

Series: Word of God

Text: Psalm 119

Message #8 (Final)

IT IS A TREASURED WORD!

Introduction

1. Over the past seven weeks, I have been trying to communicate the incredible significance of this book we call the Bible. It is the revelation of God to us. It is God speaking! Searching through the entire Bible, there is not another passage that is so rich and descriptive concerning the significance of the Scripture as is Psalm 119. This psalm is unique in that it is the longest psalm and in fact the longest chapter in the Bible. The style is acrostic, made up of 22 "eights" (22 sections in eight verse stanzas, each stanza beginning with the same Hebrew letter).
2. The message of the Psalm is quite evident. The Psalmist is saying that the Bible, the law, God's testimony, way, precept, statute, commandment, judgment, word, etc., **is enough**. Everything the psalmist needed was ultimately found in God's Word. Reference to God's Word is made in at least 171 of the 176 verses. (See verses 84, 90, 121, 122, 132).
3. Commentator Delitzsch says in the heading for Psalm 119, that this psalm is, "The Christian's golden ABC of the praise, love, power, and use of the word of God; for here we have set forth in inexhaustible fullness what the word of God is to a man, and how a man is to behave himself in relation to it." Another commentary on the Psalms written in 1875 states, "No part of Scripture is more deeply imprinted upon memory, especially of the young, than portions of it; nor is any Scripture more suggestive of edifying trains of thought; nor is any other Scripture of the Old Testament more saturated, so to say, with a spirit ... of humility, trust, devoted love to God, and realization of His near Presence, than this psalm: which is the epitome of all true religion, and must be studied by any one who wishes to fathom the meaning of the law."
4. Today's consideration will of necessity be a very brief look at the Psalm. Charles Spurgeon in the *Treasury of David* devoted 349 pages to Psalm 119. James Boice devoted about 100 pages of commentary to this psalm. George Zemek (a former professor of mine) wrote a 400-page book on Psalm 119, called, *The Word of God in the Child of God*. We have plenty of material, just not too much time. (Here is an example

of Boice's outline: Verses 1-8 First things first; 9-16 Starting young; 17-28 Trials on the way; 33-40 In God's school; 41-64 Finding God in His Word; 65-88 Affliction; 89-96 The eternal Word; 97-104 Loving God's Word; 105-112 The clarity of God's Word; 113-128 Walking by God's Word; 129-144 God's wonderful words; 145-152 Using God's Word in prayer; 153-168 Obeying while waiting; and finally, verses 169-176 This poor sheep). Any of those sections would be a worthy study for our worship together.

5. Here is what I wish to do today with this psalm. First we will consider some general perspectives on the Bible that are present in Psalm 119. Then we will actually look together in some depth at one of the stanzas. I am picking verses 9-16. Perhaps another time we will look at other sections. Let's get started.

I. GENERAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE WORD FROM PSALM 119

A. What the Bible is ... That which follows is a sampling of 8 descriptions

1. It is water for cleansing (9). We will note that especially in vv. 9-16.
2. It is treasure for valuing (14, 72, 127, 162). "The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces."
3. It is a friend for comforting (24) "Your testimonies are my delight; they are my counselors."
4. It is a song for singing (54) (Imagine making a song out of a law, but remember that this is the law of the Lord in which we are to delight. And we sing about those things in which we take great pleasure). "Your statutes have been my songs in the house of my sojourning."
5. It is honey for satisfying (103) "How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"
6. It is a lamp for illumination (105, 130) "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path...The unfolding of your words gives light. It imparts understanding to the simple."
7. It is great spoil for the taking (162) "I will rejoice in your word like one who finds great spoil."
8. It is a heritage for inheriting (111) "Your testimonies are my heritage forever, for they are the joy of my heart."

B. What the Bible does ... 8 results

1. It brings blessing (1-2) “Blessed are those who keep his testimonies...”
2. It gives life (25, 37, 40, 50, 88, 93) “Behold I long for your precepts; in your righteousness give me life.”
3. It provides strength (28) “My soul melts away for sorrow; strengthen me according to your word!”
4. It gives liberty (45) “And I shall walk in a wide place, for I have sought your testimonies.”
5. It imparts wisdom (66, 97-104) “Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies ... than all my teachers ... more than the aged ...”
6. It creates friends (63) “I am a companion of all who fear you...”
7. It provides comfort (76, 92, 50, 82) “This is my comfort in my affliction, that your promise gives me life.”
8. It gives direction (133) “Keep steady my steps according to your promise...”

C. What we must do with the Bible ... 8 responses

1. Love it (97, 159) “O how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day.”
2. Prize it (72, 128) “The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces.”
3. Study it (7, 12, 18, 26-27) “Make me understand the way of your precepts, and I will meditate on your wondrous works.”
4. Memorize it (11) “I have stored up your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.”
5. Meditate on it (15, 23, 48, 78, 97, 99, 148) “I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways.”
6. Trust it (42) “for I trust in your word.”
7. Obey it (1-8) “I will keep your statutes; do not utterly forsake me!”
8. Declare it (13, 26) “With my lips I declare all the rules of your mouth.”

II. SPECIFIC CONSIDERATION OF THE WORD FROM PSALM 119 (The Psalmist deals with personal sanctification. He tells us what crucial ingredients are necessary. Remember that this Psalm is an acrostic. Each verse in this section begins with the

Hebrew letter, “beth.” Not only is this the second letter of the alphabet, but it also means “house” like Bethlehem = “house of bread.” In many ways this section could be described as “making our hearts a home for the Word of God”). How do we do that. Here are the ingredients...

A. The right attitude (9-11)

1. An attitude of awareness (9) – It has been said by others that the ultimate desire of life for a believer is, stated negatively, not to sin and stated positively, to glorify God by enjoying Him forever. That ultimate desire will be fulfilled when we get to heaven. For there, sin will be no more and nothing will hinder us from enjoying the presence of God for eternity! But what about now? The chief end of man **here and now** is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. The psalmist suggests how that might, at least in part, be possible now. How can a young man keep his way pure? He can do so by guarding his life according to the Word. The psalmist was aware that there is a connection between glorifying God and keeping from sin and being guarded by the Word. It is so important to learn this lesson and the younger we learn it, the better!
2. An attitude of acknowledgement – This attitude or understanding is further defined in verse 10 with the recognition of both desire and weakness. There should be the desire by the believer to seek the Lord with the whole heart, though, at the same time, thoroughly aware of the propensity to wander from the commandments of the Lord. So how is it that I can increase my capacity to seek the Lord with a whole heart and decrease my desire to wander from the commandments of the Lord? The psalmist expresses ...
3. An attitude of accretion. We ought to be accruing – gathering, storing up God’s Word in our hearts! I know that is not easy, especially the older we get, but remember what it is that we are making an effort to memorize. It is not an advertising jingle or the lyrics to a popular song – it’s the Word of God! Suppose I said that for every verse you memorize, I will give you \$1000. I would guess that several of you who believe you cannot memorize or that you don’t have time to memorize would suddenly have a number of verses committed to memory. I read in another Psalm (19), that the word is to be desired more than gold, even much fine gold! Further, there is a clear

connection between what I know from Scripture and how I live for God's glory. What the Psalmist is telling us is that there are two things that keep us from sinning. One is that we store-up the word in our hearts and the other is that we value the Word as a superior treasure. Like an ant that stores food for winter, we store up the Word for it will be needed during some winter months in our souls. It is not merely a discipline in itself, though it is that. It will be needed before the day is done to aid us in our escape of a sinful attitude or action and in our quest toward living a life to the glory of God.

We need the right attitude!

B. The right source (12)

1. The character of the source. The Psalmist recognizes that he is indebted to God. His whole life is in the hands of his creator and there can be no better expression for his confidence in God and his gratitude to God than by declaring this blessing upon the Lord who alone deserves all glory and praise!
2. The capability of the source – Rather than complete the sentence with the reasons for such blessing, the psalmist chooses to passionately cry out his request, “Teach me your statutes!” Here in the presence of the source of all wisdom and knowledge is the declaration of utter dependence upon the only true source of certain help! The psalmist is not so naïve as to assume that having asked the Lord to teach him that he needs to do nothing but quietly sit and wait. Rather there is some effort that is called for.

C. The right effort (13-16)- The right effort is demonstrated in

1. Our oral testimony (13) – When the heart is full of the stored word of God, the mouth will speak out of that treasure not only in private but also in public! We will find ourselves declaring the law of God to others. It will become as natural as speaking of the weather or discussing the latest Cub loss. How good would it be to be able to speak the wisdom and knowledge of God! “With my lips I declare all the rules of your mouth.”
2. Our priorities (14) – So much of our failure in life is due to misplaced priorities. We squander time and resources and energy on that which has little value. I recently moved. We threw away several things before we moved and are throwing away a

bunch more now that we moved. Things we “just could not live without” a few months ago were stacked in the alley waiting for trash collection day. God always places a priority of spiritual treasure over material wealth. That has already been introduced in verse 11. The psalmist finds true delight in obedience to the law of God. What is the source of our delight? Is it found in God and His Word?

3. Our diligent study (15) Spurgeon wrote, “He who has an inward delight in anything will not long withdraw his mind from it. As the miser often returns to look upon his treasure, so does the devout believer by frequent meditation turn over the priceless wealth which he has discovered in the book of the Lord. To some men meditation is a task. To the man of cleansed way it is a joy.” Eastern mysticism has robbed us of the concept of meditation. Biblical meditation is the careful contemplation of the Word of God – reading it, thinking about it, studying it, examining it from every angle, committing it to memory, all the while asking God to grant insight into our understanding of it. Upon what do we fix our eyes? May it be on His Word!
4. Our unwavering resolution (16) “I will delight in your statutes. I will not forget your word.” Paraphrasing Spurgeon, “the mind will run upon that which the heart delights – and the heart is where the treasure is.” With my heart full of the Word of God treasured, and my mind fixed and focused on that wealth of God’s revelation, I will find growing delight in the Lord revealed and thus will not soon forget what is so precious and dear to me!

Conclusion

1. There you have it. This is a wonderful book that makes known to us the greatest message we could ever know, the message of who God is and what He has done that we might know Him and that we might be with Him.
2. Do you understand why the Psalmist so treasured the word? Do we delight in the law of the Lord? Do we treasure the Word so much that we fill our minds and hearts with God’s revelation? If not, why not?