

The word Is Enough

Psalm 119

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Bible Text: Psalm 119:57-64
Preached On: Sunday, March 3, 2024

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This morning, I want to encourage you to open your Bibles to Psalm chapter 119, right there in the middle of your Bible, Psalm 119. Today, we're going to begin in verse 57. Now if you're joining us today and you're a guest or visitor, or maybe haven't worshiped with us in some while, I want to invite you to a very strategic study through the longest chapter in the Bible. Psalm 119 has 176 verses and if you have not been with us, if you turned to verse 57, you'll notice that in most of your Bibles, there's somewhat of a strange-looking character and a word you probably cannot pronounce that is right above it. In fact, Psalm 119 is divided into 22 sections that are marked in most of our Bibles by the letters of what we know as the Hebrew alphabet. It is set aside as being a strategic designation that this is a passage, this is a chapter, this is a section in the Bible that requires our undivided attention.

So why is it that we would be taking this journey? Why is it that we would be walking through this chapter in this season of our life? Well, really, there's two reasons. The first one is this. If you're new to us, you may not be aware that we as a church body have challenged ourselves in this calendar year to memorize scripture, not just to read it, not just to study it, not just to hear it preached, but to place it in our hearts. In fact, individually, we have set aside time, we have reserved selected chapters of scripture. Collectively, it is our goal, it is our desire by the end of this calendar year to have the entirety of the Bible memorized as a church family from beginning to end. Allow me to share with you that we have now over 1,100 chapters that have been reserved, and so maybe you've been sitting on the sidelines, maybe you didn't know about it or were not aware. We want to invite you to be a part of it. Each and every week I hear stories of people who the word of God, even in a chapter or a section that they may not have naturally been gravitate toward, is changing and revolutionizing their life.

That's the first reason. The second reason is this. The overriding theme of Psalm 119 is the primacy and the power that the word of God can and should have in our life and today as we turn to verse 57, this is one of those messages that is, quote, specifically vague. And the reason I address that is every one of us today has our own story. Every one of us has our own background. Everybody here has their own respective struggles and at the same time successes. And so today it is my desire for you to see your life within the context of today's passage and address this subject matter, that the Bible is enough. And

what I mean by that is these eight verses today, kind of a microcosm of the totality of scripture, have within them the answers to the, quote, struggles of life, the questions of life, the dilemmas of life. No matter what you're walking through, no matter where you've been, or no matter where you believe you're headed, today in Psalm 119, we're going to see that the Bible addresses those specific issues.

In verse 57, it says,

57 Thou art my portion, O LORD: I have said that I would keep thy words. 58 I intreated thy favour with my whole heart: be merciful unto me according to thy word. 59 I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. 60 I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments. 61 The bands of the wicked have robbed me: but I have not forgotten thy law. 62 At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments. 63 I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts. 64 The earth, O LORD, is full of thy mercy: teach me thy statutes.

Now, if you've been with us regularly through this study, one of the things you'll notice is even though this is the eighth section of Psalm 119, there are some pretty consistent themes that keep piping up or popping up, and one of the reasons, I'm just going to confess, is that most of us are pretty slow learners. But that being said, it's going to kind of help us out and it begins today with the question of all questions, why? You know, that's one of those questions that is so frustrating in life. When things occur, when events take place in our life, there's oftentimes the why that we want answered that often eludes us. But there's a big why here in verse 57. Notice it says, "I have said that I would keep thy words." Why is this passage so important for our lives? Because you would not be here this morning, you would not be watching online, you would not be listening by way of radio if at some level that verse has not rung true in your life. There has been a time in every one of your lives, now it may have been a fleeting moment, it may have been a lifelong journey where you have said, "You know what? I think I'm going to try it God's way." Now again, that might have just been a fleeting moment or it might have been a lifetime struggle, but every single one of us at some point, we may not have voiced it to anybody else, it may just be a conversation between us and God, we've said, "Okay, God, I'm going to try to do it your way."

And the struggle is because for all of us, it didn't go as we planned. It didn't go as we had scripted out. In fact, Jesus told us in Luke chapter 14, he said, "What man is it that goes to build a building that does not count the cost first? Or what man is it that goes to war and he does not put a plan together?" Let me put it in today's contemporary language. I've heard this said by numerous coaches in days past, that the best playbook goes out the window the first time you get hit in the jaw. In other words, we can make all the plans and have all the expectations but one of the hardest knocks that we face in life is this thing called reality, and when it comes, oftentimes we begin to question, "Why is it, God? I said I would seek your word. I said I desired the things. I said that I wanted to be a part of what you're interested in my life." And yet difficulties, circumstances and much like

building that building are going quotes to war, it did not nor does it look as we'd expected or we'd anticipated.

And so today, we find ourselves all in this giant singular collective. At some level we've desired the things of God, we've sought the word of God, and it didn't quite go as we expected. That's why verse 58 is so critical. It says, "I entreated thy favor with my whole heart: be merciful unto me according to thy word." That word, mercy, is one of those themes that keeps arising here in Psalm 119 and by definition, mercy is not receiving that which we rightfully are owed or deserve. In other words, when we talk about the mercy of God, this is a good thing because if you think about what we rightfully deserve, it is by the grace and the goodness and the mercy of God, we do not live out that which we know should be a part of our lives. In fact, in 1 John chapter 1 verse 8, I love this verse. It says he that says he is without sin is a liar. In other words, if you're willing to say, "You know what? I don't think I've ever messed up. I don't think I've ever made the wrong decision. I am perfect." You know what the Bible calls you? A liar. That's who you are, right? You've heard the old joke, right? You know, if you're in a room, you ask, hey, who's never told a lie, raise your hand. Whoever raised their hand, you just lied. But you know what the next verse, verse 9 says? It says if we confess our sin, he is faithful and he is just to forgive us of our sin and our unrighteousness.

You talk about the mercy of God. The fact that we know the Bible says that we deserve and the wages of our sin is death and the fact that we're vertical and we're ventilated today is the mercy of God. Allow me to just walk through somewhat quickly what we know as the chronology, the story of scripture, and I want you to see the mercy of God. Notice the last phrase in verse 58, "according to thy word." Not what you think God should do, not what you think God ought to do, but what his word testifies that he's already accomplished. We have to begin the story in the Garden of Eden. We know that humanity was given access to every tree of the garden to eat freely with the exception of one, and it was that tree that we allowed ourselves by the serpent to be talked into and we talked ourselves into it. We thought it was good to the taste. We thought it would make us wise like the gods and where did we end up? Humanity ended up hiding behind a fig leaf making excuses. God had warned us, "In the day that you eat thereof, you will, quote, surely die." And you read the end of chapter 3 of Genesis, there are consequences. There are repercussions for our rebellion. But do you know how that chapter ends? By the mercy of God. You say, what do you mean the mercy of God? What does he do? He provides animal skins for them. He provides protection for them. He provides warmth for them. We see that according to God's mercy, when we should rightfully be left to our own devices, he still cares, he still loves, and he still has purpose for our life.

It only takes three chapters before you get to chapter 6 of Genesis. You know what the Bible says about us, humanity? Every thought was wicked. I mean, think about that for just a moment. Every thought, not most thoughts, not a majority of thoughts, but all thoughts. But then there was a man by the name of Noah and by the mercy of God, you know what he allowed Noah and his family to do? Get on a boat. He did not have to allow Noah access to the boat. Now the Bible says in verse 8 of chapter 6 that Noah found grace in the eyes of God. Grace is getting what you cannot earn yourself. You

know what God gave him? The instruction manual to build the boat is what he gave him. That was the grace of God was building the boat. The mercy of God is that he escaped the judgment that was all around.

We are six chapters in, and we discover the mercy of God. You move a little bit further, we have this thing called the Tower of Babel, where humanity again gathers themselves and says, "We wanna make a name for ourselves. We wanna show God that we deserve to be the most important." Not only does the Lord scatter them and confuse their language, but you know what mercy comes up next? Chapter 12 of Genesis, it says, he went to a man named Abram, we know him later as Abraham when the child of promise Isaac would be born, and we discover that God's got a Redeemer. We discover that God's got a Messiah. We discover that God himself is going to dwell in flesh. He's going to pay the price of his blood. He's going to rise from the dead so that we could be redeemed, we could be saved, we could be forgiven. We see the mercy of God.

I could go through almost every chapter and every personality, but allow me to pick up the pace just a little bit. Every character that you put on a pedestal in the Bible is the beneficiary of the mercy of God. How about David? David was a great man, a great leader. Even today, they call it the city of David over there, but does anybody remember a little issue with Bathsheba? The mercy of God. How about Solomon? A man that was wise beyond his years until he decided that he needed a whole bunch of wives and concubines. But God was merciful unto him. How about the nation of Israel collectively, the prophets specifically? In fact, you read throughout your Old Testament and there is this cycle, we call it the sin cycle, where humanity individually and corporately keeps taking advantage of the grace of God and falling into the trap of sin. So what does God do? By allowing them to come out of it, he extends a hand and an arm of mercy.

Let's make our way to the New Testament for the sake of time. How about a guy that we can all identify with, Simon Peter. Open mouth, insert foot. That's him. Every time we turn around, I mean, he's almost spiritually bipolar and what I mean by that is this, in one section, he'll say, "You're the Christ, the Son of the living God," in the same chapter, Jesus says, "Get behind me, Satan." I mean, there's a whole lot going on there, right? But this one who said, "O Jesus, it doesn't matter what they do to you," the same man that when they apprehended Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, cut off the ear of a guy by the name of Malchus, "I'll never, ever deny you." Did you know that within about six hours, standing about 20 feet away from him, he made this statement, "I've never met that man before." And did you know that a few days later, after Jesus rose from the grave, they're up in Galilee, they're off the sea, they've been fishing and you know what Jesus does? He pulls Simon Peter aside. He said, "I'm gonna ask you a question. Do you love me?" He said, "I do." "Feed my lambs. Do you love me? Feed my sheep. Do you love me? Feed my sheep." And what do we see Jesus do? I'll tell you what we see, it's called mercy. It is the mercy of God.

Here's my last illustration, a man by the name of Saul of Tarsus. That's right. A Jewish man who had the legal right to capture and to incriminate and if necessary to take the lives of what you and I know as believers in Jesus Christ. He's on the road to Damascus

in Acts chapter 9 and the Lord meets him there in a dramatic fashion. It's the conversion of Saul. You know that's the mercy of God. Here is a man who strategically was so contrary to the way and the will of God and what did God say? "You know what? In spite of what you've done, I still love you. I still care for you. I still want the best for you."

So here's where the passage is by the time we get to verse 58, we've all at some point said, "God, I want to do it your way," at some point we've all flailed and/or failed and God says, "That's okay. I'm going to extend mercy to you, just like I did Saul, just like I did Peter, just like I did David, just like I did humanity as a whole." But here's the next question, how? How do we tap into this? How does it become a reality for us? Verse 59 says, "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments." That first statement there in verse 59 says, "I thought on my ways." That could be one of the hardest things to accomplish in our culture today, to be alone with your thoughts.

Now, young people today don't understand what some of us understand today. I remember a time, and I'm not a seasoned as some of you in the room, I remember a time as a young person that I experienced something that is rare today. You ready for it? Boredom. Oh yeah, there were times where there was nothing literally on a TV that only had three channels and I was the remote. There was a time when your friends went on vacation in spring break, you couldn't FaceTime them. There was a time that if you wanted to make a phone call beyond the county line, it cost you a whole lot of money. Some of y'all remember that? You know, one of the best things that ever happened to me growing up was I was alone with my thoughts. You know, that's one of the rarities today. You don't have to be a young person to realize it. Anywhere and everywhere we go today because of the quote gift of technology there is what we might call information overload. I mean it doesn't matter where you go, you're going to hear you're going to see, you're going to experience it at some level. Here's the problem, in Proverbs 14:15 it says a simple man believes the thing at its first telling. You know what's happened to our culture today? We have become a people who the first and the loudest voice we hear, we just assume it's true. But you know what the rest of that verse says in Proverbs 14:15? It says a prudent man, he weighs the information. He actually spends a little time. He doesn't just take it for its initial presentation, but he ponders and he thinks.

Now that's chapter 14 of Proverbs. You skip a couple pages to the right to chapter 16, verse 2, and it says this, that a man believes that his ways are always right, but God proves him otherwise. If you will spend any amount of time just thinking on your life and thinking of who God is, you know what you'll discover? Verse 60, "I will make haste and not delay to keep thy testimonies." When you realize our gravity, our propensity towards sin, when you realize our incapacity to be righteous, to be holy, and to make consistently decisions that are beneficial to ourselves and others, when you actually sit down for a brief moment and you have nobody speaking into your life other than God himself, you know what happens? You realize he's not the one who's messed up. It's you. And so if we do not find times and days of solitude, if we do not find moments where we, quote, get alone with God, we're gonna continue to be fretting and upset and frustrated, because

oftentimes we've got so many channels open in our life that God's voice just gets drowned out in the midst of it.

So here's the question, when? Now, we talked about the how, but I want you to notice the when in verse 60, verse 61, "The bands of the wicked have robbed me: but I have not forgotten thy law. At midnight I will rise to give thanks." Now, this is one of those truths in God's word. It's not convenient. It's not enjoyable, but it's there. We talked about the why. We've all said, "God, I desire the things of you," and we've fallen short. We talked about the what, that God is the God of mercy. We talked about how we've got to spend some time with him. If you do not set aside time to hear directly from God, I'll tell you when you will, it's when verse 60 and 61 take place. It says when they have, quote, robbed me. I've got news for you, this old world, if you give it enough time, it will rob you clean of everything that you've desired, you've hoped for, you've had aspirations or you've, quote, anticipated.

Remember what Jesus said in John chapter 10? He said the thief, the thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy. You know when people are most apt to hear from God? It's when the enemy has robbed them of everything else. Think about the prodigal son for just a moment. He's out in the field by himself, no money, no friends. All of a sudden, he came to his senses, did he not? It is when those that we thought we could trust do us wrong and they rob us, it's when promises and projections of outcomes do not come to fruition, they rob us. Do you notice verse 62, what does it say? "At midnight." See, when we've been done wrong, when our life doesn't go the way that we had hoped, one of the things that is most assured is it's hard to sleep, and at midnight, you will either wake up to your thoughts or you will not be able to go to sleep because of your thoughts. See, some of you go to bed early. You sleep for a few hours and then you wake up at midnight with the pressure and the angst of the world upon you. There are some of us who don't go to sleep at night and can't go to sleep at night because of the same reason. But it's at midnight.

Let me share with you the tale of two midnights in the Bible. John chapter 18. Jesus is in the Garden of Gethsemane. He is literally hours from allowing his body to be placed upon a cross. I mean, you think about the last few moments of his life or at this time. He had gathered with the disciples. He'd washed their feet. They'd had a meal together. It says they walked to the garden. They sang a hymn, which means they're probably Baptist. First, second, last verse. It didn't last long. They got there. Just making sure you're awake this morning. They got there. He said, "Peter, James, and John, you step aside. I'm going to go and pray." We know from Matthew chapter 26, three times, he said, "Not my will but yours be done." At around midnight, Jesus got off his knees and do you know who he was approached by? That's right, Judas. Judas Iscariot. But he wasn't alone, was he? He had 500 soldiers with him. They had swords, they had staves, and it was there at that moment that they moved him to Caiaphas' house where a trial would take place that was so much of a quote unquote kangaroo court, they had to bribe witnesses to make lies up that coincided with each other. At midnight, he was done wrong, he was robbed, he was taken into captivity and those who claimed he'd never leave were gone like the cockroaches when the light switch comes on.

But there's another story about midnight. Acts chapter 16. Remember this Saul of Tarsus who was on the road to Damascus that got converted? He didn't just get converted, he became a preacher, a proclaimer, an evangelist of the message, the person, and the gospel of Jesus Christ. He was despised for it. See, Judas got rewarded for selling Jesus out, 30 pieces of silver. Judas had a big crowd around him because of what he was about to do. Ah, but Saul Tarsus, he had one solitary friend in what we would call solitary confinement in prison, not because they had really broken any wall, but because they just would not quit talking about Jesus. You remember what happened at midnight? God opened up the doors. He opened up the doors and they experienced freedom.

Now let me ask you a very obvious rhetorical question: which one of those midnight stories do you want to be yours? Do you want the story of Judas or do you want the story of Saul of Tarsus? Judas took the money, threw it back at their feet, and there's still a piece of dirt in Israel we've still never built on because of it. And Saul of Tarsus probably became the most prolific and the most well-known believer and disciple of Jesus Christ since the resurrection. You know what the difference is? This passage. Why? Because all Judas thought about is what would satisfy and give him what he wanted. You remember what Saul was doing? Saul of Tarsus? Paul the apostle? He was at midnight, couldn't sleep, singing praises, recognizing God for who he is and always will be. See, I've got news for you, you're gonna have a midnight, and for most of us, we're gonna have a whole lot of them. So the question is, at midnight, are we gonna pull a Judas or are we gonna pull a Paul the apostle?

You know, this passage ends with a who. Verse 63 says, "I am a companion of all them that fear thee" Now this is a great conclusion to the passage, because we've talked about our frailty of the faith, we've talked about the mercy of God, we've talked about pondering on the person of God and the words of God, we've talked about the struggles of midnight. It says, "I'm a companion of those who fear thee." I want to share with you one of the most effective strategies that the enemy has in your life. You ready? To get you alone. Now, I didn't say get you alone with your thoughts with God. I'm talking about navigating life alone. I'm talking about being in the marketplace alone. I'm talking about walking down the road of life alone. I'm not talking about at midnight pouring your heart out to God alone. I'm talking about living life alone. And I can prove it Biblical. Let's go back to the Garden of Eden. If you'll read the New Testament, you'll discover something. Ladies, don't get upset with me. Get upset with God. Eve was all alone. She was all alone when she listened to that forked tongue of the serpent. How about David, that famous Bathsheba incident, guess what? He was all alone.

See, there's a whole lot of jokes that are out there, and I like self-deprecating humor, and you've heard them, and I won't necessarily say them on air, but there's a lot of jokes about us Baptists, and what we'll do when we're alone, but what we won't do when there's another one with us. Oh, don't act like you don't know those jokes. They're all out there. Why is it? Because when we are with other believers, when we allow ourselves to rub shoulders with those of like faith, God uses it to supernaturally strengthen us. In fact, in Hebrews chapter 10 verse 25, it says, "Do not forsake the gathering. Do not forsake the assembly. Do not try to live this Christian life all on your own." That is why 14 weeks in

2020 was so tough, because we're all alone on our couches, connected by pixels being transmitted electronically. You want to go wayward in the Christian life, try to do it by yourself.

It says, "I'm a companion of those that fear thee." Listen, that is why fellowship, that is why interaction, that is why accountability with each other is so critical and is so important because left to ourselves, we are so susceptible to the enemy. And one of the reasons that verse 57 is true is because we don't heed verse 63. The reason that oftentimes our intents or our desires to do the things of God and to live a godly life fall by the wayside is because we don't have others encouraging us, holding us accountable. That is why in 1 Corinthians chapter 12, listen, it does not call us the digit of Christ, it calls us the body of Christ, that we are connected, that we interact, we intersect, we encourage, and we hold accountable.

Let me give you the secular explanation of this. Show me who your friends are, and I'll show you your future. You've heard that statement, right? Anybody who's ever struggled in life with any type of addiction or struggle will tell you one of the hardest things to do is to get new influences and encouragement in your life. See, the people we surround ourselves with, the people that we interact with, the people that we allow to speak into our life, will determine the next step of life.

Eve was alone and David was alone. Can I remind you that on the porch, 20 feet from where Jesus was being tried, did you know that Simon Peter did not have another disciple next to him? Let me conclude with this one. Judas. You know that when Judas went and he conspired with those men, do you know which one of the other disciples he took with him? None of them. Not one of them. In other words, one of the greatest truths that the Bible is teaching us today is that if we want a fertile path, if we want a prosperous path with the Lord, then we better hold hands and link arms and rub shoulders with each other because by ourselves, we have a track record of the enemy taking us out. And yet what does our world say today statically? What's all the information? You don't need anybody else. Just do this on your own. You quote, got this. Yeah, that's what we said in the Garden of Eden. That's what David said on the housetop. That's what Judas said in the chamber of powerful men. If you and I are going to heed the word of God, if we're going to live it out, we have got to do so corporately. We've got to do so as a body and we've got to do what Hebrews 10:25 says, we cannot forsake the assembly.

I'm gonna close with this. Why do most people as believers not seek out this? Why do they not seek it out being a part of a corporate body or being a part of other believers? And I'm gonna tell you the secret, you ready? Here it is. Here's the secret sauce. You know why people won't do it? Because we're discovered, or we're scared of being discovered because guess what, I've got news for you, we're all messed up. This church, any biblical church, should never be viewed as a country club with dues, but a hospital with the largest ER in town because that, my friends, is how you get well. You go down to the country club, you just hide your problems with money. You go to the hospital, it doesn't matter how much money you got, your problems are exposed to everybody.

It says, "I was a companion of them that feared thee." Don't ever think you can do this on your own. If you believe you can, you might want to read about Eve, David, Judas, Peter, and a whole list of others.

Let's pray with our heads bowed, our eyes closed. As we come to this time in our service, I know that the majority of the message about the word of God today was about those who already subscribed to, who already believe, who are already part of the family of God, but maybe today, maybe today as you heard the challenge, maybe today as we walked through those verses, you realized your longing for, your desire of, your need for this. Maybe today the Lord through his Spirit and his word spoke to you very clearly that the problem isn't those that we point the finger at, the problem isn't these or that, the problem is us. In fact, the Bible makes it very clear that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God and the wages of our sin is death. Here's the beautiful gospel story. It says in Romans chapter 10 verse 13, whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. It doesn't say whoever joins a church, whoever gets baptized, whoever starts this, whoever stops that. It just says if you are willing to admit that you're the problem and Jesus is the answer, he will forgive you and he will save you. Maybe today, maybe today that's who you are. Maybe you're here in person. Maybe you're online. Maybe today God spoke to you through his word and said, "Hey, you're not a believer. You're not a part of the family. And I desire you so much to be." So maybe today's the day where you cry out. It's not about reading a script. It's not about saying it out loud. It's a heart's cry. Maybe your heart's cry today would be as simple as this. "God, I'm just confessing today what you already know about me. I've got a sin problem. God, I've been places I should have never been. I've participated in things I should have never been a part of. I have spoken words and I've had thoughts that are so contrary to your word. And I believe that verse in Romans 6:23, the wages, the result of my sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. God, today I believe that Jesus is the only answer. I believe Jesus loved me so much that he came on my behalf. He lived a sinless life on my behalf. God, today I believe that when Jesus Christ allowed himself to be nailed to the cross, he was bearing the pain, the punishment of my sin. And God, I believe that three days later when he rose from the grave, he made it possible, he made it feasible for my sin to be forgiven and my soul to be saved. God, today I don't have all the answers to the world's problems, but I know Jesus, he's the answer to my sin problem. So the best way I know how, I'm asking you to forgive me, I'm asking you to save me, I just want to turn my life over to you."

With our heads still bowed, our eyes still closed, maybe today you're that person. You may have been in church a thousand times in your life, but today's the day. where you cried out for Jesus to save you. In a moment, I'm going to pray for us. We're going to stand and sing together. I just want to invite you wherever you are just to step out and step forward. I'll be here, others as well. We'd love the privilege of celebrating with you and praying with you and praying for you. Or maybe today you say, "You know what, I already got that covered, but I need to have a conversation about this thing called baptism." Or maybe today you say, "You know what, you talked a whole lot about the body of Christ. I'd like to have a discussion about what that means for myself and my family." We'd love that privilege. Or maybe today you say, "You know what? There's just

a lot of heartache in my life. There's a lot of struggle in my life. I'm at my wit's end. I need somebody to pray with me. I need somebody to pray for me." Whatever God's doing in your life, we just want the privilege to be a part of it.

Lord Jesus, thank you. Thank you that at this time in the service we can look back not just on the last 60 minutes, but on the entirety of human history and see your mercy unfold before us. God, today I pray that as we've heard of your mercy, as we've read it in your word, that we would now respond to it. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray, amen.