

Psalm 119:1-16

ALEPH

“Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways. Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto thy commandments. I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments. I will keep thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly.

Introduction

“Psalm 119, the longest chapter in the Bible, and certainly the theme, and it’s in a greater context, but certainly the theme of the longest chapter in the Bible is the Bible. And it’s fitting that the Holy Spirit, as he inspires the writing of Scripture would say to us in the longest chapter that he inspired, that the most important thing in the Bible is the Bible. And a remarkable, remarkable, remarkable Psalm now. It’s called an acrostic, which means that the verses are related to the Hebrew alphabet. And there are eight other acrostic Psalms in the Book of Psalms. Some of them almost complete, some of them here, a number of them complete, this one is complete, it’s completed in an unusual way. And in your Bible you should see, if you see there before the first 8 verses, it says ALEPH. You guys have that? OK, great. And then BETH, and you look, and what that tells us is those first 8 verses, there’s 22 sections in the book, and each of them, each verse in the first section begins with Aleph. Each verse in the section, section 9 to 16 begins with BETH, and so on. And so, each section has 8 verses, and each of the 8 verses begins with that particular letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Now you’ll find that in a few other places outside of the Book of Psalms. Very interesting, the last chapter of the Book of Proverbs, verses 10 to 31, 22 verses there on the virtuous woman, is also an acrostic, each verse begins with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet. And one of the most fascinating acrostics in the Old Testament is in the Book of Lamentations, the 5th chapter is not acrostic, the others are. Remarkably, I think it’s the 3rd chapter has 66 verses, so every three verses changes to the next letter, and it’s just fascinating, some of that. Now look, an acrostic was used to help you memorize. I mean, look, how many of you guys know A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, LMNO, P, you know, just so it would help you memorize a Psalm if each next verse

began with the next letter. This one's a little more challenging, because you read 8 verses, then you switch to BETH, and you read 8 verses and you switch to the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet. But Hebrew children would memorize Psalm 119, Hebrew children. Let me say it one more time, Hebrew children would memorize Psalm 119, these were the A, B, C's of the Scripture. And the Psalm is so powerful, just imagine, you know, in our school we have like a memory verse of the month, you know, and at the end of ten months you wonder who remembered any of the ten verses [I suffer from CRS, if you know what that means]. But imagine remembering 176 verses about the Bible, how important that would be in the life of any child facing that world then, particularly this world now [then, just read 1st and 2nd Kings, or the book of Judges, and for now, with our society that is so atheistic and God-hating, leading up to the time just before the great tribulation, World War III]. My recommendation, just go home and memorize it, it's easy, it's an acrostic. Author, whose the author of this? Many are suggested, Spurgeon, many others, lean to David, but the truth is this, it doesn't matter who wrote it, because whoever wrote it was just a pen or a quill in the LORD's hand. Whatever human instrument put the quill to the page was a human instrument inspired by the Holy Spirit. So it doesn't matter, you know, if you were going to, if you were in prison, and you were going to be set free from your crime, you wouldn't care if the governor signed your release with a Bic pen or a Cross pen or a custom made pen, so it doesn't matter whether this was written by a Bic pen, or a Cross pen or a custom made pen like David, with all kinds of long investment. The truth is, the LORD God Almighty wrote this Psalm and he gave it to us. Now out of 176 verses, 173 of them make mention of the Word of God. So, everyone wants to say '*Well this is the theme of this Psalm,*' and it is. But it's the theme of the Psalm in the context of the God of the Word. Because out of 176 verses, 173 mention the Word of God, but all 176 mention the LORD. So it is a picture of the Word of God, in context of the God of the Word. And we'll see that as we begin to look into it this evening, very interesting the way that is brought before us. Now in the Psalm there's no mention of priest, no mention of sacrifice, no mention of sanctuary, none of the things you would expect to find in Hebrew poetry, we don't find them there. The writer, whoever he was, the human writer, mentions himself 325 times in these 176 verses, so it's very applicable. As we read through this, you put yourself in the place of the writer, God wrote it that way, he wrote so clearly how he wanted us relating to him in regards to the Word of God. So it's very, very personal, very wonderful, as we head into the Psalm. As we look at it, look, heading into it Charles Spurgeon in his commentary said in regards to the Word of God, and I think, what a privilege we have, understand, we come here every Wednesday, come here every Tuesday morning, come here every Monday night to the studies, come here every Sunday, and we're in the next chapter, we're in the next part, we're going through the Word of God. Understand, if you

grew up here, it's not the norm across the country, that's not the norm. We just had someone come, and he was looking for a church, he said *'The Lord kind of told me something, I'm looking for a church where they teach the Word, where they teach the Word,'* and he went and asked pastors, and they said *'Oh, you're talking about Calvary Chapel.'* That's our reputation, and I'm good with that, understand, I'm just good with that. [That's the purpose of this website, and to spread it everywhere throughout the greater Body of Christ, because believe you me, the Body of Christ needs that, because they are so sound asleep, snoring away, and we need *Revival!* We're not far from the end of this world, and the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ, and the Gospel must go out before then, but it's hard for that to occur with a sleeping Church.] And it is not the norm, and it is a privilege for us to be able to come, week after week, year after year and study the Word of God. And it isn't like a book when you get to the last chapter, you know it, you don't have to study it anymore. I remember when my kids were small, it took about the first ten years to go from Genesis to Revelation, and I told the kids *'Well, we're finishing the Bible, we're coming to the end of Revelation,'* and they said *'Are you done then?'* like they thought I was going to retire. I said, *'No, no, no, no, we just start over.'* And I come to places I've taught a number of times, and I always find things I'd never seen before. I love, you guys probably know if you've been around here, I love the Word of God. I'm still excited about it, it still talks to me. When I sit alone with it, I still find myself in tears, it still rises off the page and talks to me, it still fills me with wonder, and I never get tired of it. Charles Spurgeon said, *"Show me a Bible that's well worn, and I'll show you a Christian who isn't. Show me a Bible that's well worn, and I'll show you a Christian who is not."*

What Does It Take To Lead The Blessed Life?

Psalm 119, the first 8 verses go like this, and in the Hebrew, "blessed, blessed," these words they all begin with an "A" [in the Hebrew alphabet, for the first 8 verses]. **"Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways."** and the Psalmist then says, **"Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently."** his head turned upward now, he's telling us about the LORD in those first three verses, and then he says to himself ***'you're the One, LORD, to keep your precepts diligently,'*** and then his head lifts up to heaven, he says, **"O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments. I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments. I will keep thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly."** (verse 1-8) There's a very

interesting thing that happens. Look, here's what we have stated in the first three verses, it sets the tone, and then the entire rest of the Psalm changes. He says **"Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways."** (verses 1-3) that all sounds depressing to me right away, because it rules me out, as soon as we start the longest Psalm in the Bible. **"Blessed are undefiled in the way,"** or **"the perfect"** your translation might say, or **"the blameless"**. So this is the way of blessing. What is the way of blessing? It's those who are perfect or blameless or undefiled in the way. Would you raise your hand please if you're perfect or blameless or undefiled? Carry that guy out, anybody else? You know, look, you go right from the beginning here there is a statement of truth. **"Blessed are the undefiled in the way,"** and the challenge now here in verse 1 if you'll notice, is "to walk," in verse 2 it's "to keep," and "to seek." In verse 3 again, "to walk" and in verse 4 again "to keep," in verse 5, "to keep." You just go down, the challenge is of the heart to the Word of God. And listen to this, as we head into this, in these first 8 verses, you're going to hear the Word of God in verse 1 called "the law," **"Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD"**, that's "the Torah," 24 times in this Psalm. In **verse 2,** **"Blessed are they that keep his testimonies,"** that means to attest or to bear witness to something, that's used 23 times in this Psalm. Then it says down in **verse 4,** **"Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently."** these are "mandates," it's always in the plural, wherever it is in the Old Testament, "precepts," they are mandates, things that are set that should be done. Then in **verse 5,** **"O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!"**, "statutes" it's from the Hebrew verb that means "to cut" or "to engrave," hence it means a statute is something that is decreed or ordained, they're all facets of the Word of God. [i.e. God's Sabbath in Exodus 20:8-11 and his Holy Days given in Leviticus 23, where the Sabbath is listed again, are all statutes, or ordained times for Israel, God's people, to observe. That is just one example of a statute.] **Verse 6,** **"Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments."** "Mitzva, this is an obligation to the Jew, 22 times in the Psalm, and then down in **verse 7,** **"I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments."** That's used 23 times in this Psalm, it speaks of "judicial decisions," something that is "a sentence that is passed." And further on we're going to hear "saying" or "promise" 19 times, you'll hear "the Word of God," the Word itself 24 times. So right here in the first 8 verses, it's the law, it's testimonies, it's the precepts, it's the statutes, it's the commandments, it's the judgments, and all of that is speaking of differing angles or facets of the Word of God [or the Torah law of God].

“Blessed Are The undefiled In The Way, Who Walk In The Law Of The LORD. Blessed Are They That Keep His Testimonies”

First thing he says, **“Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD.”** Now, I’m thankful for this, I’m thankful there is a way for us to walk in. Have you watched the news today? The Middle East is unraveling. Our economy is failing [and this was under Obama, btw, 2014, when this sermon was given], it’s on a shoestring, it could implode [all this could still happen under our current President, Donald Trump, by the way], you look at our Southern border, you look at the weapons that are gone missing, how many I forget, how many thousands in Afghanistan are “missing,” American military weapons. You just think of what’s going on in the world, and you think *‘I have children, what about my investment, what about my stocks, I’ve been wise, I’ve tried to run my life, I’ve tried to take care of things, what about this, do I need to get ammo, do I need to store rice, what do I do, what do I do in this world, how do I secure myself?’* Look, there’s a way. We have a way. This world is falling apart. But we have a way. And if we end up in a very difficult situation, we have a way. If we end up locked up for something, we have a way. If we end up losing loved ones, we have a way. If we end up in circumstances we never thought we’d be in, we have a way, and we can walk in it. we can walk in it. I think of xxxx in prison, in Iran, even in the middle of that he has a way, he has a way that an unbeliever would never have in the same circumstance. It’s a way to struggle in, it’s a way to believe, it’s a way to believe, it’s a way to doubt in. It’s a way though, it’s there. [Obviously from what the Psalmist is saying throughout the Psalm is that way is God’s law, the Torah, and as the Psalm points out, it’s having a love for the law and things of God that makes this possible. Paul pointed this out in Romans 8:1-8, where he pointed out the difference of walking in the Spirit and walking in the flesh, and that those who walk in the Spirit, it is they who have the love of God through his Holy Spirit dwelling within them, and a love for the things of God. This attitude is brought out throughout Psalm 119.] If we want God’s blessing, **“Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law [torah] of the LORD. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies,”** what do you attest to? **“and that seek him with the whole heart.” (verses 1-2)** I mean, listen to what it’s saying, do we keep what we attest to, and do we seek him with our whole heart? Do we seek him with our whole heart? I don’t. Because I spend a lot of time thinking about the Eagles, and about painting the house, and about doing practical things. There isn’t anything wrong with those things. But I think how easily my heart can be wayward. It says, **‘the way of blessing is to walk in his ways, the way of blessing is to keep his testimonies, and to seek him with a whole heart.’** [Here’s a

definition of what walking in his ways are all about] **“They that do no iniquity: they walk in his ways.” (verse 3)** zero iniquity. Iniquity is something inherent, it speaks of the twisted part of our nature. You think a twisted thought any time today? Just me and you, just two of us? Just, we’re twisted. You know, there’s something in us that doesn’t function properly, we get offended when somebody backstabs us, when somebody talks about us, when somebody does something we think is unfair, we think *‘I can do this, I can run him over, I can bury him in the yard,’* you know, we’re twisted, we think the wrong things sexually, we think the wrong things with our anger, we think, you know, there’s a twisted part of us. [Pastor Joe is going for the thought level, the jugular of our obedience, or lack thereof to God’s Law, as spelled out by Jesus in Matthew 5:17-48. He’s not in denial about these verses applying to God’s Torah law, he’s just going to the heart and core of that law, as spelled out by Jesus in Matthew 5.] **“They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways.” (verse 3)** and then the Psalmist says this, ***‘You know, LORD, you have commanded us to keep, to guard, you’ve commanded us to hold onto these precepts diligently. This is your idea, LORD, you’ve mandated this.’ (verse 4)*** And then look how honest he gets in **verse 5**, this is the beauty of the Psalm, he lifts his head to the LORD. Now, and he says, the pleading begins, **“O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments” (verses 5-6)** Listen to how he begins, he says ***‘I know this is the way it is, and I know this is right, and I know this is what should happen, and I know this is the way it should be, but when I think of myself, I think O LORD, I wish I was that way LORD, would you direct me, would you help me to be that way? I know it’s right.’*** Look, if you go all the way to the very last verse of the Psalm, **verse 176**, it says, **“I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments.” *‘LORD, I love your Word, I don’t forget your Word, I’ve gone astray like a lost sheep, LORD, I depended upon you.’*** Look what he’s saying here in **verse 5**, **“O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!”** “were” he’s saying that because he’s not inclined by nature to keep the statutes, he says ***‘I wish it was that way.’*** **“O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! Then”** if it was that way, **“shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments.” (verses 5-6)** because he is ashamed, whoever wrote this. **“Then shall I not be ashamed when”** it is something he is looking to, **“when I have respect unto all thy commandments.”** “respect” means “to look to” **“when I have respect unto all”** not some of, **“thy commandments.”** **“O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!”** the head lifts up, and every verse for the rest of the Psalm is either a praise or prayer or worship or pleading, the head never turns back down again, every verse directed to the LORD about the LORD, about his Word, it’s remarkable, just remarkable. You

feel like God's not blessing you, you feel like you're struggling, be honest, **"O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments."** (verses 5-6) *'when I look to all thy commandments. When that's what I look to LORD, you need to do this in me, you need to direct my heart, because my heart is not that way.'* And he says, then **"I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments."** (verse 7) and he says *'it's by you directing, it's by you leading,'* he says, **"I will keep thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly."** (verse 8) *'LORD, don't forsake me, because when you do this in me, and you do this work in me, then my heart will be directed to you.'* It's beautiful, it's wonderful.

BETH

Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. Blessed art thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes. With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth. I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches. I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word." (verses 9-16)

BETH: The Way Of Cleansing

And he comes to verse 9 then, as we go to BETH, then the next eight verses begin with BETH (in the Hebrew alphabet), now he starts to talk about the way of cleansing. Well what's the way of cleansing? Here's the way of blessing, *'I don't measure up to it, I need you to direct my heart, I'm not inclined to do that on my own, LORD how do I move forward?'* **Verse 9, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word."** So we assume the writer is a man, here he says *'young man'*, it's interesting, by the time you get to the end of the Psalm he sounds like an old man. This may have taken a long time to write, we don't know. It almost takes you through all the stages of life and all the difficulties, all the betrayals, all the things that come to us, and he has all of those circumstances in context of the Word of God and of the God of the Word. **"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse himself? by taking heed thereto according to thy word."** Because he says *'If you would incline yourself to me, if you would lead me, how can that happen?'* there's a question mark. The answer comes, and I'll read to the end of this section, **"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse himself? by taking heed thereto according to thy word."**

With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. Blessed art thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes. With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth. I have rejoiced in thy testimonies, as much as in all riches. I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.” (verses 9-16) So, he tells us here that we have to 1) heed the Word of God, 2) we have to hide [store] the Word of God, 3) we have to herald the Word of God, 4) we have to honour the Word of God. [5) and we have to remember the Word of God.] What is the way of cleansing, he sees this dilemma in the first set, and he starts to tell us, **“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse himself?” by taking heed thereto according to thy word.** The Word of God, we know, is alive and powerful, it’s sharper than any two-edged sword, it divides down into our being, all the way down, bone-marrow, all the way down to the soul and the spirit. It divides what’s soulish and what’s spiritual, what’s carnal, and what’s spiritual. It divides, it’s alive, and it’s powerful. And you can’t escape it. As God’s children you can’t escape it, neither should we be able to, because it’s the Word of God. It’s a remarkable thing, our God speaks, he speaks, he hasn’t left us in this world. It would be terrible if we just lived out our faith by impressions, *‘I think the Lord told me this, I think the Lord told me to do that.’* You know, sometimes I get Christians that do that to me. I’ll say *‘Why’d you do that?’* and he’ll say *‘Well the Lord told me to do that,’* or *‘The Lord told me, the Lord told me,’* and I’ll think *‘You don’t even need a Bible, you got a direct line it seems,’* but the problem is, and the Lord does speak to us. But any subjective experience we have, and the Lord does speak to me, rarely that he does sometimes, and I know it, but it will never disagree with the Word of God, the written Word of God is a final analysis where there is something that we’re saying God is saying to us, whether he’s saying it or not, because the same Holy Spirit that wrote the Book will never contradict it when he speaks to us. You’re never going to have a separate rule from the Book. We’re all safe that way, we’re all safe that way.

How Can A Young Man, A Young Woman, Cleanse Their Way?

“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?” you’re struggling with lust? struggling with pornography, struggling with anger, struggling with bitterness, whatever unclean thing there can be in us, what do we do with that? We take heed to the Word of God, we take heed. Well is it that simple? Why do you ask me, I didn’t write it. You know, you get on your knees, say *‘Lord, I’m struggling with this, I’m struggling with pornography, I’m unclean, how can I cleanse my way?’* Ask him, is it that simple? The Psalmist lifts his head and says *‘Lord, this is the man you’re*

going to bless, this is the man who always gives his heart, is blameless, I'm not that man, O Lord I wish you would do this, how can I cleanse my way?!?' And he answers, **'By taking heed unto thy Word, O LORD.'** It cleanses us. Jesus says in **John 17:17, "Father sanctify them through thy truth, thy Word is truth."** It doesn't say *'Thy Word is true,'* it's even bigger than that, **'thy Word is truth, itself.'** So, you know, all of us, the more time we spend in the Word, the healthier we are spiritually. If you want to feed your physical flesh, you take care of that. You know, it's not like, *'You know I should get up early in the morning, but I lay there, but then on the way to work I listen to Christian radio, I have a little bread box on the table [meaning his Bible].'* You don't do that with physical food, *'Well if the Lord wants to feed me the refrigerator will open and the ham and cheese will float out all by itself and come to the table.'* You're proactive when it comes to feeding yourself. You have to be proactive when it comes to feeding yourself spiritually, this [holding up his Bible] is the only food we have. So, he says, **'Take heed to my Word, take heed to it, it's cleansing, it'll change you.'** **Spend time in the Word of God EVERY DAY.** Whatever struggles you have, and I have them, they will change as time goes on, **because God's Word never returns void.** It's a dynamic in and of itself, it doesn't need human energy or help on the horizontal, because it has all the power it needs on the vertical. And the Church [greater Body of Christ] has lost tract of it in so many ways. By taking heed unto thy Word, you know, it's interesting, Don McLure, years ago, I remember some of the things he says, he was talking about young men struggling with sexual desire, and he said, *"You know, when I was a kid,"* he said, *"I loved to get flies, and pick their wings off,"* he said, *"I didn't like flies anyhow"* it's because we're born sinners, it's why we like doing stuff like that to flies, and he said, *"I loved to watch them just flipping around trying to fly when I pulled their wings off, I just got some sick enjoyment out of it."* But he said, *"You grow up, become a young man, you get 13, 14, 16, my hormones come to life,"* and he said, *"I'm finding myself a young Christian man, and I have this fire burning in me, this sexual desire, and I read God's Word, God says to me 'Don't you do that, don't you use that until you get married, I gave it to you, but don't you use it.'* And he said, *"I thought to myself, and I thought I was cruel pulling the wings off of a fly."*]loud laughter] [i.e. having these hormones from age 13 onward and being told by God not to use them until you're married is more cruel than pulling the wings off flies, the way this pastor humorously looks at it.] Yes, it's one of the strongest desires we have, and God said **'Don't you use it until it's in the right context.'** And he said, *"But you know, as I began to mature the Lord said to me, 'If you can conquer that one thing, there will be a thousand other things in your life you'll have victory over, if you will conquer that one thing you'll have victory in a thousand areas of your life.'* And look, you look at Adam and Eve, when they fell, the

first thing they were aware of was they were naked. You look at the media, you look at the entertainment industry, you look at television, you look at the major thing they play on constantly is sexuality, because it is such a strong force in human nature. How do we do what's right, how do we survive in the middle of all of that? Well first of all, you'll probably want to get rid of HBO and different things, just kind of get some safeguards for your computer, do the smart things, do the stuff. That removes the temptation, but it doesn't remove the fallen nature. There's still a struggle within. The Psalmist when he wrote this, he didn't have the whole Bible, he didn't have the New Testament. You and I have the Holy Spirit, and we have the Word of God complete, wonderfully. And by the way, this is not just an endemic problem to men in the United States. One out of three pornography users is a woman, in the United States. ***'Wherewithal shall a young lady cleanse her way? By taking heed unto thy Word, O LORD.'***

How Do We Cleanse Our Ways? We Store God's Word (the Bible) In Our Hearts

Look, ***"With my whole heart have I sought thee:"*** then the pleading, ***"O let me not wander from thy commandments."*** (verse 10) ***'LORD, my tendency is to wander, LORD, I've sought with my heart,'*** he's speaking of dependence here, ***'I am dependent on you, I've sought you, so LORD, don't let me wander from your commandments.'*** Look, ***"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."*** (verse 11) so, with the Word of God you take heed, verse 11, with the Word of God you hide it. ***"Thy word have I hid in mine heart,"*** by the way the Hebrew word "hid" doesn't mean you put it someplace where you can't find it when you need it. It's literally ***"thy word have I stored"*** to store something up. ***"Thy word have a stored in my heart, that I might not sin against thee."*** (verse 11) ***'Your Word, LORD, is stored in my heart,'*** not my brain, not my theological IQ, not *'I can argue with anybody about Calvinism.'* I don't want to hear how smart you are theologically if you're not walking with Jesus Christ. I don't want to hear how much you know about the Bible in Greek and Hebrew if you're not walking with the LORD. That's the most profound theology. You have to understand, when this was written in Psalm 119, it wasn't written in Hebrew. Now don't get me wrong, it was written in Hebrew. But to the Hebrews it wasn't in Hebrew, to the Hebrews it was their common nomenclature, it would be like the Bible written in English for you and I. When the Greek New Testament was written in Greek, it wasn't Greek to the Greeks, it was only Greek to you. Hebrew is Hebrew to me and Greek is Greek to me, but English is not, English is my common tongue. I still massacre it, I understand that, but I'm working on it. So this was written in the common language, this was written, you

didn't have to study and get a lexicon and do that with English. This is given to a young man [or young woman] to hear and to heed, **'by taking heed to thy Word O LORD.'** **"Thy word have I hid in my heart," 'not my brain, my heart, LORD, it's got to the deepest place of my being where there's healing, but I've done that so that I might not sin against thee.'** Look, Jesus again, when he walked among us, he's our example. Satan comes to him in the temptation (in Matthew 4:1-11) in the wilderness, Jesus, what does he do? Again, he could have just gone, *'You're done, devil, you're smoke, BLAM!'* that would have been the end of him. But again, he answers him on our behalf. But again, look, I just love this about that scene, it happened before he called any of the disciples, they weren't with him. The only one in the wilderness was the Holy Spirit, Jesus and the devil. Which means, as we find the record in Matthew and Luke, that some time after that, Jesus was sitting with the guys by the campfire or something, and somebody says something about the devil, and he said *'Well let me tell you what happened before I called any of you guys.'* He related the story to them, and he said **'This is how he tempted me, I'd fasted for forty days, I was hungry, and he [Satan] knew it, and he said 'Well since you're the Son of God, turn these stones into bread.'** and he said to the disciples and to you and I, **'Guys, I didn't answer him as the Son of God, I answered him on your behalf [as an ordinary man], and this is how you can defeat him. I said [to Satan], 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' I said to the devil, I don't have to be Deity to beat you, I just have to be filled with the Holy Spirit and submitted to the Word of God.'** (taken from **Matthew 4:1-11**) Because he'd been filled with the Spirit, driven into the wilderness to be tempted, he as fully human and fully God, but he said **'I answered on your behalf,'** he says. If Satan comes and tempts you, you may say *'The devil made you do it.'* The devil didn't make you do it, you wanted to do it. **"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God."** And you look at the answers of the Lord there, he answered Satan three time out of the Word of God. **"Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."** (verse 11) **"Blessed art thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes."** (verse 12) Look, there's a great dependence on the vertical on every verse here, this is not just a theological or intellectual exercise, not in reality. **"Blessed art thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes. With my own lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth."** (verses 12-13) the things you said, LORD, I've repeated, I'm not ashamed of the Word of God.

God's Word, The Bible, Is Priceless, Worth More Than Gold Or Silver

“With my own lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth. I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches.” (verses 13-14) Listen to what it’s saying there, **‘I rejoice in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches...LORD, your Word is priceless to me, it’s proven.’** And we may get there, watching the economy the way it’s going. If you haven’t noticed it’s this way, I don’t know how long that will take. The stock market, if you don’t know, is hollow, and can disappear any day. And we need to pray, Paul tells us that, 1st Timothy. But the Word of God is not going like this, losing value, if you’ve noticed in your study. The Word of God is getting more valuable, the Word of God is appreciating, as the world is falling apart, the Word of God is worth more. You know, and the older you get the more it’s worth, because you’re getting closer, and when you can see back further than you can see ahead it’s worth more than it’s ever been. And it becomes worth more and more and more. But there’s a light at the end of the tunnel, there may be war [World War III], there’s terrible things coming, the world’s going to go through changes, and Jesus said **‘When you see all these things coming, these are the beginning of sorrows, but let not your heart be troubled.’ (Matthew 24:6,8)** He said that. I’m thinking, *‘Lord, you’ve gotta be kidding me, these are the very kind of things that trouble me.’* And I’m a news-aholic, worse than that [I used to be]. **“Let not your heart be troubled.” (Matthew 24:6)** We have something that’s increasing in value, as everything in this world’s that’s wealthy that’s worth anything is decreasing, his Word, you know, is increasing in value.

“I Have Respect Unto Thy Ways.” ‘I’m Honoring Your Word, I Will Not Forget Your Word’

It says **“I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches. I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways.” (verses 14-15)** You know, I’m honoring your Word, LORD, I’m not hearing these things just to procrastinate, I don’t hear the Word of God and just turn away from it, I rejoice in it, I meditate in it, I respect it. And he says, **“I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.” (verse 16)** Future, I’m going to continue in this direction, **‘I’ll delight myself in thy statutes, I will not forget thy Word.’** And I believe, by the way...I have seen too many Christians, sometimes you wonder how they’re doing, you wonder what’s going on in their lives, you see their struggles, and then you see them in the midst of crisis, horrible horrendous circumstances, you see them with their Bible open, they want to come and talk about spiritual things, *‘Tell me what that verse says again.’* I’ve been with a lot of people in hospice, breathing their last set of breaths, not knowing whether it’s going to be ten more, twenty more, another hour, another day, and I can’t tell you

how many have said to me “*Read that chapter from Revelation again, tell me what the City looks like. What’s it going to be like? Would you read that chapter to me again?*” **“I will not forget your Word.”** And we won’t, because I guarantee you, as we get to the point where everything else fades away, and everything else fails—am I depressing you tonight? But, you know, we get to the point in our lives, where we’re there alone, if the Lord tarries, your spouse can’t be in that spot with you, your kids may gather around the bed, but they can’t be there with you. There is a place, and it’s where the rubber meets the road, and all of our faith, when we start to breathe our last breaths, and we sink into ourselves, and it’s only us and Jesus and his Word, and it’s in that place where we say “*I am saved. You so loved me that you gave your only begotten Son.*” It’s funny how many verses will come back at that point in time, “*You promised that you prepared a place for me, that my heart shouldn’t be troubled, if you’ve gone and prepared a place for me, you’ll come again and receive me to yourself, that where you are I’m there also, Lord I know you’re coming to receive me.*”

“Christian Perfection Is Not Perfection Of Performance, But Perfection Of Relationship” It’s All About God’s Grace

And think how stressful it would be if we only had these first three verses, it’s the way of blessing to be perfect before him, **‘Blessed are they that keep his testimonies and that seek him with their whole heart, their heart is never defiled, they also do no iniquity, they walk in his ways,’** he [the Psalmist] turns to the LORD, **‘You’ve commanded us to keep your precepts diligently, that my ways...’** and now for 172 verses he asks God for help, again, finally coming to the very last verse, saying, **“I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments.” (Psalm 119:176)** You know, that’s why Paul says this, when he’s writing to Timothy, he says, **“You’ve learned the Word of God from your mother and your grandmother,”** and he said, **‘which is able to make thee wise unto salvation.’** And all that Timothy had was an Old Testament, **“which is able to make thee wise unto salvation.”** And we’re doing a thing on parenting on Sunday, one of the reasons that fathers should be teaching their kids the Word, is the more they know it, and the more evident it becomes, the more they’re convicted that it’s right, the more they’re aware of what fails within them, they’re more aware of what needs to change within them as they grow. That’s why, you know, you have kids, and they all get saved around 4 or 5 years old. And they all get saved again around 16 or 17. You know, I think my son Mike got saved at 4, and then we were watching one of those movies, they were kind of black and white, just about the distant thunder and all those things, and there was one scene where there was a guillotine behind the church, and the

antichrist had taken power and they were taking people behind the church and chopping their heads off, and he was 6 then, and he said “I’m saved, right?” I said “Yah” so he said “Let’s make sure.” So we did it again. But then it comes, 15, 16 and they start to make it their own and they start to understand ‘Yah, there is grace. Yes, Lord, I am aware of what I am, make me wise unto salvation. And I understand I have to be dependent on you, I understand now the worth of the blood of Christ, I understand now what grace is, I understand why I’m secure, because I could never be secure on my own,’ [wow, I would never have shown a 6-year-old a movie like that, not even a 10-year-old] **Oswald Chambers said_ “Christian perfection is not perfection of performance, but perfection of relationship.”** It is not perfection of performance. A lot of Christians are stuck in a legalistic way. Perfection is not perfection of performance, it’s perfection of relationship, ‘O Lord, I blew it again, O Lord, I know you love me, O Lord will you forgive me, I confess my sins,’ it’s perfection of relationship, look, I am not perfect, but I am secure in my relationship with Jesus Christ. Obviously, I’m not doing anything that would disqualify me from ministry, but if you ask my wife, I’m not quite perfect yet. But I am completely free, I have no hesitation to go to the Lord in repentance and confession, fellowshiping with him, when I rediscover the same weaknesses, the things he’s working on in my life, I rejoice to go to him. Condemnation is from the devil [and the feeling of condemnation], conviction is from the Holy Spirit. This song, this longest song, this longest chapter in the Bible, just starts by saying, **‘This is what perfection is, you want to know the way of blessing,’** and then 172 verses later he’s saying **‘I’m not that way, LORD! But I trust your Word, teach me, lead me, guide me.’** Dependence is all vertical, it isn’t just an intellectual exercise or theological exercise on the horizontal, it’s the Word of God, it comes down from above like the rain, like the snow, it’s alive and it’s powerful. And this Psalm, in a wonderful way, 176 verses, tells us about the Word of God. But in all 176 verses it tells us about the God of the Word.

In Closing

So let’s do this, we have time for two or three songs, we’ll have Rob come. And I want to do this, this would be a great time, you know what, **‘Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way, or a young woman?’** If you’re struggling with something this evening, I encourage you as we worship, to just say ‘Lord, I need to take heed to this, don’t let me slip from your testimonies, keep me Lord, so I don’t wander.’ That’s what the Psalmist is saying, ‘Don’t let me wander, don’t let me fail at these things. O that my heart was inclined, Lord, you need to do that in me, because in the natural my heart is inclined to all kinds of nonsense, in the natural. I need this tonight Lord to be in the supernatural. Would you

incline me to heavenly things? Would you give me an ability to set my affection on things above and not things of the earth, because that's not natural to me, Lord, it's supernatural to me. I love your Word, like the Psalmist is saying, I know it's alive, I know it's powerful, it's a lamp unto my feet, it's a light unto my path, Lord, your statutes are the songs of my Pilgrimage, I sing your Word, and here I am this evening, I listen to these things, and I find myself right in these verses, I find myself here Lord, without shame I run to you Lord, tonight. Would you touch me, would you fill me with your Spirit? Would you take the nonsense out of my life? Would you let my heart be filled with your Word, not just my brain, would you receive me Lord, just a fresh consecration, a fresh commitment tonight Lord? I don't have the strength to do it [alone], so would you keep me as I do that? Would you honor it?' We can do that, right? We can admit what we're not, and we can admit what we can only be with him. His mercies are new every morning, I assume they're new every evening. And we can say 'Lord, let this be a fresh start.' I encourage you, read ahead. You don't have to read the whole Psalm, read the next 16 or 30 verses, just kind of read ahead, we're going to take our time to go through this. But let's stand, let's pray, I'll lead, and again, as we sing these next three songs, if it's on your heart, and you want to turn to the person next to you and just say 'Do me a favor, would you just pray for me,' maybe it's somebody who knows what you're going through, and say, 'That's me tonight, would you pray for me?' Or maybe you feel 'I'm so sick of this in my life that needs to change.' ...[Lord] you have to do that, you have to change me Lord. And the longest chapter in the Bible says that's the business that you're [you Lord] in, so here I am, Lord, I'm a customer, here I am, I need your service.'...[transcript of a connective expository sermon on Psalm 119:1-16, given by Pastor Joe Focht, Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia, 13500 Philmont Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19116]

[Dedicated to JAK, a wonderful 10-year-old boy whose biggest desire is to own his own Bible.]