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The Word at Work in the Believer; Psalm 119:1-8

GPBC

12.30.18

Introduction - The title for this sermon actually comes from a NT text. 1 Thess 2:13 says, *“And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the Word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the Word of God, which is at work in you believers.”* What this verse teaches is that the Word of God works, **comes alive**, in those who receive it for what it is, the Word of God. God has spoken, so we must receive it and believe it, and when we do, it goes to work in our life! It works to bring salvation, to bring life, answers, direction, comfort, conviction, sanctification, wisdom. It works! It changes us, transforms us.

The connection then from this NT text to our OT text is that Psalm 119, the largest chapter in the Bible, is dedicated to magnifying the worth of the Word of God. Throughout the entire psalm, we see how the Word works in believers. For our study today, we’re going to examine these first 8 verses.

I. The Word of God and Its Many Forms

A) God has sent His written revelation to us in a richly diverse pattern. God did not speak in one form of prose but rather with multiple genres and characteristics. The language of the Bible is both literal and figurative, didactic and narrative, prophetic and poetic, stories and parables. The Word itself takes on a flavor of characteristics. Our text lists 7.

1. “law of the Lord” - rule of conduct, that is to say, God, in His law, has revealed how we avoid despair by avoiding sin and how we live with fullness of joy by living to His glory.
 - a. “law” is not restrictive but freeing
 - b. God is not keeping good from us but rather keeping good for us.
2. “His testimonies” - to bear witness of oneself, that is to say, God, in His Word bears witness to Himself by confirming His Word, making sure His promises, and ensuring salvation in Christ. Every time the Bible says, “The Lord said,” that’s a testimony. Revelation is divine self-disclosure.
3. “His ways” - the word literally means “a course of life”. God has not only spoken, but in speaking, He reveals His nature, His actions, His will. We get to know God by what He has said, what He has done,

and how He has done it. The more you speak with someone, the more you learn about them. Look how much God has spoken! In the Word of God, we find the ways of God. Reading the Bible is not just about what God has said but about who God is.

- a. To know God we must know His Word.
 - 4. “precepts” – a principle, a rule, a code for life. God, who has given us life, did not leave us on our own to figure it out. He gave us precepts to live this life, to navigate this life. The Bible is filled with bright caution tape over everything we should avoid and warm, welcoming light on everything we should embrace.
 - 5. “statutes” - means to engrave or inscribe, just as God engraved the ten words on stone tablets, just as He inscribed His eternal truth through the pen of men, just as He engraves the hearts of all with a conscience and the hearts of His people with His will.
 - a. God’s Word is eternal.
 - 6. “commandments” - direct instruction from God, not only meaning the ten commands, but every command found within His Word. God, in giving commands, reveals Himself to be the divine, eternal, Lawgiver. He sets the rules, the order, the standard. He issues commands that have as their end, His glory and our good!
 - a. ill. The commands of parents.
 - 7. “righteous rules” - just and righteous decrees, refers to God’s government of His creation. His judicial ordinances and decisions. These are the rules whereby God reveals how His creation is to unfold, to operate, to run, along with His sanctions when creation chooses to rebel and go their own way. There is a right way to live. There is a right way to think and act and love and speak. There is a right way, and God has revealed it to us.
- B) The point of explaining these various facets of God’s Word is to say that if we want to know God, if we want to know reality, if we want to know truth, to know real life, to know true salvation, then we must know the Word of God. He has not left us in darkness and confusion. He has spoken. He has revealed. And we have it, right here in our laps, in English! In multiple versions and studies and specialized target groups. We don’t need more English Bibles, we just need to read the ones we have! That’s the major application of today’s sermon - read your Bible!

II. The Word of God and Its Many Blessings

A) What would happen if we began to read God's Word, and receive it as God's Word to us, and believe it as God's treasure? What work would it do in us? Well there are hundreds of millions of works that God's Word would work into our lives. It would increase our faith. It would fill us with wisdom for thousands of daily decisions. It would guide our lives. It would satisfy our thirsty souls with the sweet things of God. And here in our text, the psalmist lists 7 spiritual blessings of the Word in our lives.

1. The blessing of a blameless way - blameless does not mean sinless but rather free from accusation, this simply means if we chart the course of our life according to the law of God, we will be blameless. But more than that, along with being blameless comes the blessing of spiritual joy, a spiritual satisfaction! There is a lot of joy in being found free of accusation, and there is a lot of misery when we have to constantly defend indefensible behavior, when we have to lie to cover up a lie. There is much freedom and joy in a blameless life.
2. The blessing of an undivided heart - when God has our undivided attention and affection, we have His rich spiritual blessing. Keeping His testimonies testifies that we have given Him your whole heart!
 - a. The misery of a divided heart is that we constantly have to keep up a false front according to what group of people we are with. It's exhausting!
3. The blessing of not doing wrong - When we live wrong, act wrong, speak wrong, think wrong, we fill our lives with regrets. There is a great blessing of living life without regrets. To be able to lay your head on your pillow at night with a clean, clear conscience is a huge blessing!
4. The blessing of diligent obedience - This verse is not so much about keeping God's precepts as it is about how we keep them. diligently. Not groaning or complaining. Not by force. Not by fear. But with sincere devotion. Diligence. Excellence. Worship. Obedience can be deceptive. You can force obedience to keep up appearances, but diligent obedience is sincere obedience.
5. The blessing of a consistent walk - Consistently keeping God's statutes results in a consistent life. In this ever-changing world, of ever-changing morals, promoted by ever-changing minds, represented by ever-changing lives, consistency is a huge blessing. Consistent doesn't mean we never fall, it means we never quit. Consistency is huge for your children and spouse and church!

6. The blessing of shamelessness - sin will leave us shamed, distraught, disreputable. God's Word will leave us with character, integrity, dependable. God's Word builds virtues into our lives.
 7. The blessing of an upright heart - A heart right with God, having been trained by the Word of God, cannot help but praise God!
- B) The point in listing these blessings is to say if we want to be full, to be happy, to find purpose and meaning, to find satisfaction, to know the thrill of living for our created purpose, then let's read the Bible and discover its riches and treasures and promises and life-giving, soul-saving power.

III. The Word of God and the Life of a Believer

- A) Did you catch how v8 breaks with the rest of this section. The first 7 verses contain a description of God's Word and a blessing of God's Word. V8 is a pledge followed by a plea from the psalmist.
- B) He pledges to keep the statutes. I'm not only going to know Your Word, I'm going to live it, believe it, obey it, trust in it, walk in it, abide by it. "I will keep your statutes."
- C) He pleads, "do not utterly forsake me!" What? How does that plea fit? Why does the psalmist cry out in this last verse to not be forsaken? Listen carefully. The answer lies in these blessings, the spiritual benefits. They are worth it. It means everything to be spiritually blessed, to be blameless and shameless, and consistent, and to have an undivided heart. It means everything to know God and treasure His Word. The psalmist cannot bear the thought of life without the Word of God because life without God's Word is really no life at all! And the psalmist knows he needs God's help to treasure and live God's Word!

Conclusion - If God has spoken, and if we hold His written, inspired revelation right here in our own lap, in our own language, I invite you to read the Bible with me this year?

- (1) Set aside a time.
- (2) Have a plan.
- (3) Don't stop when you miss a day.
- (4) Don't stop when you don't really understand or remember or perceive any benefit.
- (5) Pray for God to open our eyes and our heart