better eating habits or a better quality of life or whatever, and so they make a resolution to be REVIVED through their life in the new year.

Here in these verses the writer is not making a new year's resolution, he is seeking a spiritual and physical revival because of his situation.

And by reading this section of Psalm 119 tonight we will answer this important question:

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE REVIVED BY GOD?

[SCRIPTURE]

We're talking about what it means to request to be revived and to actually be revived by God.

So let's follow what is happening with the writer in these 8 verses:

v. 153

LOOK UPON MY AFFLICTION AND RESCUE ME

While it is true that some trials in life are not of our own doing, some of them are. And if we were totally honest we would probably have to admit there have been times in our lives when we have prayed to God, not to help us in a difficult situation, but rather to take away the consequences of what we have done.

That's not what the writer is asking in this verse, he is asking for God to remember the difficult situation he is in, and he is calling on God to do what only God can do.

Some of the trials and adversities in life are within our control to alleviate; others give us to an overwhelming sense of helplessness. There is a difference between, "Lord help me" and "Lord I can't do this."

Israel was on the banks of the Red Sea and needed divine intervention – only God could rescue them.

Israel was on the banks of the Jordan River and needed divine intervention – only God could rescue them.

Israel for 40 years in the wilderness needed divine intervention for food and water – only God could provide for them.

Elijah and Elisha needed divine intervention through the many miracles God affected through them;

Peter, John, and Paul needed divine intervention when imprisoned – only God could help them.

Israel needed divine intervention during the dark period of the judges and time and time again His power came upon a judge to deliver them;

And sinful man had no way to deal with the sin in his life – he was separated from God because of sin and it would take divine intervention to rescue him, and it came in the person of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary.

LOOK UPON: consider it and decide what must be done from a divine perspective

We don't know what the writer's 'affliction' was except he asked God to rescue him from it.

I DO NOT FORGET: he remember the word of God, he remembered the work of God. God is the unchanging God, God is the all-knowing, all-powerful God. He knew from God's word that Israel had cried out to God and they were delivered; he knew that the prophets had cried out to God and God answered with deliverance, and now he was simply reminding God of his situation, not forgetting God's word to hear and deliver.

One of the keys to being revived is to first understand the situation you are in. We must also understand that God has not changed, and the deliverance that God may bring will be the deliverance that brings Him glory.

v. 154

REDEEM: this is an extremely important word. It means to release from a debt or to buy back. This word is seen in graphic style in the Book of Ruth where Boaz is seen as the kinsman redeemer, the one who takes Ruth in and marries her to carry on the family tradition. There was a relative that was closer in relations than Boaz but he refused, so Boaz married her to carry on the family name, he redeemed her from being a widow.

An even greater picture of a redeemer can be seen in the Lord Jesus Christ when He purchased our sin debt on the cross of Calvary, he took our place, He shed His blood so we would not have to suffer the penalty of our own sin.

So the writer of Psalm 119 is requesting of God that he be redeemed, purchased, rescued from his present situation.

And here is the first of 3 times in these verses that he requests to be revived or to be refreshed.

The redemption of the Lord brings revival.

v. 155

SALVATION IS FAR: he did not say that salvation was impossible, but that it was far from the wicked.

FAR: this is an easy word to understand. The literal meaning is to be at a distance from something. We spent Labor Day weekend in central Wisconsin with Dena's folks. Now from here their home in Marshfield, WI is a short 8-hour drive, almost a direct drive straight north from here. And although their home is an 8-hour drive, when we lived in south Georgia it was a longer 20-hour drive and took us almost 2 whole days. But regardless of whether it is 8 hours or 20 hours, their home in central Wisconsin is FAR from here, it is removed geographically from Vandalia by 453 miles of woods, and corn and soybean fields. It is not impossible to get to Wisconsin, it's just far geographically from here. But in v. 155 the writer is talking about a spiritual distance not a geographical distance.

Salvation was far from the wicked because of the hardness of their heart, far because of the proud attitude, far because of an unwillingness to pursue God; far because of an unwillingness to listen to God

“No man can ever have God’s soul salvation until he feels that he both needs it and wants it.” (PC)

Salvation is not only far away but it is out of reach to those who think they can be saved by their own human devices. On the other hand, salvation is near to all who call on the name of the Lord in faith to be saved.

This is a mirror of PS 14.1-3, that no one does good and no one seeks after God. the person who seeks God is the one who loves Him and wants to follow Him. The one who seeks God is the one who has been humbled by his own sin and knows that only God through Jesus Christ has the power to forgive those sins. The one who seeks God will find Him because God is as close as a prayer

And guess what? Revival can be just as far from the saved as salvation can be from the wicked, and for the very same reasons. There may be some who say they want revival but they are not willing to look at their own life, they want revival but they are not willing to pay the price to have revival, they would rather look at someone else than their own life.

The wicked don’t seek the Lord, they don’t pursue the Lord, they ignore the word of God, they ignore the commands of God and so salvation is far from them. And revival can be just as far for the church that ignores God’s word, ignores God’s commands, that doesn’t pursue a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.

This is another way revival comes. When we look at our own lives and understand maybe we have strayed from God in some way, and we request of God to be revived, then God will show us the way back.

v. 156

The mercies of God mean He has not treats us as we should be treated nor has He given us what we truly deserve as sinful creatures (PS 103.12). The Bible tells us, tells me, His lovingkindness never ceases and his compassions never fail (LAM 3.22).

Revival comes when we understand that as sinful and disobedient as we are, that God could treat us much worse, or God could completely ignore us. But God treats us with compassion, God gives us the opportunity to repent, God gives us the opportunity to be brought back. Now we cannot take the mercies of God for granted, but praise the Lord he give us that opportunity to be brought back by the way he treats us.

Think about it: if God were unfeeling or uncaring, if God were an evil and harsh God, how willing would we be to come to him and ask for forgiveness? Not very likely.

MATT 18.21-35 Jesus tells the parable of the merciful king and the unmerciful servant. The servant owed the king a large amount of money and the king forgave the debt. And yet the servant had money owed to him of a much smaller amount by another servant and he treated him harshly. When the king found out he had that servant thrown into jail until the debt was paid. The king's mercy should have been a lesson in his own life yet he failed to learn.

God is merciful towards sinful man, and God in turn expects us to be merciful to those around us as a reflection of our relationship with Him through Jesus Christ.

v. 157

MANY ARE MY PERSECUTORS/ADVERSARIES: it should come as no surprise to any of us that persecutions and adversities are part of the Christian life. Now the Bible does not tell us that we have to go searching out for persecution and adversity and then endure it to prove our faith; but rather if we are living the Christian life, persecution and adversity will find us because of how we live our lives. The Christian who believes he will never be persecuted nor have adversaries is the Christian that has been sold a false bill of goods.

Just listen to what Jesus had to say about adversities as a child of God:

MATT 10.16-23, 34-39 [READ]

LUKE 14.28-35 [READ]

JOHN 15.18-21 [READ]

I DO NOT TURN ASIDE because I have learned how good and beneficial God's word really is; I have learned the value of trusting in God's word, I have learned the value of living the truth of God's word. Persecution and trials should only serve to drive us towards the word of God instead of away from the word of God.

Part of revival is being faithful through adversities.

v. 158

This is a repeated refrain from the writer throughout Ps 119, his dislike of those who despise the Word of God because of his zeal for the Word of God. Our love for the Lord should display this kind of zeal for His Word.

This will be the last time the writer speaks of the wicked and those who oppress him. Throughout Ps 119 he has spoken of the wicked and arrogant as those who:

Wander from God's commandments (v. 21);

Are not in accord with God's word (v. 85);

Forget God's word (v. 139);

Are far from God's word (v. 150);

Do not seek God's statutes (v. 155);

Do not keep God's word (v. 158)

Basically he contrasts his life with the life of the wicked.

And in essence as he portrays the life of the wicked and arrogant we can see why revival is at times needed.

v. 159

CONSIDER: look at or inspect; to see or to pay attention.

Here the writer requests of God to revive him according to how he pays attention to and loves and lives the word of God.

v. 160

SUM: total amount, everything all together.

The sum total of history books is history, of math books – math, of science books – science. But when you read the Bible you discover not only is it one book in its totality, but it is sixty-six books individually that come together and tell one consistent story from the first book to the last. While the author of the Bible is God, God worked through over 40 different men over thousands of years, many of whom did not know each other, to tell one comprehensive story. Every book has as its essence truth, and all the books together have as their essence – truth. Whatever the writer of Psalm 119 knew about the word of God, both oral and written, he knew enough to know that it was truth and not something that he would call into question. And because the sum total of God's word is truth that means we can rely on it, trust it.

The sum of God's word is truth because every part and every word of God's word is truth. The Bible is Looking back at vv. 153-160, there are three questions we must answer:

1. How do we know we need revival?

- a. When we wander from God's word;
- b. When we are not living in accord with God's word;
- c. When we forget God's word;

- d. When we find ourselves far from God's word;
- e. When we don't seek guidance from God and His word;
- f. And the main reason:

When we don't live (keep) God's word.

2. What does it mean to be revived by God?

- a. Being revived by God means we realize only the power and presence of God can bring healing and correction to our spiritual situation.
- b. Being revived by God means He has removed the guilt and shame of our sin and replaced it with joy and forgiveness.
- c. Being revived by God means we are the recipients of His mercy.
- d. Being revived by God means being refreshed through adversity.

3. How are we revived?

Through prayer, through confession and repentance, through obedience to the word and will of God.

HIS WORD – OUR SOURCE
Psalm 119.161-168

INTRODUCTION: if you were to try and describe the word of God with a word that started with the letter “S” – what word or words would you use?

Strength – sufficiency – supply – salvation

In Ps 119 this next to last stanza is highlighted by the what we would understand as the letter S, the first word of the first verse beginning with the letter S.

The Mississippi River in New Orleans is a mile wide. The Mississippi is the 4th longest and 10th largest river in the world. The source of the Mississippi River has traditionally been known as Lake Itasca in Clearwater County, Minnesota.

The Amazon River is believed to have its source in the Mantaro River in southwestern Peru, although there have been five different rivers that some believe it comes from. The Amazon River is over 4,000 miles long. Some interesting facts about the Amazon River:

In the wet season the river can get to over 120 miles wide;

There are no bridges that cross the Amazon because it runs primarily through the rain forest;

It discharges over 55 million gallons of water per second;

It is responsible for over 20% of the world’s fresh water entering the ocean

The flow of fresh water from the Amazon into the ocean is a stream over 250 miles long and anywhere from 62 to 124 miles wide.

So both these great rivers have as their source much smaller bodies of water thousands of miles away from where they empty into the ocean.

The writer of Psalm 119 uses the letter S to describe some unique facts about the word of God, some truths that he lived by, and some guidelines that we can live by as well.

Tonight we are going to answer this question about PS 119:

WHAT IS GOD’S WORD THE SOURCE OF IN MY LIFE?

[SCRIPTURE]

We’re talking about the word of God being the source in our life, but the source of what?

I. GOD’S WORD IS THE SOURCE OF GREAT TREASURE (v. 161-162)

v. 161

Princes were those in charge, they had some degree of power over their subjects. The writer did not consider his knowledge and acquaintance of princes of any value and in fact considered the word of God to be more valuable than those he knew.

He was not in awe of the princes, he was not in awe of those over him, he was in awe of the word of God because he was in awe of the God of the word. Jesus taught His disciples about true fear in life:

★**MATT 10.28**

Rather Jesus told his disciples to fear the one who had the power to cast their body and soul into hell!

v. 162

SPOIL: spoil or plunder or treasure was a big deal in the ancient world, in fact it was often the very reason for going to war against someone.

God even authorized the Hebrews to take and use the spoil of conquered cities:

★**DT 20.10-15**

God's word is not only to be treasured but is also a great treasure. It is more valuable than gold or silver and is to be treasured above any earthly treasure. But yet we must never forget the word of God is not to be worshiped, rather, our praise and worship is to the God of the word and His son the Lord Jesus Christ. God's word is to be explored like a treasure house, it is to be mined like a gold mine, and it is to be sought like a lost city or treasure, and all who discover it find great wealth for their soul.

According to a report in Popular Mechanics, some professional treasure hunters and marine historians estimate there could be over a million shipwrecks at the bottom of the ocean that have yet to be discovered. And there have been billions of dollars recovered from sunken ships. But in this same article professional treasure hunters also say that the costs of finding the treasure far outweigh the treasure itself. It is estimated that for every \$1 recovered in a sunken wreck, it takes about \$10 to process it which means the costs of the recovery ship, the dive, and the chemical processes that take place to make the treasure useable again after sitting in salt water for hundreds of years.

And yet the writer of Psalm 119 says that for him God's word is the great treasure, God's word is greater than any treasure anyone could find or obtain.

Why is God's word such a great treasure, such as the spoil taken in battle?

We rejoice when we go to a rummage sale or antique shop or even on e-bay and find a good deal, and that good deal is based on what we paid as compared to the market value of something. I buy used books sometimes because I have found good deals on Amazon where instead of the price of a new book being \$40-\$60, I can find it used for under \$5 even though it may be slightly used. The used condition of the book doesn't alter the information inside the book.

But here the psalmist states that God's word is greater than any treasure he could find or any spoil he could obtain as the result of a war.

God's word is considered a great treasure or greater than any spoil, not because of any monetary or market value attached to it, but rather because of what it contains and what it provides. For the writer of Psalm 119 the word of God provided comfort, strength, salvation, hope – all of which no amount of money in all the world can buy.

Money can buy a house but not a home;

Money can buy an education but not common sense;

Money can provide a secure income but not peace of mind;

Money can provide a means to live but it can't give meaning to life;

**GOD'S WORD IS THE SOURCE OF GREAT TREASURE BECAUSE WHAT IT PROVIDES
WILL OUTLAST ANYTHING OF THIS WORLD.**

II. GOD'S WORD IS THE SOURCE OF GREAT AFFECTION (vv. 163, 167)

v. 163

The reason the writer could hate and despise falsehood is because he loved God's law, God's word, God's testimonies and ordinances. A love of God's word is a love of what is good and right and holy and pure. And when we love God's word we will know what is not good and right and holy and pure, and we are inclined to stay away to honor God.

The law was in opposition to falsehood. Falsehood is lying and untruth, while God's word is the honest truth. When we go to God's word we will be confronted with the truth, and it is that truth, Jesus said, that will set us free from the bondage of sin (John 8.32).

v. 167

He loved the testimonies of God's word as much as he loved everything else about God's word.

GOD'S WORD IS THE SOURCE OF GREAT AFFECTION BECAUSE IT WILL NEVER LEAD US ASTRAY; IT WILL ALWAYS LEAD US IN TRUTH.

III. GOD'S WORD IS THE SOURCE OF GREAT PRAISE (v. 164)

SEVEN TIMES: this has not been written for us to be legalistic about worship, thanksgiving, and prayer. The writer was simply stating that his life was one of constant thankfulness, constant worship, constant prayer.

Earlier, in v. 147, the psalmist wrote he "rose before dawn to cry for help." Then in v. 148 he said he anticipated the night watches to meditate on God's word. It is clear that he was a man who meditated and prayed throughout the day from before the sun came up until late in the evening. Paul wrote in 1 Thess. 5.17 to pray without ceasing. V. 164 is a perfect picture of that command.

★COL 3.16-17

GOD'S WORD IS THE SOURCE OF GREAT PRAISE BECAUSE IT REMINDS US HOW MUCH WE HAVE TO BE THANKFUL FOR.

IV. GOD'S WORD IS THE SOURCE OF GREAT PEACE (v. 165a)

Because God's word for them and to them is a lamp and a light to their feet and their path (v. 105).

His word also gave them wisdom and understanding when faced with temptation.

What a powerful verse that speaks to the sufficiency of God's word. God's word supplies us with nourishment, when we begin to trust in the word of God we find contentment from striving against the world. In God's word we find God provides for His children, all we have to do is ask. Now, God is not a cosmic genie to give us what we want, but He does provide.

PS 107.9 is an example: For He has satisfied the thirsty soul, and the hungry soul He has filled with what is good.

Also, God's word gives us warning about sin, about our adversary the devil, that he is always on the prowl. When we stay close to and in the word of God we arm ourselves against the attacks of the devil.

We will always be tempted but God's word through His Spirit arms us against yielding to those temptations.

PEACE: state of fulfilment which is the result of God's presence. We are familiar with this word because it is often spoken as a greeting – "shalom".

Jesus in the Old Testament is called:

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God

Eternal Father, Prince of Peace

EPH 2.14: Paul described Jesus as, “our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall.

EPH 2.15: Jesus established peace

★**COL 3.15**: *let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.*

The tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot, of whatsoever sort that is.

GOD’S WORD IS THE SOURCE OF GREAT PEACE BECAUSE THROUGH IT WE ARE INTRODUCED TO THE PRINCE OF PEACE.

V. GOD’S WORD IS THE SOURCE OF GREAT CONFIDENCE (v. 165b)

STUMBLE: not in the sense of falling away from God and into sin and not in the sense of literally stumbling over something that would cause a person to fall, but rather to be offended or to cause offense. If we truly love the word of God then we will not be offended by anything in it and in fact God’s word will be a source of peace in our own lives.

★**PROV 3.13, 24-26**

GOD’S WORD IS THE SOURCE OF GREAT CONFIDENCE BECAUSE IT WILL NEVER LEAD US ASTRAY.

VI. GOD’S WORD IS THE SOURCE OF GREAT SALVATION (v. 166)

SALVATION: deliverance or rescue. The idea with this word is that the help or deliverance comes from outside the situation. In other words, the writer is calling on the Lord who is outside the situation to help him.

HOPE: expectant waiting.

DO: accomplish or live or be obedient to

For the writer the hope of salvation was deliverance by God from his enemies. He knew quite well that only God had the power to deliver him from the hand of his enemies and this was his great hope. For us today this reality has not changed. our only hope in this world is Jesus Christ. In Him is

salvation and eternal life. Only in Him is there peace and comfort. His salvation is available to all who by faith simply trust in Him.

GOD'S WORD IS THE SOURCE OF GREAT SALVATION BECAUSE IT TELLS US OF GOD'S LOVE FOR US THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

VII. GOD'S WORD IS THE SOURCE OF GREAT DIRECTION (v. 168)

BEFORE YOU: read the story of a football coach that had problems with a running back that had trouble holding on the ball. The coach took a football, painted it pink, and told the running back to carry it with him all day in school. And he encouraged the other players to try and slap it out of his hand during the day when he saw him. The coach was trying to emphasize holding on to and protecting the ball, and it worked.

But we don't take God with us and we don't have to worry about losing him. God is with us all the time and God through the Holy Spirit goes with us everywhere we go. And so it is true that not only is God with us but everything we do is before Him, nothing is hidden from Him.

★**PS 69.5** – nothing is hidden from you

PS 44.21 – God knows the secrets of the heart

We must never forget that our lives are before God. Everything we do and everywhere we go is always before God. He is the all-knowing and all-seeing God, present to everything that never changes.

God knows when I get up in the morning and when I go to bed. He knows when I go out and when I come in. He pulls up his seat at my table at mealtime. He is the unseen guest at every meal, the silent listener to every conversation. He sits with me in my office and rides beside me in my car. He reads my thoughts and knows the intent of my heart. It makes good sense to keep His precepts. [John Phillips]

GOD'S WORD IS THE SOURCE OF GREAT DIRECTION BECAUSE IT SHOWS US THE PATH TO WALK IN LIFE THAT HONORS GOD.

CONCLUSION/CALL TO ACTION: Everything in life has a source, whether it is the great rivers of the world like the Mississippi or the Amazon; or the food we buy in the store; or the clothes we wear – everything has a source.

God's word is our source for a great treasure, affection, praise, peace, confidence, salvation, and direction.

HIS WHOLE WORD FOR OUR WHOLE LIFE

Psalm 119.169-176

INTRODUCTION: the concept of the one-stop shopping super center has been around for quite some time, but it has not always been that way. There was a time when you went to the grocery store to buy groceries, you went to the drug store to get your medicine, you went to the department store to buy your clothes, and you went to the gas station to get your gas and have your car worked on, and you went to the auto parts place to buy parts for your auto. To some extent it is still that way today; but we also live in the world of the one-stop shop super center where you can buy your groceries, get your medicine, buy your clothes, get your car worked on, and even get your eyes examined, your nails done, and your taxes prepared all under one roof. And now if you want to survive as a smaller store that meets a specific need you have to find your niche and be really good at what you do or you will lose business to the super center. And in today's economy most folks are very picky when it comes to the services they will pay for with the limited resources they have. And with shopping on the internet becoming more popular your computer now has become the one-stop shopping place for almost anything you can imagine except for maybe the groceries you need. There is a website, of course, called peapod.com on which you can order your groceries and they will deliver them to your home. But unless you live in Chicago, Milwaukee, southeast Wisconsin or Indianapolis this service will not be of use you at least for those of us who live here. And what does it cost? For the Chicago area, for instance, for orders over \$100, it costs \$6.95 for delivery and as long as gas is under \$3/gallon there is no fuel surcharge. So you can get your groceries delivered at home, as long as you live in a specific area.

God's word tells us everything we need to know in matters of faith and salvation. God's word tells us everything we need to know for living a life that honors God. God's word points us to the importance of wisdom, to what worship is all about, to the source of our salvation and how to be saved.

Article I of the Baptist Faith and Message says this about the Word of God:

I. The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and

religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

I don't have to go shopping around to find out how I am supposed to live;

I don't have to go shopping around to find out about God and His Son the Lord Jesus Christ;

I don't have to go shopping around to find out about God's design for the family –

all I need to know in terms of life, and living according to God's principles can be found, not under one roof, but instead inside the cover of one book, the Bible – God's infallible, inerrant, inspired and holy Word.

And as we wrap up our study of the 119th psalm we are doing to discover tonight how the writer of Ps 119 understood God's whole word was for his whole life. And here is the one question we will answer tonight:

HOW DOES THE WHOLE WORD OF GOD BENEFIT MY WHOLE LIFE?

[SCRIPTURE]

We're talking about how the whole word of God benefits our whole life.

I, THE BENEFIT OF GOD'S WHOLE WORD BEGINS WITH AN UNDERSTANDING OF THAT WORD (v. 169)

LET MY CRY: he wanted nothing to hinder his word, his cry, his plea, his prayers from getting to God. The truth is God hears our prayers, nothing can keep our prayers from getting to God, but often there may be situations in our lives that prevents us from praying to God. We can get mired in sin, we can distance ourselves from God's word, we can say we are too busy, we can come up with a thousand different reasons for not praying, none no doubt are valid. God doesn't hinder our prayers from getting to him, but often our lives hinder our prayers being made to him.

GIVE ME UNDERSTANDING: there is a difference between knowledge and understanding.

Knowledge is simply the accumulation of facts and information about something, and we can gain knowledge and information simply by reading a book.

In my research for the doctorate I read all of or parts of 28 different books on preaching, and all different aspects of preaching; I even read three books on delivering the homily which is what the Catholic priests do. So I read these books to gain information and knowledge on different aspects of preaching, the oldest was written in 1870.

We can read the Bible and gain knowledge and information. Understanding is different. Understanding is knowing what to do with the information, knowing how to understand it, make sense of it for use in your own life. This is basically the difference between a bachelor's degree and a master's degree – the bachelor's degree is: I will give you information and I want you to give it back to me. The master's degree is: I will give you information, I want you to tell me what it means. The doctorate is: go out and get the information and tell me why it's important.

A plea to, “give me understanding” is a plea for God to help him understand the knowledge he already had about God's word.

The first step in someone coming to the saving grace of Jesus Christ is understanding who they are. The Bible is clear about our sinful nature and about the consequences of that sin; and the Bible is equally clear about how we can be rescued from the penalty of that sin through faith in Jesus Christ. But the sinner must have an understanding about it. I have witnessed to 8 year olds that had a clear understanding of what sin and salvation were all about, and I have talked with senior adults that refused to believe they have ever sinned.

And here is the other sad part about salvation: we can have the knowledge about salvation and still be lost. Look at Judas – if anyone had the knowledge and information about salvation it was Judas – he walked and lived with Jesus for three years. Judas was even given authority over demons to cast them out and heal people and in the end he was still lost!

So having knowledge is important, but knowledge without understanding and application does us no good.

Johnny Hunt: it is not what you KNOW that will change your life, it is what you DO with what you have that will change your life.

Seven times this request is made in Ps. 119: give me understanding:

That I may observe your law (v. 34);

That I may learn your commandments (v. 73);

To help know the false way (v. 104);

That I may know your testimonies (v. 125);

As a light for the simple (v. 130);

That I may live (v. 144);

John Phillips put it this way: *The psalmist knew God's word. He could recite by heart many of the great promises it contains. He had knowledge. He could quote a dozen texts that suited his situation. But he did not have understanding. His circumstances remained as stringent as ever, despite his pleadings and prayers. He had knowledge; he wanted understanding. He wanted to be able to enter more deeply into the principles of God's dealing with him, to understand not just the WHAT but also the WHY.*

God's word is our guide for Godly living. There is no way we can ever know how to live a godly life apart from the Word of God. Christians who do not bring the Word of God to worship are in effect telling both God and the preacher they are not interested in what either has to say! How are they going to gain understanding apart from God's word?

And how are we to understand the word of God? Through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit our counselor, our helper, our interpreter of God's word. If God's word is going to benefit our lives then we must pray that God will help us understand His word for our lives.

In this Sunday's sermon I will be preaching on the stewardship of God's word – knowing it and understanding it for the purpose of putting it into your own life and then teaching others the word of God, passing it along.

2 TIM 2.2: the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

If we are going to gain the benefits of God's word the first step is we have to understand God's word, we have to marry our knowledge with understanding.

II. THE BENEFITS OF GOD'S WHOLE WORD:

1. Communion (v. 170)

Communion is simply spending time with God, just being in his presence.

v. 170

What does supplication have to do with communion? He was spending time with the Lord, and as he prayed and as he poured out his heart with the Lord he also made requests of the Lord.

If you are spending time with God on a regular basis you won't have a hard time lifting up your requests to him; that's the beauty of communion, that's a powerful benefit of the word of God.

Supplication. This is an urgent plea, a request for God to do something on behalf of the requestor. He had prayed to God before and knew of the deliverance of God. God's word told him that God hears and helps those who love the Lord and the writer was holding on to this promise of God.

2. Praise (v. 171-173, 175) UTTER PRAISE: as we learn God's word, it gives us reason to praise and rejoice. As God taught him, as God teaches us, we can rejoice in the fact that God has given us His word, and God has given us the ability to learn and understand his word, and as we learn it and live it we know more about God and as we learn more and put into practice His word, it gives us reason to sing our praises to God.

★**How does God teach us?** Through His word, through the experiences of life, through other Christians.

Our praise of God comes from an understanding of who God is. We understand who God is through serving Him and through reading and understanding His word. The more we know about God in Jesus Christ and the more we grow in our relationship with Him the more we are driven to praise Him in our lives and on our lips.

song. The truth and rightness of God's word created the reason for his praise of God. Singing is part of worship, a very important part of worship, but worship is far more than just singing. Singing is simply joyful expression of God's work in our lives and it should be the result of the overflow of what is already doing in our lives.

3. Help (v. 173). YOUR HAND: an anthropomorphism – attributing physical characteristics to a spiritual being. The hand or the arm of God is attributed to the power of God.

And no other hand would do – he is not appealing to a king, he is not appealing to an angel, he is not appealing to an army – he is appealing to the only source of power that could help him in his distress and that was God Himself.

4. Salvation (v. 174) Through the study of God's word we understand what salvation is, where it comes from, and how we can be saved – rescued from the penalty of our sin. Also notice what the writer puts at the end of v. 174: your law is my delight. In 8 verses of PS 119 the psalmist wrote of his delight in God's word. This just affirms that not only is God's word a lamp and a light, but also a source of delight for times of distress, when we need encouragement, or when someone else needs to be encouraged.

5. Direction (v. 176) this may seem like a strange confession coming from someone who had just written 175 verses about his love for the word of God.

I HAVE GONE ASTRAY: he has not turned his back on God, that would be apostasy. Apostasy is a willful turning away from God once a knowledge of God has been gained. Here the writer has gone astray because either he has forgotten God's word or he has gotten involved in some sin and has realized how far he has strayed from God. None of us are immune from drifting away from God and His word.

We go astray when we separate ourselves from the word of God. We go astray when we depart from prayer. We go astray when we leave God out of our lives.

SEEK: we may lose sight of God, we may wander because that just what our nature is – to wander. But God knows where we are, He knows the content of our heart, He knows our thoughts and desires.

I DO NOT FORGET: because he had not forgotten God's word, he knew he had strayed and he knew he needed to get back to where he needed to be spiritually. It is because he knew God's word that he knew about the character of God, that God was loving and merciful and all he had to do was seek God's forgiveness and God would forgive him and receive him back. While he may have wandered from God, God had never wandered from him.

We may walk away from God but God never walks away from us.

CONCLUSION/CALL TO ACTION: the concept and reality of the one-stop shopping super store is simple: one store that meets all your needs, you can get all your shopping done under one roof.

The Bible provides for us, not under one roof but in one book, everything we need to know about how to live, how to honor God, we not only get information about God but we also gain understanding.

And in the Bible, in the book of Psalms, Psalm 119 to be specific, is a great treasure about the value of God's word. And the writing winds up this great psalm with his understanding that God's whole word was beneficial for his whole life.

God's word is beneficial because it leads us to spending time with God - communion;

It is the source of praise and worship in our lives;

It gives us direction,

And most importantly it points us to the only source of salvation, and He is Jesus Christ.