

**The Psalm 119: 161-168; "My Heart stands in Awe of Your Word", A
Communion Sermon delivered on October 5th, 2008,
by Pastor Paul Rendall,
in the Morning Worship Service.**

It is interesting how many of these sections of Psalm 119 have to do with a persecuted believer who is relating his experience. As you look back in this psalm you can see that it is one of the major themes. Verse 157 - "Many are my persecutors and my enemies." Verse 150 - "They draw near who follow after wickedness." Verse 139 - "My zeal has consumed me, because of my enemies." Verse 121 - "I have done justice and righteousness; do not leave me to my oppressors." Verse 115 - "Depart from me, you evildoers, for I will keep the commandments of God." Verse 110 - "The wicked have laid a snare for me, yet I have not strayed from Your precepts." And the first hundred verses include similar words. It is probably David who wrote this Psalm and it was probably written upon the occasion of his being chased and hounded by Saul, who had become his persecutor without a cause. "Princes persecute me without a cause, but my heart stands in awe of Your word." It is not as though David was not greatly affected by this malice and hatred which Saul demonstrated toward him time and time again; it was just that he had come to realize that the greatest help to his own heart in such times was the word of God coming to him with power. And the reason that the word of God came to him with such power in the way that it did, was because David was trusting in God and all of the rich promises which had been given to him. The reason why the promises of God did not fail to help him was because God was, and is, faithful to all of His Elect to apply all the blessings and benefits of salvation to them. The reason that David was Elect was because God had simply purposed it to be so. It was nothing in David. God had been loving and merciful to him through Jesus Christ our Lord. God had been, was, and continued to be a God of mercy to him because of the amazing grace of a Savior-Redeemer who would not come into the world for a thousand years yet. But His grace was already at work in this child of his.

David believed that the God he worshipped and knew was a sovereign God. He knew that God had permitted these adverse circumstances of men hating him. God had done this for David's good, to build Christ-like qualities of righteousness into his life. You do not find David questioning or blaming God at all in these verses for the difficult circumstances that he was in. But you do find him declaring God's praise, and declaring how precious God's word was to him, and declaring the strength of the blessings of grace which were coming to him to sustain him. These declarations show forth the fact that his heart stood in awe of God's word. As we come to the Lord's table this morning, we must ask ourselves, "Does my heart stand in awe of God's word in the same way that David's did?" Do I stand in awe of everything that God does for me in salvation? David here declares that there are

4 reasons why he stands in awe of God's word. And in each of them I will relate to you how they were established to David with power through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. I pray that they will be established in power to your soul as well today.

1st of all - David tells us that he stands in awe of God's word because it makes his soul rich. (Verse 162)

"I rejoice at your word as one who finds great treasure." Oh, this is not the prosperity gospel of some Christians. He says, "I rejoice at Your word **as**...one who finds great treasure." "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field." (Jesus' parable in Matthew 13: 44) I believe that the field is the Scriptures, the word of God. The treasure is hidden in it, and when we find it, we hide it in our hearts. In order to find our life in Christ, we "sell all that we have and we buy that field. It's not just that we buy the Bible. That; most of us can afford to do. It is that we buy the truth. We will part with everything else for the preciousness of the truth of the Scriptures, the word of God. "Buy the truth and sell it not," it says in Proverbs 23: 23, "also wisdom and instruction and understanding. It is not as though David is speaking of earthly riches here. He is speaking of spiritual and heavenly riches which are found and come through God's word being blessed to the soul. He is speaking of the riches of God's grace and truth. The riches of God's precious grace come to every Christian, through the truth of the word of God. There is the spoken word of God, the written word of God, and the Essential Word of God who is Jesus Christ our Lord. You remember that in the beginning, in the creation of the World, that God spoke and it was done. He commanded and it stood fast. He created all things of this material world by the word of his power. He spoke it into existence in 6 literal days. Never doubt this. Never give in to the doctrine of evolution. Never compromise with the Day-age theory. Never believe those lies. Let your heart stand in awe of God's word. God can create things fully developed in an instant if He purposes to do so. He not only created them, but He also upholds all things presently by the word of His power.

He also does all spiritual things by the word of His power as well. Turn over with me to Deuteronomy chapter 8 and you will see this. The Lord was bringing Israel out of Egypt. He had brought them out of bondage and was bringing them into a good land. He said to Moses to say to them, "Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land of which the Lord swore to your fathers." "And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not." "So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord."

"You should **know in your heart** that as a man chastens his son, so the Lord your God chastens you." "Therefore you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him." "For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing; a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper."

My brethren these things were written for our instruction, that we might stand in awe of, and rejoice in God's word as ones who have found great treasure. God did these great things for Israel in bringing them out of their physical bondage in Egypt, in providing for their every need, in chastening them to teach them as a Father would His children. He allowed them to hunger. He allowed them to be in need. Sometimes God lets our economics as Christians falter. Why does He do it? We have been diligent to work and to provide for our families. And yet things do not always go according to plan. He does this so that we will pray and say to Him, "Give us this day our daily bread. He would show us his power as He did Israel in the wilderness. He prepares a table in the wilderness for them. He did refresh them, He did strengthen them, and He blessed them by bringing them into the land of promise; a good land full of good and refreshing things. He gave them His commandments and expected them to walk in His ways and to fear Him. Verses 2 and 3 are just as critical for us to understand as it was for them to understand. "And you shall remember..." That is what we are here to do this morning. We are here to remember the Lord Jesus Christ; the greatest gift, the greatest treasure that God gave to man or could possibly give to fallen, sinful men. It is He, the Essential Word of God, whose incarnation was spoken into existence by the Father and the Spirit. It was not as though in His deity that the Lord Jesus is a created being. Far from it! He has always existed and dwelt with the Father and there never has been a time when He was not. But He was spoken into existence as a the God-man; the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory; glory as the only-begotten of the Father. He lived a perfect sinless life and kept all of God's commandments perfectly. The Father's love was spoken into existence and came and suffered and bled and died in our place so that we might have all of the rich blessings of salvation, all the treasures of grace. God spoke Him out of the grave on the 3rd Day with these words; "Thou art My Son, today I have begotten You." "Ask of Me and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession." The treasure of God's word speaks of the treasure of Christ. God, through this Word, has brought those of us who believe in Him into a good land. All things are yours in Christ. He has brought you out of your bondage to sin, out of your captivity to Satan, and through Him, even the world has been crucified to you, and you to the world. (Galatians 6: 14) This is what you and I have come here to remember this morning. God has done these things and He is brought us into a good land.

But it is not a physical land that our God has brought us into now, as New Testament believers. It is the spiritual land of promise. It is the eternal inheritance of spiritual blessings first; then later on, after the Day Christ returns, and all men face the judgment, and God's work in the believer has been vindicated, and he has been glorified in his Savior Jesus Christ, the believer shall be brought into the New Heavens and New Earth wherein will dwell righteousness. However in this age, it is the spiritual blessings which come first and then after the Lord returns, shall come the blessings of perfection; the physical blessings perfectly coupled with the spiritual and soul of the believer being made perfect at the time of His death. In the Old Testament and under the Old Covenant it was the physical blessings of the land that figured first, and figured prominently, and they were types of the spiritual blessings which would be coming in Jesus Christ. These physical blessings of the physical land, the physical springs and waters, the treasures of wheat and barley, fig trees and pomegranates, olive oil and honey were meant to encourage the Old Testament believer's faith and their obedience to God, even as our being blessed in Jesus Christ is meant to encourage our faith and obedience to God now. Their blessings in the physical things of the land and all that was to be grown on it, figured prominently to them because God was pointing them, in those things, to the eternal inheritance which would come to them, and to us, through the physical body of Christ who would come through the loins of Abraham, come in conjunction with the blessings and promises given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; to Moses and David, and indeed to every Old Testament believer who "remembered" what God had done in giving these good physical things to sustain and establish their life. In the end, if they remembered, they would most certainly be saved and established and be useful and fruitful servants of God. Remembering was the Old testament exercise of their spiritual faith, which faith they had from God as a grace, based upon what Jesus Christ would really do for them. And our remembering Christ, and what He has done and accomplished, is the New Testament exercise of our faith.

God tells them here in verse 2, that "they shall remember that the Lord their God had led them all the way, forty years in the wilderness, to humble them and to test them, to know what was in their hearts, whether they would keep the commandments of the Lord or not. He made them entirely dependent upon Him in the wilderness to make them realize that they only lived by His word. This is what God would have us to understand as well. The Lord humbles each and every believer in Jesus Christ. He tests us all to see what is in our hearts. He does this to find out whether we will keep His commandments. We realize in many times and many ways that we do not keep His commandments as we should. We fall short even with the grace of Christ. But that is why we come here to observe the Lord's Supper. We come here to remember the Lord Jesus Christ; to remember that we do not live by physical bread alone, we do not live by our own efforts and strategies to give ourselves life, or to try to keep ourselves alive; either physically or spiritually. We live by the word of God. We live by God's written word spiritually;

believing in the gospel of Jesus Christ. We live spiritually because of the work of the Essential Word, Jesus Christ, who has died for us and was raised for our justification. We live spiritually by the Essential Word, Jesus Christ, coming into our hearts and giving the water of life through His Holy Spirit's indwelling our hearts. You have a fountain of living water springing up to eternal life in your soul today if you have believed in Jesus Christ our Lord. You live spiritually, and you are sustained spiritually, and you grow spiritually because of the Essential Word of God Jesus Christ who gives you the bread of his word, the meat of his word, the honey of his word and the fruit comes from him as well. Oh, remember this and rejoice as one who has found great treasure. You have found great treasure. You have all the riches of His grace, at the expense of His labors. You have the riches of an eternal inheritance at the cost of His work of obedience, and His sufferings for you.

Then 2ndly- David tells us that he is in awe of God's word because by believing it, he has come to hate lying and to love the truth. (Verse 162 and 163)

"I hate and abhor lying, but I love Your law." David hated lying in himself first of all, and then he also hated it when he saw it in others. When a person comes to saving faith in Jesus Christ he comes to His Savior asking Him to save him from his sin. He comes seeking grace so that in his spirit there will be no deceit. Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit." There is, in other words, in the grace of Christ which comes to the soul of every true believer; there is a change which takes place in his or her soul. The soul is straightened out which used to be bent toward lying and exaggeration. Not only is a believer in Christ forgiven; he also has a seed of righteousness placed in his heart which grows up to bear righteous fruit to God. Ask yourself, this morning, as you come to the Lord's table, whether your spirit is straight and true in the sight of God? Is there a hatred of lying? In regeneration and conversion to Christ, the spirit of the believer is changed from being a Jacob (a trickster) to being an Israel (a Prince with God in prayer). He no longer feels that he has to clothe himself with the hairy skin of Esau in order to deceive his father in order to receive the blessing of his father. He does not have to lie either in big ways or little ways when he speaks of himself or other people. He both speaks the truth and loves the truth. He loves the truth of God's word. He loves God's definitions of what is right and wrong and what is true and false. He hates any misrepresentation of God or His truth. He remembers that he once lived a lie himself, before he came to faith in Jesus Christ. And so having read and understood the implications of the 9th commandment, he now believes that God would have him to speak the truth in love in everything that he says to others. He remembers that God is a God of Truth, and a God who hates lying. He remembers that the 9th commandment says, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." And he loves God, that person who he is speaking with, and God's

word enough not to lie. He receives that grace to see the evil of lying from Jesus Christ.

Turn with me to Proverbs 6: 16. Here we find out things that the Lord hates, which we also should hate. "These six things the Lord hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him: A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil, a false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren." It is interesting here, is it not, that 2 of the six things that God hates are both related to lying. There is a lie upon the tongue. And there is a bearing false witness, misrepresenting people or situations where the truth needs to be understood. These are two sins which a Christian has a double hatred of. Perhaps this is why the Psalmist here in our text says, "I hate and abhor lying." To abhor is to, "regard with horror or loathing; to detest." This, my brethren is how we ought to regard lying. If we love God, and if we love the souls of other people, we ought not to lie. We ought to regard the very thought of lying with horror. What can do more damage to the cause of Christ, than to be found to be a liar? How can a person serve God and live or speak a lie? This is a sin which a person may conceal for a time; but which God will expose in due time.

I do not know if you have ever understood that there is a connection between hatred and lying which the Scriptures mention. Lying is a very unloving thing. Turn with me over to Proverbs 26: 24 and you will see this. "He who hates, disguises it with his lips, and lays up deceit within himself.; when he speaks kindly, do not believe him, for there are seven abominations in his heart; though his hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness will be revealed before the assembly." These verses show us that lying begins with a deceit within the heart of a person. I believe that this is speaking of someone who had been attending the synagogue in those Old Testament times. But it applies just as much to those who attend church today. As a Christian, in order for you to glorify God, you must have speech and actions that are consistent with the thoughts of your heart. If they are not consistent there is a lie taking place. This is why you and I need to seriously review the thoughts of our heart as we come to this table this morning and repent of those thoughts that are hateful or unloving towards others which may be covered by the pleasant words that you might speak. The way to change this hypocrisy is to pray that the Lord will so work in your heart that you will have truth in the inmost being. This is what God desires and this is what each of us should desire and be manifesting in our relationships with others. Psalm 51: 6 says, "Behold You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom." These were the words of David spoken to God after his great sin with Bathsheba and the lie that he lived trying to conceal it for many months. It is your relationship to God through Jesus Christ your Lord which will give you the ability, through the power of His grace, which He purchased on the cross, to bring your words into line with the thoughts of your heart. Through faith in Jesus Christ your Lord, your thoughts can be changed to become righteous and

loving in relation to other people who you may disagree with; people whose decisions and behavior you may not approve of. Then it will not be necessary to be living out a lie in your heart or your words. This is why Jesus died. And this is what He and the Father are looking for from you; truth in the inmost being. And when you see this glorious consistency taking place in your heart and life, you will praise God seven times a day because of His righteous judgments. You will praise Him over and over again each day for this aspect of holiness which He is teaching you and helping you and upholding you in. His righteous and holy law He is giving you for your good. You learn to keep it in greater measure through the grace of Jesus Christ.

Then 3rdly- David tells us that he is in awe of God's word because of the great peace that had come to him because of his having it. (Verse 165)

"Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble." This is peace in the midst of the greatest difficulties. Do you have it as a Christian? "Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing cause them to stumble." If you do not have this peace ruling and guarding your heart as a Christian it is not as though Christ does not offer it, or that He is not willing to convey it to you. Jesus says in John 14: 27, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you." "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Jesus was going away; He was going to the cross, and then after His resurrection He would return to heaven. But He would give His disciples His Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit would bring the peace of Christ all of His disciples. Our object is not to fear men as much as we fear God. We may have real fears in relation to men who would try to create fear in us, but we must learn to fear God more than them. "Fear God, and keep His commandments." "For this is the whole duty of man." (Ecclesiastes 12: 13) In Matthew 10: 28, Jesus says, "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." It says in 1 Peter 5: 7, "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you." If you are not experiencing great peace, it is most likely because you have neglected staying close to His word, and hiding it in your heart, and praying over it, and seeking to put what you read into practice in your life. "Great peace have those who love Your law." Loving God's law, His word, grows out of our having faith in Him. Our faith works by means of love as it says in Galatians 5: 6. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love." It is the power of God's word working in your hearts, as you exercise that faith in Him, that brings you peace. When you come to Christ with all your cares and problems, when you come to God's word for help; the word itself in hands of Christ's Spirit, the word itself becomes to you like the parent who soothes and comforts the anxieties of their child when they have been bullied at school, or on the way home from school. You are not only a child of God through

Jesus Christ. You are a child who takes comfort from His word. I can remember this kind of anxiety that we are talking about, happening to me once in Elementary School. There was a young man who was a bully and he didn't like the looks of me; didn't like the fact that I would not give him the respect and the obedience to his ugly words that he thought that I owed him. He told me that he was going to beat me up on the way home. I did not know the Lord and I was full of anxiety over this. I went way out of my usual way home out of fear for his finding me and beating me up. I finally told my parents about it and they were able to call his parents and get him to stop the bullying. We need to cast all of cares upon Christ now as we come to the Supper. Let us remember that His word is a treasure; His word teaches us to hate sin, and his word brings us peace. Let us come down front to partake of the Supper.

4thly- David tells us that he is in awe of God's word because of how he now views his own obedience to it. (verses 166-168)

In these last three verses we see how much David's relationship with God had grown through these persecutions, these trials, and afflictions. And this is what we want to express to our Lord at this time, as we come to His Table. When David says in verse 166, "Lord, I hope for your salvation," he is not saying that He hoped that the Lord would save him from his sins. He is saying that he hoped that God would deliver him from the trial of Saul persecuting him. But he is also saying that "he was doing keeping His commandments and testimonies anyway, even though as of yet, he had not been delivered. Even in the process of this trial he could say, "I love Your commandments and Your testimonies exceedingly." And the reason that he kept God's testimonies and precepts is because he knew, and he loved it well; the fact that "all his ways were before God." He knew that God's eye and His hand were upon him for good, even in the trials. He saw God as His treasure. He had great peace ruling in his heart. All his hope was in Him. As we partake of these elements which are before us, let us also remember that all of our ways are before God. If we need to confess sins, this is the place to confess them in our heart before God. If we are anxious for anything, let us pray about it. If we need to more fervently love God and His word and to become more obedient, (which we all know that we do), let us pray in our hearts that God would through this means of grace, strengthen us to do His will. Let us remember that the Lord Jesus died to bring us all of these blessings. Let us ask Him now to draw near and bestow them upon us.