

“The Surety of God’s Word”
Psalm 119:89-96
(Preached at Trinity, January 27, 2013)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Tonight we look at the 12th stanza of the 119th Psalm designated by the Hebrew letter לָ – “Lamed” The first verse sets the tone for this stanza –
"For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven."
2. There seems to be a change in tone beginning with this 12th stanza. In stanzas 9-11 we find the psalmist describing his great affliction.
Psalm 119:81 KJV - "My soul fainteth for thy salvation"
His soul was fainting and he was crying out for God’s deliverance.
3. Although David would continue to suffer at the hand of his enemies we find in this stanza a confidence in deliverance. We find the great source of his strength and confidence and his salvation—the Word of God.
4. David declares the steadfastness of God’s Word. The word in this opening verse is דְּבַר (dabar). דְּבַר most often refers to God’s spoken word and is sometimes translated “promise.”
1 Kings 8:56 – “Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant.”
5. God’s Words are absolute - "thy word is settled"
Isaiah 46:11 – “I have spoken *it*, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed *it*, I will also do it.”
Isaiah 55:11 – “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it.”
Numbers 23:19 – “God *is* not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do *it*? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?”
6. Behind every Word of God we have the promise that He cannot lie. His words are sure and steadfast.
2 Corinthians 1:20 – “For all the promises of God in him *are* yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.”
Titus 1:2 – “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;”
 - A. God has never gone back on a promise
To Noah:
Genesis 9:11 – “And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.”
To Abraham

Genesis 17:7 - "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee."

To all of the elect:

John 6:37-40 – "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. ³⁸ For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. ³⁹ And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. ⁴⁰ And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."

B. God's Word is absolute. It rests upon His infallible character, His infinite power, and His absolute purpose.

His promises are not yea and nay. They are not true one moment and then false the next. They do not speak one thing today and then another tomorrow. They are always yes, true, infallible

C. God's Word has become unto us a sure foundation:

How firm a foundation, you saints of the Lord

Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!

What more can he say than to you He has said,

To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

7. As we explore this stanza tonight I want to direct your attention to God's sure Word. I'll divide the stanza into four points.

I. God's Sure Word reflects His faithfulness – **Verses 89-91**

II. God's Sure Word is the unending source of comfort and refreshment – **Vs. 92-95**

III. God's Sure Word is without bounds – **Verse 96**

I. God's Sure Word reflects His faithfulness – **Verses 89-91**

A. David stresses the permanence of God's Word

1. He uses two words to stress this steadfastness

a. "forever" – this covers both sides of eternity. God's Word is unending

b. "settled" – it literally means "to stand" which is how the NIV translates it – "it stands firm in the heavens"

It is unshakable. The ESV translates it "firmly fixed."

2. God's Word is an expression of His eternal decree. It is God's revelation of Himself and His purpose. It will not, it cannot fail.

B. God is absolutely faithful to Himself and to His Word.

Psalms 119:90 KJV - "Thy faithfulness is unto all generations"

Psalms 89:2 KJV - "thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens."

1. Faithfulness – the word means "firmness" or "steadfastness"

2. In the second half of **Verse 90** David declares that God established the earth. Why does David say this here? What does this have to do with the Word of God? Because God spoke creation into existence.

Genesis 1:1-3 KJV - "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. ² And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God

moved upon the face of the waters. ³ And God said, Let there be light: and there was light."

3. That which God declares is steadfast. His Word will never fail.
Psalm 119:90 KJV - "thou hast established the earth, and it abideth." - עִמָּד

Psalm 119:91 KJV - "They continue this day according to thine ordinances"

Both of these are from the same Hebrew word - עִמָּד

C. Everything continues according to God's Divine Word

Psalm 119:91 KJV - "They continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all *are* thy servants."

1. "They" refers to the works of God in creation. Everything continues according to God's Word.
2. The word for ordinances is one of the eight words used in Psalm 119 to refer to the Word of God - מִשְׁפָּט - This word refers to the legal aspect of the Word of God.
3. By God's Word all things were brought into existence and by His Word they continue.
Num. 23:19 KJV - "God *is* not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do *it*? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?"
4. Everything functions upon the course God placed it.
The sea stays within its borders. The sun rises and sets each day. The seasons come and go on schedule. Each plant grows according to its prescribed order. Apples will not grow in the deep South, nor oranges in the North.
5. Fallen man doesn't recognize that they live and move according to God's design. They are the servants of God coming and going according to the will of God – "for all *are* thy servants."
6. God remains eternally faithful according to His Word
Verse 89 - "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven."
Verse 90 - "Thy faithfulness *is* unto all generations"

II. God's Sure Word is the unending source of our comfort & refreshment – **Verses 92-95**
Psalm 119:92 KJV - "Unless thy law *had been* my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction."

A. David's affliction had been great

1. He spends much of Psalm 119 describing the fierceness of his enemies
Verse 85 - " The proud have digged pits for me"
Verse 78 - "they dealt perversely with me without a cause"
Verse 61 - "The bands of the wicked have robbed me"
Verse 51 - "The proud have had me greatly in derision"
 - a. Their assaults upon him seemed endless. They were continually seeking his life.
 - b. Where could he find comfort under such miserable conditions?
He continually found comfort in God's unchanging Word

3. Once again he describes God's Word as his delight
Psalm 119:16 KJV - "I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word."
Psalm 119:24 KJV - " Thy testimonies also *are* my delight *and* my counsellors."
Psalm 119:35 KJV - "Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight."
Psalm 119:47 KJV - "And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved."
Psalm 119:70-72 KJV - " Their heart is as fat as grease; *but* I delight in thy law. ⁷¹ *It is* good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes. ⁷² The law of thy mouth *is* better unto me than thousands of gold and silver."
Psalm 119:77 KJV - " Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for thy law *is* my delight."
- B. Where do you find your greatest delight? What is your greatest pleasure?
1. All men turn towards their greatest pleasures.
 - a. Paul warned of those who were - "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (**2 Timothy 3:4 KJV**)
 - b. Jesus taught in the Parable of the Sower that the seeking of pleasure is one of the things that keep people from Christ.
Luke 8:14 KJV - "And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to perfection."
 2. What is your greatest pleasure? How do you view the Bible? Do you see it as delightful? Does it provide you with hours of pleasure? Are the words within its pages your great delight because of the effect they have upon your relationship with the God who gave us His Word?
 3. What is your great source of comfort when you go through times of difficulty?
 - a. It isn't a question of whether or not you will go through difficulty. The question is where is your comfort? Where do you flee for refuge and strength?
 - b. David makes an honest announcement. If he had not found delight in God's Word he would have died.
 4. Because David had discovered the great peace and comfort in God's Word it had become his constant refuge.
Psalm 119:95 KJV - "The wicked have waited for me to destroy me: *but* I will consider thy testimonies."
- C. David declares the the Word of God to be his source of refreshment – **Vs. 93-94**
Psalm 119:93 KJV - "I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me."
1. When he was down and depressed God's Word revived him

2. What is it you are going through?
 - a. Are you suffering through a severe trial
Exodus 15:2 KJV - "The LORD *is* my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he *is* my God"
Does that comfort you?
 - b. Are you struggling with sin?
1 Corinthians 10:13 KJV - "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*."
 God says that your struggle with your particular sin is not unique to you but has been the struggle of many others but God has provided the way of escape. Does that comfort you?
 - c. Is it loneliness?
Hebrews 13:5-6 KJV - "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. ⁶ So that we may boldly say, The Lord *is* my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."
 - d. Is it depression?
Psalms 42:5 KJV - "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and *why* art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him *for* the help of his countenance."
3. As David read and meditated upon God's Word he was assured that God was his God and that God would sustain that which belonged to Him.
 - a. "Save me because I belong to You – this I have learned from Your Word."
Verse 94 - "I *am* thine, save me; for I have sought thy precepts."
 - b. We struggle with fear, anger, depression, guilt, anxiety, doubts, loneliness, sorrow, pain and on and on because we fail to take God at His Word—because we see so little value in God's Word.

III. God's Sure Word is without bounds – Verse 96

- A. This verse sets up a comparison/contrast
 1. David speaks of something limited and something broad or boundless
 2. He states that he had seen an end or a limit upon perfection.
 - a. This world is not the place of perfection. In fact it is polluted by sin. If we look upon this world as the source of perfection we will find nothing but disappointment.
 - b. We will not find a solution for our fear, anger, depression, guilt, anxiety, doubts, loneliness, or sorrow apart from God.
 - c. Multitudes turn to alcohol or drugs. Some seek worldly pleasure. Nothing covers the need of the heart.
 3. In contrast David says of God's Word, "*but* thy commandment *is* exceeding broad." -- boundless
- B. Where do you turn for peace and comfort in this life?
 1. Sadly, most see little value in God's Word

2. Most see God's commands as restrictive and detrimental to the satisfaction of our quest for pleasure.
3. Few see the words of this Book as being the source of great delight.