

Series: "Open My Eyes"

Title: "A Power of Perception the World Does Not Have" (Psalm 119:17-24)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 3/23/2019

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Today we are presenting the third segment of a message from Psalm 119.

*This transcript contains the entire message that has aired
on three broadcasts.*

The passage of Scripture to which I want to direct our attention this morning is found in Psalm 119. It is highly significant that the longest chapter in the Word of God is a chapter about the Word of God. It is a chapter about the nature of the Word of God, the purpose of the Word of God, and the effects of the Word on both the believer and the unbeliever. I want to direct our attention in particular to the words that we find beginning at verse 17. Psalm 119, beginning at verse 17:

- 17.) Deal bountifully with Your servant, that I may live and keep Your word.
- 18.) Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law.
- 19.) I am a stranger in the earth; do not hide Your commandments from me.
- 20.) My soul breaks with longing for Your judgments at all times.
- 21.) You rebuke the proud — the cursed, who stray from Your commandments.
- 22.) Remove from me reproach and contempt, for I have kept Your testimonies.
- 23.) Princes also sit and speak against me, but Your servant meditates on
Your statutes.
- 24.) Your testimonies also are my delight and my counselors.

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In particular this morning I want to focus our attention on the familiar words of verse 18 – "Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law."

"Open My Eyes"

What is the first thing that confronts us as we look at these words? Well first of all, this is a prayer. It is a petition to God. "Open my eyes..." What does this mean? Why is the psalmist praying for this? Why does he need for God to do this for Him?

Well in the original Hebrew we find that the psalmist is literally petitioning God in this way: Uncover my eyesight. I recognize that my eyes are covered. Something is over them that is preventing me from seeing at all, much less from seeing thing clearly.

And he says, "Open my eyes." There is an emphasis in the Hebrew. Open my eyes – yes, even mine. It is a personal petition. It is a petition that recognizes a personal condition. It is a petition that recognizes a personal need. It is also, as we shall see, a petition that recognizes personal responsibility. And it is a petition that is asking the Lord for personal benefit.

What is our natural condition?

Apart from the work of God, we are the people who are described many times in the pages of the Word of God in this way – "people who walk in darkness." Literally, "people who walk in obscurity" – people whose vision is not merely impaired, but obscured. Blocked. People who are in utter spiritual darkness.

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Our eyes are covered. We are in darkness. We cannot see.

The way of the wicked is like darkness; They do not [even] know what makes them stumble. (Proverbs 4:19)

Satan, "the god of this age," Second Corinthians chapter 4 tells us, "has blinded [the minds of those] who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Corinthians 4:4-6)

Here is where today's church is failing. Today's church, with few and precious exceptions, preaches man, not Christ. Man's word, not God's Word. Why? Because, as these verses tell us, light has never shined into their hearts. They are still in darkness.

And what is the result?

The Holy Spirit tells us in 1 Corinthians 2:14. "...the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God" – literally, the unsaved man does not accept the things of God as truth – Why? – "for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them" – he is incapable of understanding them – Why? – "because they are spiritually discerned."

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Let me put this in terms of what has happened this past week in our nation. This past week, the highest court of the United States ruled that it is a Constitutionally-protect act for two men or two women to enter into a so-called marriage relationship, to enter into a relationship that God in His holy Law repeatedly calls an abomination, a supremely detestable thing in His sight.

Would we have had the Supreme Court decision of this week if the decision had been rendered by men and women whose eyes could see? We have the answer in the words of the Court. If you read the majority opinion that was given, and if you read all of the dissents that were written, there is absolutely nothing of Biblical Christianity in any of them. Absolutely nothing. The case was argued and decided completely apart from even the slightest consideration of the holy Law of the God of the universe, the One that our own founding documents acknowledge as the Author of true liberty.

And why is our government in this condition? It is because of this: As the church goes, so goes the nation. The church has failed to grasp that it alone has supernatural authority and power that emanates from the supernatural Word of God.

The believing church, the Bible-believing church, the Scripture-driven church, the praying church, the church that holds forth God's Word as the only standard, the church that holds forth God's Word as the inerrant authority and the infallible critic of the human heart, the church that declares that all things are naked and open before the eyes of the One to whom we must give account – that church, Christ's true

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church, has greater power than all of human government to exert a righteous influence upon the nation. It has the power of God.

Would we have the conditions that we have in so much of what is called the Evangelical church today if the churches were being led by men who can see? It is by the way in which they are leading the church that they most clearly demonstrate that they cannot see, their spiritual eyes are darkened. Many of them – I would dare to say most of them, based on the evidence – are still lost in their sins. They are still blinded by the god of this world.

How does God remedy that condition?

It is God who brings the light that drives away darkness.

Through the tender mercy of our God... the Dayspring from on high has visited us; to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." (Luke 1:78-79)

God does this first of all by the saving work of Christ. God applies that work to our hearts by His Spirit who regenerates us. By His Spirit who lives within us. By His Spirit who "guides...into all truth" (look at this week's broadcast notes)

"That I May See"

Why does God remedy that condition of obscured sight, covered eyesight resulting in spiritual darkness? He does it, the psalmist declares, "that I may see." This is a very rich statement in the original Hebrew. "That I may see," the psalmist says.

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That I may pay attention to God's Law. That I may behold God's Law with unrestrained eyes. That I may give to God's Law due respect and regard. That I may look upon it with a proper insight, with a proper spiritual appreciation, and with an appropriate response. All of those things are contained within the original language of those four words, "that I may see."

Why does God do this? Why does God answer the petition of the man who prays, "Open my eyes, that I may see...?"

God does not do it to give us a mere knowledge that will puff us up with pride. No. He gives sight so that we may understand our humble position before Him.

He gives us knowledge that increases our responsibility before Him. He gives us knowledge that must be obeyed. He does this so that we may walk in the light, walk in the truth. He does this in order that we may set our minds on things above where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

"Open my eyes, that I may see." Biblical truth is revealed truth. Man does not discover it or understand it on his own. He cannot.

Biblical truth is revelation from God. Biblical truth consists of God's facts, not man's opinions. To understand Biblical truth requires God's enlightenment by His Spirit. To obey Biblical truth requires God's illumination.

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"Wondrous Things"

And what is the nature of that truth? The psalmist calls it "wondrous things." Again, this is a rich term in the original. It speaks of things that are surpassingly marvellous. It speaks of things that are extraordinary. It speaks of things that are beyond mere human power to perceive. All of that is embodied in this word.

The Scripture-driven Christian can see what the unregenerated world cannot see. Let me put it to you in a very basic way. The Christian sees a different world than the ungodly see. The blue of the sky is a different blue than the ungodly see. The green of the grass is a different green.

As the hymn writer has put it, "Something lives in every hue" – even in the very colors of the creation – that "Christless eyes have never seen"

The difference is that fundamental, that basic. A fundamental difference in the way the Christian looks at the entire world, because God has opened our eyes to behold wondrous things out of His law.

What things?

First of all, wondrous things about Himself. That He exists. That He created this universe, out of nothing, in six days. That He created us as the pinnacle of His creation.

Secondly, wondrous things about ourselves. We were created to have fellowship with our Creator, and all the benefits that pour out of that relationship.

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Also, our lost condition. Why is that "wondrous"? It is wondrous because God in His mercy does not merely annihilate us. He could have wiped the slate clean when our first parents sinned. But God did not do that.

Thirdly, God's Word teaches us wondrous things about Christ. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Fourthly, God's Word teaches us wondrous things about this present world. The wondrous thing about this world is that

For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. (Romans 8:19-21)

Fifthly, God's Word teaches us wondrous things about the world to come.

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent

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heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. (2 Peter 3:10-13)

"From Your Law"

Wondrous things. And where do we learn them? "From Your law," the psalmist says. And here again, the Hebrew is rich. Those three words – "from Your law" – mean that these wondrous things are by reason of God's law. They are in accordance with God's law. And they have certainty because they are God's law, God's Word.

This phrase in the Hebrew also emphasizes the ownership of this Law – that it is God's law, that it emanates from His mind, from His being, and not from the mind and being of fallen man. It is not of human origin. It is not from the mind of the natural man. It is from the mind of the holy God of the universe.

And this phrase in the original also emphasizes the fact that God's law, God's Word, is a written Word. A written body of instruction. Given by inspiration of God. Forever settled. Unchanging and unchangeable, because it is exactly like its Author and Owner.

"From Your law," the psalmist says. The third emphasis in the words is that what God reveals in His law, and what God teaches from His law, is a matter of facts and certainty, not subjective opinion.

Let me again relate these facts about the Law of God to the horrible sin that our government has further plunged this nation into, this past week.

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When man makes laws that are in keeping with God's law, he makes laws that act to restrain sin in this present world. When man makes laws that are contrary to God's law, man increases his condemnation before God. That is the position we as a nation are now in.

Let me give you a brief history lesson about the United States of America and the law of God. In 1902, Theodore Roosevelt was the last president of the United States to speak of the direct intervention of God against a nation when it forgets God's law – as Theodore Roosevelt put it, [and I am quoting] "when the hand of the Lord [is] heavy upon [a nation] in drought or flood or pestilence, when in bodily distress and in anguish of soul [the nation pays] the penalty of folly and a [habitually disobedient] heart."

Franklin D. Roosevelt was the last to mention the Law of God as the nation's standard in an official presidential statement. The last president to call upon Americans to "bow before God in contrition for our sins" was Dwight Eisenhower in 1953.

Now the best evidence we have is that none of these men were Christian believers. But they were brought up reading the Bible. By God's hand they at least understood that much.

But since 1973 in particular our government, our courts, our legislatures, have increasingly made laws that are contrary to God's law – laws and court rulings that are plunging this nation and this world further and further into sinful horrors that would have been unimaginable within the lifetime of my parents. And in the past

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decade the pace of the spread of evil in this country through the propagation of ungodly laws has become literally breathtaking.

Dear friends, if we ever needed a reminder of the fact that this present evil world is indeed evil, and that this present evil world is indeed perishing, and if we ever needed to be reminded of the fact that we are commanded to love not the world, neither the things that are in the world – well dear friends, we have most certainly been reminded of those things this past week.

And these things should also remind every Christian of the fact that God's law has a far greater and eternal purpose than the restraint of sin in this present perishing world.

What is that purpose? Galatians chapter 3, verse 24: "Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ," – to show us our desperate condition, to show us our need of Christ, to show us what Christ has done on behalf of sinners – Why? – "that we might be justified by faith."

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Romans 10:4). Christ is the end of the law – literally, in the original, He is the end to which all things relate that pertain to the Law of God.

It is the Law of God that shows us what Christ has done, and why He has done it. It the Law of God that truly shows us that everything Christ has done, He has done in relation to the Law.

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Christ is the One who perfectly obeyed the Law that we cannot keep.

Christ is the One who took upon His own sinless self our violation of God's Law. He bore our sins in His own body on the Cross.

Christ is the One who paid the penalty of God's Law on our behalf.

Christ is the One who has thus redeemed us from the curse of the Law.

Christ is the One who has thus given us, undeserving sinners, justification before the holy God of the universe – He is the One who made it possible for us, guilty sinners, deserving of Hell, to be declared "not guilty" before the judgment bar of God, given the robe of Jesus' perfect righteousness. And therefore, as Romans 8:33 declares to us, no one in all the universe can bring a charge against God's elect. God who was our condemning judge is now God our loving Father – but only because of what Christ has done in relation to the Law.

Psalm 19 verse 7 tells us that it is the law of the Lord that is perfect – that is, spotless and complete – converting, or bringing back, the soul.

Application – For the Christian

"Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things out of Your Law." Let me say a word to Christians this morning. Do you understand your true position, according to the Word of God, the Law of God?

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The people who walked in darkness have seen great light. You have a power of perception that the world does not have. You have a Person living within you that the world does not know. You have a Book in your hands that only you can truly understand.

And as Christians, we must resist the sinful propensity to lapse back into the effects of our former condition by neglecting God's Word.

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them. For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (Ephesians 5:6-8)

In John chapter 16 verse 13, Jesus declared to His disciples, that the indwelling Spirit "will guide you into all truth." The Greek could also accurately be rendered as saying that the Holy Spirit will "give guidance" to the Christian "in all aspects of the truth." In other words, God has given us His Holy Spirit so that He may apply the truth of His Word to the situations we face in our daily lives. There can be no more practical help for the Christian than the guidance of the Spirit of God living within you.

Dear friend, spend time in the Word of God. Spend time in prayer. Ask God to guide you in the truth of His Word, to help you understand how to apply His Word to your specific situations, challenges, and problems in living with unbelievers in your own household or your own family. "He will guide you into all truth." This is the

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sure promise of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. God the Holy Spirit will do it. Pray this great petition of the psalmist, "Open my eyes that I may see wondrous things out of Your law."

Application – For the Unbeliever

And if you are here this morning as an unbeliever, let me say a word to you as well. The words of this psalm are also words that you need to pray. This is where you must begin with God. "Open my eyes that I may see wondrous things out of Your law."

You must realize your blinded, hopeless condition before Him. You must come to the only One who can remedy that condition. You must come to Christ. You must ask God to save you from your sins and from the eternal wrath that you most certainly and mostly justly deserve because you have broken His holy Law.

Only Christ can save you. And Christ, who can and will save you if you come to Him, will send His Holy Spirit, the Author of the written Word of God, to live within you. And then you will truly see the wondrous things of God that are to be found in His Word. You will be able to read His Word as you have never been able to read it. You will see God as you have never seen Him. You will see yourself as you have never seen yourself. You will see this world as you have never seen it. And you will see the world to come as only the child of God can see it.

The words that we read this morning in Isaiah are God's call to you. He says,

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...to those who are fearful-hearted, "Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God; He will come and save you." Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

Amen.

About the Broadcast

The Scripture-Driven Church airs each week across the United States and around the world. Our goal is to obey Christ's Great Commission: preaching the Gospel to all, and equipping believers in Christ to live every area of life by the sole authority of Scripture, to the glory of our Lord and Savior.

For more information, please visit our website, www.teachingtheword.org.

The prayers of our listeners and supporters are vital to all we do. We thank you for bringing this ministry before the throne of grace. We are also grateful to God for the gifts of individuals and churches that support this work financially.

**May the Lord richly bless your personal study
of His inspired, infallible, inerrant Word.**

TeachingtheWord Ministries

Box 2533, Westminster, Maryland 21158 USA
In North America, toll-free 888-804-9655