

**Psalm 119: 1-8; "Christ's blessedness and Ours," A Communion Sermon
delivered on January 7th, 2007, in the Morning Worship Service
before the Lord's Supper by Pastor Paul Rendall.**

What does the keeping of God's Word and keeping the commandments of God have to do with the Lord's Supper? That is the question that I would like to answer this morning before we partake of the Lord's Supper. Psalm 119 is a Psalm all about the believer's keeping God's Word in his or her life. It is about the heart and soul of a person learning what all of God's commandments are, and having the grace to go about doing them. I want to assert to you this morning that it takes great grace to keep the commandments of God in a way that pleases Him. But when we do keep them, and we are able to resist temptation and overcome our sinful habits and tendencies we find that it truly makes for our greatest happiness. "Blessed," or how supremely happy, "are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord!" It is an exclamation mark that we see at the end of that sentence. It is true that there is a very definite place in the Christian life for mourning; mourning over our sinfulness and our deficiencies in righteousness. "Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted." But there is also just as great a place, if not more so, for joy and happiness in the Christian life. I am speaking of the spiritual joy and happiness that we will find with our coming to realize that God always gives the best things in life. And the very best things of all are those things which are related to the eternal happiness of our souls. When we come to realize that it is the greatness of the grace of Christ that will enable us to leave our sins behind and find something far more satisfying and enjoyable; something that will really last and something which can never be taken away from us; then we are truly happy. This is what Jesus Christ died to bring us.

The commandments of God, we are told in Romans 7: 12 "are holy, righteous, and good." And yet somehow, sometimes, we get the notion that we must be legalists if we find happiness in keeping them. It is true that we can never find happiness in trying to be saved, or accepted in the sight of God, by keeping the law. But it is just as true that once we have come to know the Lord Jesus Christ and have experienced the greatness and the fullness of grace which is in Him, we come to realize, or we should come to realize, that "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord!" The person who seeks Christ with all their heart will find that they will be more happy and blessed by far, in keeping the commandments of God, than they ever were in their most enjoyable times of sinful independence, sinful enjoyments, or selfish attainments. The question that we are asking this morning is this. How can a Christian find greater happiness and blessedness in keeping the commandments of God; more than anything that he has ever attained to in pursuing self and sin? The truth is; that a Christian will find greater happiness and blessedness in keeping God's commandments because Jesus Christ lived, and He died, in order to make this great change in the lives of all the sinners who are trusting in Him for salvation. For Jesus Christ was more blessed, more happy than any man, in being obedient to God's commands. And He will be with us, to cause us to be happy in keeping God's commands, when we seek Him with all of our heart, in order that we might find the truth of the reality of the blessings of His grace in our obedience. There is truth in the reality of Christ's being happy to obey God which will come to be ours as well, by His grace. This truth we will consider in 3 points.

1st- There is the truth of the reality of Christ's being happy to be undefiled by sin. (Verses 1 and 2a)

"Blessed are the undefiled in the way..." It is the person who has not been tainted and touched by sin who is the most blessed and happy of all people. But all of us, in the human race, with the exception of Jesus Christ are sinners and we are defiled by it. Sin's influences are defiling in every way to the hearts, the souls, and the bodies of people who were created originally in the image and likeness of God. When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden in the beginning, they not only brought guilt to themselves, but they also were defiled and polluted by sin. Sin was that which entered their souls to defile them. Sin poisoned the pure fountain of their hearts. Adam and Eve did not walk in the law of the Lord. They broke the one holy and wise commandment that was given to them in their time in the garden of paradise. Sin stained them with guilt, but the reality of that disobedience defiled them in soul and in body. It polluted and defiled their nature, which before was holy.

This is why sin is often compared to a disease when its effects are mentioned in the Bible. Sin brought not only guilt to man; it brought defilement which is pictured in the most accurate sense by the disease of leprosy. The person who was diagnosed by a priest in the Old Testament, would be examined for the signs of the defilement of the disease and if he found them, he would pronounce him unclean. He would be isolated from the camp of the congregation of Israel. He was unclean and defiled by this disease. All that he touches and whoever he touches is affected by this disease. So it is with sin. Sin is the condition which we are born in and with, because of Adam's sin. The Lord is the one who correctly diagnoses this condition for us and gives us the description of it in his word. Every man who ever became godly has come to know his own sinful condition, the plague that is in his heart. And even the best of Christians acknowledge that there is still much remaining corruption within them that they need to mourn over. Solomon, when he is praying at the dedication of the temple says in 1 Kings 8: 38, "...whatever prayer, whatever supplication is made by anyone, or by all Your people Israel, when each one knows the plague of his own heart, and spreads out his hands toward this temple: then hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and forgive, and act, and give to everyone according to all his ways, who heart You know (for You alone know the hearts of men)." And this is spoken of those who were believing, praying people. Believing, praying people know the plague of their own hearts. They know that sin is defiling. It brings uncleanness and impurity to the souls of men because it is present with them.

An unbelieving person does not see sin in himself the way that he should; he does not see himself in this way. He does not understand that his nature is defiled, and that it leads to thoughts and feelings that are defiled, words that are defiled, and actions which are defiled and which defile others. Listen to Titus 1: 15 - "To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled." "They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work." Christians are being called "the pure" in those verses, in contrast to others who are called "unbelieving." So it must be, that to be pure in heart, that you must be believing. And you must be believing in Jesus Christ. But what is the reason that we must believe in Him? It is because He is the great physician of souls.

It is because Jesus Christ is not tainted with sin; not the least tincture of it in all of His nature, not in all of His words and nothing in all that He did. He is perfectly pure and holy. He did not have to say like David in Psalm 51: 5, "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me." No, when his mother conceived and was with child, it was "by the Holy Spirit." And this "holy child" who was formed in her womb was the Son of God. He was not fathered by a sinful man. Many of the Pharisees of Jesus' day thought that they knew the Scriptures, but they could not recognize the purity which is alone in Jesus Christ, when they saw Him and spoke with Him. Jesus says to them in John 8: 37, "I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you." They were so defiled that even though they were very religious they could not receive the word of the Son of God to them! He says, "I speak to you what I have seen with My Father and you do what you have seen with your father." "They answered and said to Him, 'Abraham is our father.'" "Jesus said to them, 'If you were Abraham's children, you would do the deeds of Abraham.'" "But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God." "Abraham did not do this." "You do the deeds of your father." "Then they said to him, 'We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.'" "Jesus said to them, 'If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but sent Me.'"

Sin can defile a person in such a way that he is unable to love Jesus, the Son of God. Jesus says in verse 43, "Why do you not understand My speech?" "Because you are not able to listen to My word." "You are of your father the devil, and desires of your father you want to do." "He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him." "When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it." "But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me." "Which of you convicts Me of sin?" "And if I tell you the truth, why do you not believe Me?" "He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God." These words of our Lord Jesus prove to us that being defiled in God's sight is when we have the desire to kill, to get rid of, to argue with, to suppress, and to use all of our resources, to resist the word of God and especially to resist the truth that we need Christ and the grace that only He can bring. It will lead to lying, to anger, and yes even to murder as you see the Pharisees wanted to do to Jesus. You say to me, "But I do not want to lie, I do not want to murder." Perhaps not outwardly, but ask yourself if it is in you in the inward parts of your being? Are you angry with your brother because he has spoken God's word to you, and you are convicted of sin?" There is a way of purity. It is that way of walking in the law of the Lord. The way of the Lord is you seeing your need of Christ and living by His grace as you go about to keep His commandments. "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord."

2ndly- There is the truth of the reality of Christ's being happy in prayer.

(Verses 2 and 3)

"Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, who seek him with the whole heart!" "They also do no iniquity; they walk in His ways." Jesus in the very reality of His being was perfect, pure, undefiled, and separate from sinners. Since He alone was pure, it was He alone who has kept the testimonies of the Lord in the right way, in the pure and perfect way." Psalm 119, verse 40 says, "Your word is very pure; therefore Your servant loves it." The way that Jesus Christ kept the testimonies of the Lord and was able to

walk in His ways, was because He sought God with all of His heart; with His whole heart. This is what is essential to your keeping His word as well. It is only by seeking Him in prayer and by having faith in Him that you will walk in the law of the Lord. But this shall come to pass in your life, it shall become a reality in your life; that you shall become happy to pray to Him because of His grace and faithfulness. Turn with me to Mark 1: 29. I want to show you how great the grace of Jesus Christ really is. I want to focus on verse 35, but before I do so, I want you to see the things that went before that, in order to set a context. "Now as soon as they had come out of the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John." "But Simon's wife's mother lay sick with a fever, and they told Him about her at once." "So He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up and immediately the fever left her." "and she served them." Now, you notice here that when the disciples realized that Simon's mother had a fever, that she had this life threatening problem, that "they told Christ about it at once." Is this the way that you approach your problems and your concerns? If it is not, it should be the way that you approach them. Take all your cares to Him at once, and cast them on Him. You also notice that when Christ came and took Simon's mother by the hand, and lifted her up, that immediately her fever left her. This is what happened for them, and will be the case, spiritually, when Christ comes to help you, when Christ comes to save you from your sins, and when Christ addresses the problems in your life, those things that have put you into a fever of great concern. When Christ addresses your sins and your difficulties and distresses, then you will find grace, you will be raised up, and "immediately" you will want to serve Him. If this is not the case with you, then ask someone who you know is walking with the Lord, to pray for you, and to bring your sinful spiritual sicknesses to Jesus. You shall receive help. "Bless the Lord, O my soul;" you will say, "and all that is within me, bless His holy name!" "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies." How happy your soul will be, to pray to Him and to praise Him in this way."

But let us proceed on to verse 32. "At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed." "And the whole city was gathered together at the door." "then He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him." Now you can see here that Jesus is very busy, He has people coming to Him from everywhere, the whole city is at the door. How does He handle this without it breaking Him in spirit and body? He goes to sleep that night and finds strength for His body, but it does not say that He got eight hours of sleep. He could have only gotten six or less with that many people there in the evening. But what the Scripture does mention is found in verse 35. "Now in the morning, having risen a long while before the daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed." This Jesus saw as absolutely essential to the continuance of his strength and having a right frame of mind in everything that He would do that day. Do you see this, my dear weary brethren? Our strength for ministry, our strength for our jobs and our families and strength to be faithful in a thousand things that might happen in a day does not come from our hours of sleep as important as that is. It comes from God. It is God who "gives to His beloved, even in their sleep." And it is especially by, in, and through prayer to God that we are renewed and strengthened to do His will, and to go on in this life to glorify Him. You

must carve out time for prayer, and early in the morning is the very best time, if you can manage it. Because people will come looking for you if you are faithful. Verse 36 says, "And Simon and those who were with him searched for Him." "When they found him, they said to Him, 'Everyone is looking for You.'" "But He said to them, 'Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.'" You see that prayer, regular prayer to God, will enable you to see clearly what your priorities are. Jesus knew that there would be no problem establishing a physical healing ministry among the people of any community. But the word of God being preached, proclaimed, and spread by Jesus and His disciples was of greater importance. It was of the greatest importance because the eternal destiny of souls is even more important than the health of the body.

But Jesus found delight in prayer. "Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart." It was, I am quite sure, one of His greatest joys in the days of His flesh. And because He made it so, in that time, He will make it so in this time for you, because of His faithfulness. This is what we will remember as we come to the table this morning; that by His grace and faithfulness that we shall be happy to pray to Him constantly, and for everything by His grace. Isaiah 56: 6 says, "Also the sons of the foreigner who join themselves to the Lord, to serve Him, and love the name of the Lord, to be His servants--Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, and holds fast My covenant--Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer." This is what believers in Christ do; they "hold fast His covenant." And as they do so, they are made joyful in prayer. I will now ask you to come down front and gather there in the pews and we shall renew our covenant with Christ in the Lord's Supper.

3rdly- I want to tell you this morning that there was truth in the reality of Christ's being unashamed to look into all of God's commandments.

(Verses 4-8)

This is how we must approach keeping the commandments of God. It is that we look at the commandment and also how it is to be kept. Verse 4 says, "You have commanded us to keep Your precepts diligently." To keep the precepts of God diligently, means that we must often and frequently look carefully into our heart and life to see if the way that we are living and the way that we are thinking and the things that we are doing are in line with what God has stated. Do I love the brethren? Do I love God with all of my heart? Do I love my neighbor as myself? Am I crucified to the world and its lusts? Am I putting to death the sins in my life; covetousness and greed, pride, and uncleanness; the sins which defile the mind and the heart? Am I living by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me? As we search ourselves, before we take this Supper, we will find that in many ways that we fall short, but the way that we will change to become more holy, will be to pray to Christ and to seek His grace and wisdom and power. Verse 5 is a prayer. "Oh, that my ways were directed to keep Your statutes!" "Then I would not be ashamed, when I look into all Your commandments." Our obedience to God is to be as Christ's was; a universal obedience. He looked into "all of God's commandments." He did not pick and choose from God's holy law, which ones He was going to observe. He did not say, as we do sometimes, "This one I do not like, it does not fit in with my lifestyle." "This one I cannot figure out why God would ask me to keep." No Christ looked into them all and He diligently kept them all. Will you not covenant with me this morning to do as Christ did? For if you will bring all of your sins

and weakness, and inability to keep the commandments of God, to Him, you will find strength and grace. When you have Christ, when you find Christ, when you pray to Christ and when you walk with Christ, you shall never be ashamed. Verse 6 says, "Then I would not be ashamed, when I look into all Your commandments." Instead we will do what verse 7 says, as we come to this table. "I will praise You with uprightness of heart, when I learn Your righteous judgments." And as we have the bread, the emblem of Christ's broken body in our mouths, we will partake with the resolution of verse 8, "I will keep your statutes; Oh do not forsake me utterly!" You see, our Lord Jesus said, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" when He was upon the cross. We must this day, as we come to partake of this supper, see Jesus as unashamed to look into all of God's commandments. Keeping those commandments led Him to the cross; and to in love, die for you and me. In Hebrews 12: 2 it says that we should, "look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy (the happiness, the blessedness) that was set before Him, endured the cross, despised the shame (because He kept all of God's commandments) and He has now sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." And Hebrews 4: 14 says, "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession." "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses" (in keeping all of God's commandments), but we have "One who was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Let us come boldly to this table also that we may now remember all that He has done for us. And in remembering Him let us pray that we might be like Him; happy in keeping all of God's commandments.