

PSALMS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Psalm 118 as we continue our study through the Word of God. Keep in mind that Psalm 118 is the last Psalm of the Hallel Psalms, which cover Psalms 113 through 118 and they are Psalms of praise, of thanksgiving unto God! What is interesting about this Psalm is that during the night of the Last Supper, on the evening before Jesus was crucified for our sins, He shared the Passover meal with His disciples. And after the meal we are told in Mark 14:26, “**And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.**” I believe it is this Psalm that they sung before they went to the Mount of Olives, the place where Jesus was arrested. So let’s see what we can glean from this Psalm, all that the Lord has for us as we begin reading in verse 1 of Psalm 118 this evening!

PSALM 118

VERSES 1-4

1. This Psalm opens up with shouts of thanksgiving unto the Lord for His great mercy that He gives to us. Mercy deals with not getting what we deserve and the Lord is so merciful to all of us. In fact, the Psalmist says that, “**... His mercy endures forever.**” It is like Jeremiah said in Lamentations 3:21-23, “**This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. Through the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.**”

That tells me we can have confidence in what God has promised us and it gives us hope that as much as I may blow it, His mercy will endure. His mercy is inexhaustible, we can't use it up, we can't even put a dent into it! So can we say as a body of believers, "Let Calvary Chapel of Manitowoc say, 'His mercy endures forever.'" Can we as individuals say, "Let Joe or Linda or Steve, you can put your name in there, and say, 'His mercy endures forever.'" Don't forget that fact. As a body of believers, as individual believers, when we blow it, when we sin, He will forgive us. We are told in I John 1:9, **"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."** His mercy is new every morning, and I am so thankful for that, aren't you?

VERSES 5-9

1. Notice that the Psalmist is calling upon the Lord, when? He is calling upon the Lord when he is in distress, when things are falling apart around him, when the situation is hopeless. How does that help the situation? Because it changes our focus, it changes how we look at the situation we are in. As we look at the situation and become overwhelmed by it, we are walking by sight and it does not look good. But, if we look upward, if we focus on the Lord, the situation may not change but our focus has and we are now walking by faith, standing on the promises of God!

The conclusion then is this, “**What can man do to me?**” Now before we become smug with our answer, if you are not experiencing distress in your life right now, it is easy to say, “**What can man do to me?**” The bottom line is that man can cause us great harm, great pain, great suffering. That is just the reality in this sin-filled world. Then how can I have hope, how can I find rest? Look to the Lord!

You see, you need to have a proper perspective of the situation. Listen to the words of Jesus in Matthew 10:28, “**And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.**” In understanding where we are at in Christ, then nothing should move us from the course that God has for us. Even in death the enemy does not win! Paul, in II Corinthians 4:17-18 puts things into perspective for us as he tells us these things we face are nothing more than a, “**. . . light affliction, which is but for a moment, [and it] is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.**”

Think about the rest we can find as we cast our cares at His feet, that weight that has been taken off our shoulders. There truly is a freedom in letting go and letting God have control of our lives. We are in His hands and we can rest in that. And truly, if God is for us, then what can man really do to us? Nothing that is outside of His control!

2. What happens many times when we are in these distressing situations is we look to man to deliver us. And think about that one, has it really helped you? You may get temporary help, but not the lasting help, not the rest and comfort that you will find in the Lord as you go through these storms of life! Just because something works does not mean it is of the Lord. You need to obey His Word; you need to put your confidence in Him and what He will do rather than what man will do. You need to be still and know that He is God and His mercy endures forever! Not an easy thing to do but it is the best thing we can do. As the Psalmist said, **“It is better to trust in the Lord Than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord Than to put confidence in princes.”** Psalm 118:8-9. May we not forget that!

VERSES 10-14

1. Whatever the Psalmist was going through, it was truly a time of great distress. The enemy tried to destroy him, make him fall, make him fail and during this time of tremendous pressure, what did the Psalmist do? He got out the latest self-help book and started thinking positive thoughts! No, he didn't do that. When the enemy pushed, the Psalmist looked to the Lord and we are told that, **“... But the Lord helped me. The Lord is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation.”** Psalm 118:13-14.

May we learn to look to Him to be the strength of our lives instead of looking to ourselves or man to deliver us! Our salvation, our deliverance comes only from Him and not from man! Paul put it like this in II Timothy 4:17-18, **“But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!”**

Paul was in prison waiting to be put to death by Nero for his faith in Christ. And many had distanced themselves from Paul because of this intense persecution. And yes it was hard to be alone and yet Paul realized he was never really alone, the Lord was with him. That is a great perspective to have. He saw how the Lord delivered him from dangerous situations before and even in death the Lord would deliver him. You see, with that perspective, you can't lose! Stand still and see the salvation that He will bring to the situations you are facing in life and praise Him for His great mercy and love that He has given to you! Our victory is in Him!

VERSES 15-18

1. Notice what happens as you focus on the Lord, as you are resting in Him, praise will fill your life, praise will fill your home! If that is lacking in your life right now, I would encourage you to look up, to focus on the Lord, to cast your cares at His feet and as you do, as you walk by faith and not by sight, praise will come forth! You can't help but praise the One who has delivered you from your distress and as you praise the Lord others will see the joy you have and wonder why? You can tell them, it is because of Jesus!

2. The Psalmist also speaks of chastening here and how this chastening was not to death, not for destruction, but for restoration! He is trying to restore lives not destroy them, that is what Satan does! And God will only chasten us to the degree in which we will respond and get right. That is how much He loves us, that is how much He cares for us! Never forget that no matter what you are going through and learn the lesson, return to Him!

VERSES 19-21

1. What are these gates of righteousness? What is this gate of the Lord in which the righteous enter through? Jesus said in John 10:9, "**I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.**" The door to enter into His presence, the presence of God is Jesus Christ, He is the only way!

Now some may feel I am being very narrow minded, and I am. He is the only way, not because I have said it but Jesus did! In John 14:6 Jesus said, “**... ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’**” He alone is the way! How can I be sure of that? Because He alone is the truth, He speaks the truth and we can trust in Him! What do I receive if I do come to Jesus? You receive that abundant life, that everlasting life that is only found in Him! What do I receive if I don’t accept Christ as my Lord and Savior? You will be eternally separated from Him because it is only through Him that we can stand before God the Father, we can only enter into His presence through Jesus!

But the Bible says that our righteousness is like filthy rags, so how can we enter in? Paul, in II Corinthians 5:21 tells us, “**For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**” You see, our righteousness, which is like filthy rags has been replaced with the righteousness of Christ which is perfect and the only righteousness God will accept! Thus, may we be able to say as the Psalmist did, “**I will praise You, For You have answered me, And have become my salvation.**” Psalm 118:21. The gates of righteousness have been opened up to us by Jesus Christ and we can enter through Him!

VERSES 22-24

1. Jesus, in speaking to the Jewish religious leaders tells us in Matthew 21:42-45, **“... ‘Have you never read in the Scriptures: “The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord’s doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes”? Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.’ Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them.”**

We see this again in Acts 4:11-12 as Peter tells us, **“This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.’ Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”**

And in I Peter 2:6-8 Peter tells us again, **“Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, ‘Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.’ Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, ‘The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone,’ and ‘A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense.’ They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.”**

Jesus Christ was the stone that the builders rejected, the Jewish religious leaders, and the nation as a whole turned from their Messiah. Thus, this gift that was given to the Jews to be a witness to the world of God has been given to the Gentiles and it is Christ that has united Judaism and Christianity, for those who have come to Him by faith!

2. Today it is very sad to see many Christian denominations turning from the Messiah, moving away from His Word and seeing many roads that lead to life. They negate that He alone is that foundation stone, there is no other and thus, there is salvation in no other. May we understand that and share that truth with others! He is that precious corner stone and apart from Him; we will be crushed, ground to a powder. But, if we do come to Him, if we do fall upon Him we will be broken of our self-will and receive that abundant life that is only found in Him!

3. Now in verse 24 what is the day that the Psalmist is speaking of? I believe that this day that the Father has ordained speaks of the cross where our sins were placed upon Jesus and His righteousness was imputed into our lives by faith! And our response to this day that the Lord has made is that we rejoice. He gave His life so that we may live. May we, **“... rejoice and by glad in it.”**

VERSES 25-27

1. This is what the crowds were singing as Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem as Messiah, the King. In doing so He fulfilled to the day the prophecy spoken of by Daniel the prophet in Daniel chapter 9, verse 25. And their cries on this day were ***“HOSANNA - SAVE NOW!”***

2. The Psalmist speaks of God giving us light and the Scriptures tell us that Jesus is the light of this world. When God became flesh and dwelt among us He pierced the darkness that this world was in! Then the Psalmist speaks of binding the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar, what is that about?

He is speaking of the altar of sacrifice. The altar of sacrifice was basically a huge barbecue pit that had 4 horns, one on each corner. This was used to tie up the animals that were to be used in the sacrifice so they would not walk away. Jesus was bound to the cross of Calvary for our sins, to pay the debt that was due for them and that is how our Lord “Saves now!” It is through His sacrifice. And please understand that it was not the nails that held Him to that cross, bound Him to that cross, it was His love for us that held Him there!

But I think there is even more because Jesus also says that we are a light in this dark world and we are to shine for Jesus. Not only that, but Paul, in speaking of our Christian life, said in Romans 12:1, **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.”**

In other words, we are to give our lives freely to the Lord as a sacrifice, and we don't have cords that bind us to the altar, but love, just as our Lord had. That is the only motivation that God will accept. He will not accept our sacrifice with murmuring and complaining, but in love. You see, it is the cords of love that bind us to the altar of sacrifice!

3. Now listen how the Psalmist concludes, it is how he started out this Psalm!

VERSES 28-29

1. Notice the personal relationship that the Psalmist has with **HIS** God! How did that happen? Through the sacrifice that was made, the perfect sacrifice by Jesus for the sins of the world. That is how our sins can be cast as far as the east is from the west to be remembered no more! And thus, **“Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.”**

2. Here is a little homework for you if you want to dig into this Psalm a little more. As you read through this Psalm picture Jesus hanging on the cross of Calvary, all His enemies surrounding Him, wanting Him dead. But in that death there is life. You will then see that the gates of righteousness have been opened up for us through Him. That He alone is the way, the truth and the life and apart from Him we will never see the Father. And as the Psalm concludes look ahead to the Millennial Kingdom! An interesting Psalm that was the last Psalm sung by Jesus with His men before He went to the cross to die for our sins! He was singing about what He was going to do!

PSALM 119

As we move into Psalm 119 this evening it is the longest Psalm in the book of Psalms and it is the longest chapter in the Bible. It contains 176 verses! Now don't be nervous, we will not finish this Psalm this evening, but we will make a good dent into it.

In saying that this is the longest chapter in the Bible, and it is, what do you think the main focus is? Maybe it is the love of God? Maybe it is the grace of God? Maybe it is the faithfulness of God? Now I can go on but it is none of those things. This Psalm extols the Word of God as the Psalmist speaks of his love for the Word and the benefits of keeping the Word of God.

Nineteenth-century English literary critic and economist John Ruskin was required by his mother to memorize one of the psalms every week. He was doing pretty good until he came to this Psalm, Psalm 119. When he got to this Psalm he was upset and resented having to memorize it. Why did he feel that way, was it because it was so long?

No, it was not because it was 176 verses, not at all. The reason he resented it was because it seemed to be saying the same thing over and over again! But, when he got older he did not resent it, it was no longer dreadful to him but it was powerful to him because it showed him the power of God's Word and it stirred his mind and encouraged him to study God's Word every day!

Later on in his life John Ruskin wrote, "It is strange that of all the pieces of the Bible which my mother taught me, that which cost me the most to learn, and which was to my childish mind most repulsive - the 119th Psalm - has now become of all the most precious to me in its overflowing and glorious passion of love for the Law of God."

This Psalm was written in an Acrostic, that is, each section begins with a succeeding letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Thus, the first 8 verses begin with the Hebrew letter Aleph, the second 8 verses with the Hebrew letter Beth, and-so-on. We see all 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet used, 22 sections of 8 verses each, giving us a total of 176 verses for this Psalm.

Since this Psalm is speaking of the Word of God, we should then see it mentioned often in this Psalm and it is! A reference to the Word of God is referred to in almost every verse! The Masorites said that the Word of God is mentioned in every verse except Psalm 119:122. Other people reckon differently (with disagreement about verses 84, 90, 121, and 132). But Scripture is mentioned in at least 171 of 176 verses.

In this Psalm there are 8 basic words used to describe the Scriptures, God's written revelation to us:

- **Law** (*torah*, used 25 times in Psalm 119): "Its parent verb means 'teach' or 'direct'; therefore coming from God it means both 'law' and 'revelation.' It can be used of a single command or of a whole body of law." (Kidner)
- **Word** (*dabar*, used 24 times): The idea is of the spoken word, God's revealed word to man. "Proceeding from his mouth and revealed by him to us." (Poole)
- **Judgments** (*mispatim*, used 23 times): "From *shaphat*, to *judge*, *determine*, *regulate*, *order*, and *discern*, because they *judge* concerning our words and works; show the *rules* by which they should be *regulated*; and cause us to *discern* what is *right* and *wrong*, and *decide* accordingly." (Clarke)
- **Testimonies** (*edut/edot*, used 23 times): This word is related to the word for *witness*. To obey His **testimonies** "signifies loyalty to the terms of the covenant made between the Lord and Israel." (VanGemeren)
- **Commandments** (*miswah/miswot*, used 22 times): "This word emphasizes the straight authority of what is said . . . the right to give orders." (Kidner)

- **Statutes** (*huqqim*, used 21 times): The noun is derived from the root verb “engrave” or “inscribe”; the idea is of the written word of God and the authority of His written word. “Declaring his authority and power of giving us laws.” (Poole)
- **Precepts** (*piqqudim*, used 21 times): “This is a word drawn from the sphere of an officer or overseer, and man who is responsible to look closely into a situation and take action. . . . So the word points to the particular instructions of the Lord, as of one who cares about detail.” (Kidner)
- **Word** (*imrah*, used 19 times): Similar in meaning to *dabar*, yet a different term. “The ‘word’ may denote anything God has spoken, commanded, or promised.” (VanGemeren)

Make no mistake about it, we have lost the importance of God’s Word today but the Jewish moms knew how important the Word of God was to their children! The Jewish mothers would teach their children the Hebrew Alphabet by memorizing this Psalm. What a great way to learn the Word of God. Of this Psalm Spurgeon wrote,

This wonderful psalm, from its great length, helps us to wonder at the immensity of Scripture. From its keeping to one subject it helps us to adore the unity of Scripture; for it is but one. Yet, from the many turns it gives to the same thought, it helps you to see the variety of Scripture. . . . Some have said that in it there is an absence of variety, but that is merely the observation of those who have not studied it.

I have weighed each word, and looked at each syllable with lengthened meditation; and I bear witness that this sacred song has no tautology (a phrase or expression in which the same thing is said twice in different words.) in it, but is charmingly varied from beginning to end. Its variety is that of a kaleidoscope: from a few objects a boundless variation is produced. In the kaleidoscope you look once, and there is a strangely beautiful form. You shift the glass a very little, and another shape, equally delicate and beautiful, is before your eyes. So it is here.

- Charles Spurgeon

In the days we are living in we have many people, many teachers, many pastors and many churches that have moved away from God's Word and they teach the philosophies of this world, the doctrines of men. Paul warned the Colossian church and us regarding this issue. In Colossians 2:8-10 we are told, **“Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.”**

This is a very stern warning by Paul to the believers in Colosse to be aware, to pay attention because the world's philosophies are deceptive and they want to take you away from Christ, they will rip you off! The Greek word for **“philosophy”** is PHILOSOPHIA (fil-os-of-ee'-ah) and it comes from two Greek words; PHILEO, which means, “to love” and SOPHIA, which means, “wisdom.” So the word means the love of wisdom! Now here is the problem, you cannot find truth regarding life apart from Christ!

I know, some of you disagree with me, but hear me out. Look at the philosophies of the world over the years and how they change, how they contradict each other. Do they sometimes get it right? Yes, that is possible but why grope for answers to life's problems, to life's questions when God has the answer for you. Os Guinness puts it this way in regards to the futile effort of man and his search for the truths of life. He says,

Contemporary man, with his self-drawn picture of society as the "closed room" with No Exit, is caught metaphysically and sociologically. In the darkness of the room evidently without windows, perhaps without doors, he gropes round and round the edges. Can one hope that someone will dare to wonder whether there is any light other than the feeble sparks of his own making? Or will he stubbornly persist in treading the barren circle of poor premises?

- Os Guinness, *The Dust of Death*, p. 148

Thus, false teaching is according to the basic principles of the world, elementary knowledge like the ABC's and not according to Christ. In fact, Paul put it this way in Colossians 2:20, **"Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations."** Don't become a prisoner to the basic principles of this world because we have died to those things in Christ!

Here's the thing, if your car is broken down you don't get out your Bible but you take it to a mechanic or you get a book on auto repair. If you hurt your leg, sprained your ankle you may go to the doctor or read up on what you can do for it in a medical book. That doesn't mean we can't pray that God would fix the car or heal the ankle, but most of the time we must get it fixed. The Bible is not a book on science even though when it speaks of scientific things it is 100% correct. Now, if you have a problem with your heart and soul, what do you do? You go to a therapist, a psychologist; you get books on how to overcome and-so-on, right? Wrong!

That is what the church is doing today but it is not what we should be doing. When you have a problem with your heart and soul you bring it to Jesus, you get into the Word of God because the Word of God deals with life's issues; with our own lives, with our fellow man, and with God. The world's philosophies won't help you here, but they will hurt you! Get back to the Word of God!

We should not be surprised about people moving away from God's Word because God has warned us in the book of Amos! We are told in Amos 8:11-12, **“Behold, the days are coming,’ says the Lord GOD, ‘That I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine of bread, Nor a thirst for water, But of hearing the words of the LORD. They shall wander from sea to sea, And from north to east; They shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the LORD, But shall not find it.”**

How sad it is to see people lust after dead things, rotting meat, instead of the bread from heaven, the Word of God. And people are calling this meat, these dead things, ***“New things,”*** but it is not new, and it will not build you up, it will only cause you to become spiritually sick. The bread from heaven nourishes our soul and gives to us life.

People in America long to see revival but it won't happen until we first hunger and thirst after the Word of God and apply those things to our life. Revival begins within our own hearts and is caught by others. Here in Psalm 119 the Psalmist, which could be David, we aren't sure, extols the Word of God in almost every verse as I have said. That is how important God's Word is, at least it should be! He had such a love for God and His Word and we will see that as we go through this Psalm.

My prayer as we go through these verses is to have you fall in love with God and with the Word of God and allow it to transform your life into the men and women that God wants you to be. With that said, let's begin reading in Psalm 119, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study this Psalm that extols the Word of God!

VERSES 1-8

1. The Psalmist starts out with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, **Alef or Aleph א**. And he speaks of the blessings for those who seek the Lord wholeheartedly, and not just halfheartedly. You see, when you follow His Word, walk in His ways, you will find contentment, happiness. Those who do not follow His Word, walk in His ways, will not be content, will not be happy, but restless, always longing for something else.

Spurgeon put it like this in regards to the blessings of following the ways of God. He wrote, “Blessedness is ascribed to those who treasure up the testimonies of the Lord: in which is implied that they search the Scriptures, that they come to an understanding of them, that they love them, and then that they continue in the practice of them. We must first get a thing before we can keep it. In order to keep it well we must get a firm grip of it: we cannot keep in the heart that which we have not heartily embraced by the affections.” He nails it, you need to not only read God’s Word, meditate upon God’s Word, but you must also apply God’s Word to your life!

And so, what we see in these first 8 verses of Psalm 119 the Psalmist extol the blessings of walking according to the Word of God. Great lesson, may we walk accordingly!

VERSES 9-16

1. The second letter of the Hebrew alphabet is **Bet or Beth ב** and we see the Psalmist speak of a purity of life and how we are to meditate upon God’s Word if we want to live that way. You see, as you saturate yourself with the Word of God it will keep you clean as the Holy Spirit shows you what is right or what is wrong. And if you decide to go down the wrong path, the Holy Spirit will convict you as He quickens the Word of God in your heart. You see, the best defense against sin is a good, strong offense. Or as one writer said, “This Book will keep you from sin and sin will keep you from this Book!” How true that is!

Thus, we should do as Paul tells us in Philippians 4:8-9, **“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy; meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.”** Let the Word of God keep you clean as you saturate yourself in God’s Word and make it part of your life. The Word of God cleanses us!

2. The Psalmist also speaks of declaring the judgments of God and I think the idea here is that of sharing God’s Word will help us walk accordingly. You see, as others hear what we have to say, they are going to watch to see if our walk matches up to our words. Remember what Paul said in Philippians 2:14-15, **“Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.”** May we live out what we say we believe!

3. Now I realize that in the days we are living in we don't have the time to wait upon God, we need the answer now, we need it to happen yesterday, we just can't wait, not even on the Lord. Thus, meditation and contemplation have become a lost art when it comes to the Word of God. Everything must be quick and at our disposal. But God wants us to wait upon Him. To spend quality time with Him so He can show us the things we need to know. There are no short cuts and for those who think there are, they will only be disappointed and will soon be looking for another quick fix solution to their problem. It is as Isaiah 40:31 says, **“But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.”**

4. Did you notice the focus of these 8 verses in regards to the Word of God? The Psalmist tells us to heed God's Word. Do not wander from God's Word. Hide God's Word in your heart, treasure it. We are to teach God's Word. We are to declare God's Word. We are to rejoice in God's Word. We are to meditate upon God's Word. We are to contemplate God's Word. We are to remember God's Word, don't forget it. In other words, the Word of God is important to our lives, at least it should be!

Spurgeon summed it up like this, “Young man, the Bible must be your chart, and you must exercise great watchfulness that your way may be according to its directions. You must take heed to your daily life as well as study your Bible, and you must study your Bible that you may take heed to your daily life. 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.” If you want to keep pure, clean, then take heed to follow God’s Word!

VERSES 17-24

1. The third letter in the Hebrew alphabet is **Gimel** ג and the focus here is God’s Word and the various trials that we face in life. We are told that God’s Word is living and it is powerful and thus, as you read the Word of God the Lord will open your eyes so that you may see His wondrous truths and those lessons He has for your life. Too many times our goal is to read as fast as we can, and it is just a superficial reading, that does nothing for the soul. God has rich treasures for each of us if we would only spend the time in the Word of God, waiting for Him to show us things we need to learn.

2. And notice what the Psalmist does as difficulties come into his life, as trials come into his life. He meditates upon God's Word, he reads God's Word, he keeps God's Word.

Many times as trials come into our life we move away from God's Word. As we begin to do that and we become angry, bitter over the situation we are in. We then don't keep God's Word. That is just where the devil wants you. Don't listen to the one who wants to destroy your life, but listen to the Lord through His Word who wants to give you life, abundant life that is found in Him. He wants to give you rest as you go through these trials in your life, so rest in Him! Keep your eyes focused upward, on the eternal, instead of becoming entangled in the things of this world.

3. I like the way that Spurgeon sums this up for us. He wrote, "Spiritual desires are the shadows of coming blessings. What God intends to give us he first sets us longing for. Hence the wonderful efficacy of prayer, because prayer is the embodiment of a longing inspired of God because he intends to bestow the blessing. What are thy longings, then, my hearer?" He goes on to say, "Longing lingers not within a lifeless corpse. Where the heart is breaking with desire there is life. This may comfort some of you: you have not attained as yet to the holiness you admire, but you long for it: ah, then, you are a living soul, the life of God is in you." May we have that kind of passion for God and His Word!

VERSES 25-32

1. The fourth letter of the Hebrew alphabet is **Dalet or Daleth 7** and the focus here is that the Psalmist is calling for God to revive him from the dust. Obviously he was going through a very dry time, a very difficult time in his life. And what we see here is that God's Word revives our dry heart, our dry lives, spiritually speaking and I also believe physically.

Let's face it, life is hard at times, or as the Psalmist puts it, our "**soul melts from heaviness.**" Think of it like this. Things, situations can pull us down but it is the Lord who will lift us up and He does so as we read, meditate upon His Word. David said in Psalm 16:11, "**You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.**" Notice that it is not just joy but there is fullness, completeness to that joy, a true satisfaction as we read and obey God's Word!

Make no mistake about it, the Psalmist is in love with the Lord and His Word, and he runs to obey it. When God reveals an area in your life that you need to change, do you run to obey it? I think many times we drag our feet, holding on as long as possible to it. But the more we obey the more our heart grows in love with the Lord and His Word.

Spurgeon put it like this, "Can each one of us now say, in this sense, 'I have declared my ways' to the Lord? For this should be done, not only at our first coming to him, but continually throughout the whole of our life. We should look over each day, and sum up the errors of the day, and say, 'I have declared my ways,' - my naughty ways, my wicked ways, my wandering ways, my backsliding ways, my cold, indifferent ways, my proud ways." May we say as the Psalmist did, Lord, "**enlarge my heart.**"

Thus, “The remedy therefore is in that *enlargement*, which embraces a wider expanse of light, and a more full confidence of love. . . . He does not say – I will make no efforts, unless thou work for me; but if *thou wilt enlarge – I will run*. Weakness is not the plea for indolence [laziness], but for quickening grace. . . . The secret of Christian energy and success is a *heart enlarged* in the love of God.” (Bridges).

VERSES 33-40

1. We now move to the fifth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, **He ה**. As you read through this Psalm you see the passion in the heart of the Psalmist to learn the things of God, to understand the things of God, to walk in the things of God. And here is the point. What you fill yourself up with will be manifest in your life. A heart that is steadfast in the Lord and His Word will not fall prey to the things of this world. It is when we develop a wandering heart that we fall prey to these things that will not build us up, but tear us down.

2. And the marketing industry and really this world knows that if they can attract our eyes we will be drawn to these things, we will buy these things, we will indulge in these things. The problem here is that many of these things are worthless and they just feed our flesh instead of crucifying it. We are not building up the inner man but the flesh is sure growing and once you start to feed that beast, he is hard to control!

John warned us in I John 2:15-17 when he wrote, **“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”** If you want revival to break forth in your own heart, don't lust after worthless things, but hunger for the Word of God!

3. Spurgeon paints this picture for us as he wrote, “This is the cry of a child that longs to walk, but is too feeble; of a pilgrim who is exhausted, yet pants to be on the march; of a lame man who pines to be able to run.” The solution is to fill yourself up with the things of God, feed the Spirit and starve the flesh and by the power of God's Spirit empowering us and empowering His Word to our lives, we can accomplish these things!

VERSES 41-48

1. The sixth letter of the Hebrew alphabet is **Waw or Vav ו**. And in these verses we see the liberty, the freedom we have as we love God's Word and obey God's Word. We are not in bondage to anything, we are not slaves to the things of this world, we have been set free by Christ and we can walk in that freedom as we obey God's Word! This is a man who is in love with God and His Word and it is a priority in his life to read and apply the things of God to his life! May we have that kind of passion!

2. Now how do we learn about God, the things of God? Let me give you an example from what we read here in these verses. If you want to learn of God's tender mercies and His great salvation, then dig into His Word. Paul said in Romans 10:17, "**So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**" But today we want new revelations that tickle our ears and place no demand on our Christian walk, and the reality is our faith does not grow like that, it is only stunted. Now the world looks at us and they see us in bondage because of our faith and they think they are free.

It reminds me of the Jews who said to Jesus that they were not in bondage to anyone and yet, they were under the authority of Rome. People can deny they are in bondage today all they want, just as the Jews were doing and it does not change the fact that they are in bondage to something. It could be a job, it could be money, it could be sex, it could be drugs or alcohol, it can be buying things. For us as Christians, Jesus said in John 8:31-32, "**... 'If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'**" Are you free in Christ or in bondage to the things of this world?

VERSES 49-56

1. The seventh letter of the Hebrew alphabet is **Zayin** ז. And here in these verses we see the power of God's Word and how it brings us comfort and strength! What a wonderful promise God has given to us and yet how often we don't apply that promise to our life, that God will comfort and strengthen us even during the most difficult of times!

You see, even in times of difficulty, when the enemy has afflicted the Psalmist, his hope remains in God's Word and we should have that same attitude. Don't let life's circumstances cause you to doubt the promises of God. For even in difficult times, God's Word gives us life. As David said in Psalm 27:1, "**The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?**" God's Word gives to us life, that spiritual life, that abundant life that affects every aspect of our being and in a good way!

2. Now we live in period of time in our nation where people can mock our faith but we can't say anything that would go against what they want to do, their sin. And it is easy to become frustrated, especially when we see people willingly transgress the Law of God, mocking it. But don't let your righteous anger cause you to become bitter or think of yourself better than them. Let it drive you back to the Word of God and cause you to pray for them realizing that the only reason we stand clean, as white as snow, is because of the righteousness that has been imputed to us through Christ.

3. How in the world can we live as God desires in a world that is filled with such wickedness? That is a great question and if you think it is impossible, you have taken God out of the picture. Study the life of Joseph and his time down in Egypt and how he was able to live a life that was pleasing to God in spite of the temptations that were before him!

Another person in the Scriptures who was able to rise above the wickedness was Daniel. He was taken captive by King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians, and he refused to compromise his walk with the Lord, even though he was living in the center of pagan worship. In Daniel 1:8 we read, **“But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.”** I think it is good to purpose in our heart what we are going to do. Make a commitment to God, out of love and not out of the Law, and keep it. And the way we know what is right and what is wrong is by reading the Word of God! Let us keep His precepts!

4. Next time we will continue on with our study through Psalm 119 as we continue to look at this powerful Psalm. Let me close with these words regarding the Word of God. Paul said in Hebrews 4:12-13, **“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.”** May we never forget that!