

# Biblical Hatred

*Psalm 119*

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**Bible Text:** Psalm 119:113-120  
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This evening, I want to invite you to open your Bibles to the book of Psalm, chapter 119. And as you're turning to a section of your Bible that by this time might just naturally just open that way, I want to give you kind of an update on our Bible memorization plan, what we've called Project 1189. There's 1189 chapters in the Bible. We're actually reserving 1210 because Psalm 119 has 22 sections and maybe I'm just too nice or too gracious. I wasn't going to ask anybody to memorize 176 verses, okay? But nonetheless, even though we have not completed reserving every one of those chapters, there's an honest reason why. Most of the chapters that are left are genealogies. They're the list of names and places and numbers and such, but we've heard from hundreds of folks that want to be a part of it, but for whatever reason, that's just not kind of the direction. That being said, for all along, our plan was that after Easter, we're gonna open up the second portal. In other words, remember, only each chapter can be reserved one time. So I'm gonna go ahead and give you a little heads up here. Beginning next Sunday, we're gonna open up the second portal. So maybe you're here tonight, maybe you're watching online, you said, you know, I really wanna be a part of this, but memorizing 150 names and places, I just don't think that's in my wheelhouse. Well, beginning next Sunday, we're opening up the whole Bible again. So whether it be sections of Psalm 19, which is eight verses, whether it's a chapter in the gospels, Paul's letters, wherever it may be, whatever it may be, just want you to be aware that we're opening up the second portal and on Labor Day, we're going to open up the third. Okay, that's been our plan all along. Obviously, we hope to have every chapter memorized at least once, but at the very least, we truly want every single person, if possible, to be memorizing scripture and hiding it in their heart. And so next Sunday morning, we are going to open up what we know as the second portal.

Tonight, we continue our study of Psalm 119. Obviously, we're doing so on Sunday morning, but because of our scheduling, we're kinda having to double up and tonight, we're gonna begin in verse 113. Now, as you're turning to Psalm 119:113, again, as we walk through these respective eight verse sections, tonight, we're gonna deal with a subject matter that is not that. We're gonna deal with a subject matter that may sound initially oxymoronish. You know what an oxymoron is, right? Two words that seem to be in opposition with each other. Tonight, we're gonna deal with this subject matter. You ready? Biblical hatred Now look at the second word of verse 113, hate. It's a word that's

in the Bible. It's a word that we must dissect. It's a word that we must deal with and so tonight we're gonna do some Bible study and figure out what does it mean when the Bible addresses how or what you and I should not just loathe but should hate. And on a subject matter such as this, I think we need a little wisdom from on high, so let's pray.

*Lord Jesus, we believe tonight that all scripture is inspired by you, God, the passages that we love, the passages that are unfamiliar to us, and even the ones that at times make us a little bit uncomfortable. So God, tonight I pray as only you can do, would you take the filters of familiarity, would you take the filters of preconceived notions and ideas, God, would you take our man-made traditions and concepts and may they crumble at the foot of your almighty word? And God, tonight I pray that as we read, as we study, eventually as your Holy Spirit convicts us, may we see not what we want to see, but may we see what your word says. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.*

Alright, beginning in verse 113, it says,

113 I hate vain thoughts: but thy law do I love. 114 Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word. 115 Depart from me, ye evildoers: for I will keep the commandments of my God. 116 Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope. 117 Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe: and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually. 118 Thou hast trodden down all them that err from thy statutes: for their deceit is falsehood. 119 Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross: therefore I love thy testimonies. 120 My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments.

Now this passage begins with a statement. It says that "I hate vain thoughts, but thy law do I love." You know, when we think of the word hatred, when we think of what that word means, it is an intense emotion of dislike or disdain. Now, let me qualify this word, and let me kind of begin with somewhat hopefully of a humorous story. I know that you're not shocked when I say this, but the crew that's in my house is somewhat competitive. That's kind of an understatement. Anytime you get that much testosterone in one geographical location, you're going to have some competition. Well, the story that I'm about to share with you happened many, many, many years ago, but it let Tracy and I know that we're on the path to some interesting moments. You know, we've all experienced this with kids that have played any level of sports. The first sport they ever play and the first team they ever play on. Now, oftentimes, whether it be soccer, tee ball, flag football, we joke it's just ants on a chocolate bar. Everybody's just running around, having a good time, picking flowers, who knows what they're doing. Well, my crew just came out of the womb a little different. They weren't interested in picking flowers, they were interested in running over people, just to be honest with you. That being said, I'll never forget one of my children who will not be named, but it was his very first competitive match. Now, it wasn't really that competitive, you understand, right? But in his mind, it was. So they went out and they started the little game and it was soccer. I'll go ahead and tell you. All three of them, that's what they started with. And so, you know, they're out there, it's ants on a chocolate bar, balls going all kinds of different directions.

And I mean, he is just, I mean, he is intense. He's intense and intense. But you know, after about five or six minutes, whatever it was, they called a little timeout and they just, you know, basically it was like shifting teams. Everybody, they put the next group in because they want everybody to have a break and everybody get to play. Well, my guy comes in, I'm sitting there watching and he sits on my lap. I'm sitting on the chair, just like most parents do on the sideline and he's kind of bouncing on my knee and he's the one doing the bouncing, not me. And I'm like, "Buddy, are you okay?" He said, "No, sir." I said, "What's going on?" He said, "Do you see the team in orange?" That was the other team. I said, "Yes." And he goes, "I don't like them." And I said, "Oh boy, we're, we're going to have a piece of work on our hands." Okay.

Now when we speak language of, I don't like them or an incredible, I guess, competitiveness, even though that's intense, doesn't compare to hate. I mean, let's just be honest, hate is not just taking up a notch, it's taking it up a whole bunch of notches. And what does it say here? It says, "I hate vain thoughts, but thy law do I love," and so tonight, I thought we would do an introductory study of what does it mean when the Bible says I hate or hatred is used, because here in verse 113, there's this dichotomy between hate and love and just as hate is a more intense form of dislike, what we know as love, biblically speaking, is so much more than our world makes it. And so I'm going to begin with somewhat of a precedence. There is a passage in your Bible that caused all kinds of stir, and so I want you to turn to the right a few pages to the book of Malachi. It should be pretty easy to find. It's the last book of your Old Testament, Malachi chapter 1, the last of the Old Testament prophets. There's a statement that is made here that has caused a lot of disconcertment among people that I want to bring some clarity to tonight. So when we talk about, when the Bible speaks about hate, Malachi chapter 1 verse 1 says, "The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi. I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob," verse 3, "And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness." Now the reason that that verse causes so much discontent or discussion is it literally says, "I hate Esau." Now most of us, myself included, were brought up and raised with a very specific quote unquote church phrase. You've said it, you've heard it. You ready? Hate the sin, love the sinner. That's not what the Bible says. That's what Baptists say. There's a big difference, all right? Because in this passage, he did not say, I hate the deeds of Esau. He did not say, I hate their sin. He said, "Jacob I have loved and Esau I've hated."

Now, just to give a little balance to the conversation, in Revelation chapter 2, there's a group of people known as the Nicolaitans. They're a group of people who were separating the pastors of the local church from just the regular members of the church and basically saying that, you know, one was of more value and of greater importance than the other. Nike, the word Nike for victory, laity for the layperson. And God says, "I hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans." Now the reason that this is important is in your Bible, God distinguishes between one's deeds whom he hates and as we just read in Malachi, one whom he hates.

Now, if we're going to understand what that verse actually means, we need to go back to the very first time that we see this word in the Bible. So go all the way back to the book of Genesis chapter 24. Now, I know you've come to church tonight, but you ended up at a Bible study. But Genesis chapter 24, we're actually going to be in verse 60. It's one of those chapters in the Bible that if this is yours you're memorizing, it's going to take you all year. It's a long one. But Genesis chapter 24 verse 60, let me set kind of the historical stage for you. Rebekah is pregnant with twins, Jacob and Esau, who we read about in Malachi. We know the Lord said that the older will serve the younger. We know the famous story that Esau sells his birthright literally for a bowl of porridge and/or stew or soup or whichever you prefer to call it. That being said, in verse 60, I want you to hear the first mention of this word in the Bible. It says, "And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them." In other words, we get that first mention, that defining, that the first mention of hatred in your Bible is not actually the hatred of a deed, it's the hatred of an entity, it's the hatred of a person. But what I want you to focus on is this: it is not a singularity, it is a plurality. Notice the last word of verse 60, them. It is a corporate term. It is a collective term.

So when we go back to Malachi chapter 1, it says, "Jacob I have loved and Esau I have hated," you do understand that there's two levels here. On one level, you have twin brothers, one who hunted and fished and did all the things a man does by the name of Esau, one who stayed home by the name of Jacob. But in its biblical context of Malachi chapter 1, when he says, "Jacob I've loved and Esau I have hated," he's using it in the context of Genesis 24. When you go to Genesis 25, you know what God says about that which is in her womb? There are two nations that are within you. In other words, the very first mention of this term or this concept of, quote, hatred, is a collective term. It is a corporate term. It is a plural term. And the reason I want to call that to your attention is that in a moment when we go back to Psalm 119, when it says, "I hate," it's not about individuals, it is about a corporate plurality of which the Lord established long ago in the book of Genesis.

So there's precedence for this word hatred involving humanity on a corporate level, not just deeds like the Nicolaitan. Secondly, it involves a priority. Matthew chapter 6, Jesus says that you and I cannot serve two masters. We're incapable of doing it. God did not wire us to serve two opposing concepts or ideas or entities at the same time. In fact, if you go back to the book of Malachi in chapter 1, he says, "Jacob I have loved, Esau I've hated," by the time you get to chapter 3, basically the Lord is calling out the Israelites because they're claiming with the same mouth and the same life that they love the Lord, yet they love the world and they do so equally. And it just cannot be done. We're not made that way.

So what happens in Matthew chapter 6? Jesus says you cannot serve two masters. You will either love one and hate the other, or you will hate one and you will love the other. So when we start dealing with this concept of hate or hatred, we may have grown up with the statement, "hate the sin, love the sinner," but there's a lot of biblical evidence that it is more personal and more plural than you and I may give it credit for, which leads us back

to Psalm 119. Again, I just wanted to set kind of a precedence for us of this word, how it's used in the Bible, and that oftentimes words are used in the Bible a little bit differently than maybe we were instructed, taught, or brought up.

So what's the product here? It says, "I hate vain thoughts." Essentially, the first verse of this section says that we should intensely dislike, we should unbelievably loathe anything that is a vanity or a vain thought. Now, it contrasts it for us because it says, "but thy law do I love." So let me kind of establish kind of the issue that's bringing forth. If anything is advocated, if anything is promoted, if anything is contrary to the way that God wrote it, scripted it, and told it, it should be hated. Now that sounds somewhat contrary to what most of us grew up with, right? Most of us have just said, "Well, you know, that's just who they are. That's just what they do. That's just, that's how they were raised. We were raised different." Don't you love how we speak Southernese in our homes? I hate to tell you, but you know the Lord doesn't speak Southern. He speaks truth.

He says, "I hate vain thoughts, but thy law do I love." Let me remind you in James chapter 1, verse 8 it says a double-minded man is unstable in all of his ways, and you and I today, even as those of us that are believers in Jesus Christ, most of us, whether we realize it or not, at some level, we're double-minded because we proclaim and declare the truth of God's word, but then how often do we make excuses for that which is contrary to? How often do we make exceptions for which is contrary to? There are no excuses, there are no exceptions. It says, "I hate vain thoughts." So this passage begins, it encourages us that essentially we're to side with what the Lord is for and we're to be against what the Lord is against.

That being said, you may have heard this in the old days of preaching, so to speak. You've heard this in some country church days gone by. Somebody said, "Well, how was church tonight?" And you said, "Well, the preacher preached about sin." "Was he for it or against it?" Y'all heard that old joke? Well, essentially what that joke says or what that analogy says is exactly what this verse says, there is no middle ground. We're either for it or we're against it. We don't excuse it. We don't make exceptions for it.

So what are the implications? Verse 114, "Thou art my hiding place, my shield, I hope in thy word." My hiding place. Now, you don't need to hide unless somebody's after you. You don't need to be shielded unless somebody intends harm for you. Now, I know that most of you understand and grasp and believe this, but I've got news for those of us that are living in the 21st century Western civilization, that if you claim verse 13 to be true, there are going to be some folks after you and you're gonna need a hiding place. You're gonna need a shield of protection. Why? Because we now live in a culture that most people have defined as post-Christian. You say, what does a post-Christian culture mean? That means the majority of people in our culture today not only do not subscribe to, but they do not respect the biblical message of Jesus Christ. They don't even respect it, much less believe it. And I hate to share this with most of us, because we live here in the South. Those of you watching online, this is the buckle of the Bible belt. But generally speaking, in our culture today, when we survey people, now you know if you ask somebody, are you a Christian, most people are gonna say, oh yeah, I am. Why? Because I live in

America. That's a bad answer, okay? When we actually start investigating and drilling down, this may be a hard pill for some of you to swallow, but the number of truly they understand what it means to believe in Jesus Christ Christians in America, we're down to about 10% or less. Now, there's more than that that at least are accepting of or favorable of, but in a post-Christian culture, there is direct opposition towards.

That's exactly the world we're living in. In fact, I joke all the time, one of these days, don't get nervous, I'm gonna write a book called "If My Walls Could Talk." Now, I'm gonna change all the names and all the locations. Nobody gonna know who anybody is. But it's not just about personal trauma that people have dealt with, it's about situations like this that we're discussing tonight. It might surprise you in the schoolhouse, in the workplace, and in the home that those who you call fellow church members, the opposition they face, that which they have to put up with, that which they're dealing with, and how do they navigate these things? Well, he says, you are my, quote, hiding place. In Colossians chapter 3, verse 3, it says, we are hid in Christ.

You know, there was a famous story written called "The Hiding Place." It was about Anne Frank. I'm sure you remember. Set there in what we know as World War II, a Jewish family that was literally being hunted by the Nazi SS at the direction of Adolf Hitler. And even there were those that came to their physical aid and assisted and such. The whole theme of the story was that their demise and death was the goal of those outside the room. And I know this may be difficult, particularly for most of us, because there's some of us here tonight we remember a time where it was actually beneficial to believe in the Lord. There was a day and there was a time where it actually helped you get a job to tell somebody you were a member of a local church. Here, today, it might keep you from getting a job if you admit you're a believer.

So to have a hiding place is to realize that there is opposition that isn't just where you're located, it says that you are my shield. Now that's getting a little personal. A hiding place, we're hid in Christ, that's kind of a total concept. When it says "you are my shield," now it's getting up close and personal because a shield is something that you hold close to you. We cannot help but think of Ephesians chapter 6 where it talks about the armor of God and it speaks about that we don't fight against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers and rulers of darkness. It says put on the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation, and then what does it say in verse 16? "Above all take the shield of faith." Above all, why? "To protect against the fiery darts of the enemy." In other words, it doesn't matter how tight the belt is, it doesn't matter how sure the breastplate is, it doesn't matter how guaranteed the helmet is, if one of those fiery darts penetrates, then demise and destruction will take place.

So understand that what Psalm 119 is saying is this, that if you hate what God hates and you love what God loves, there's going to be opposition. There's going to be those that desire demise and destruction and so the Lord must be our hiding place. He must be our shield. And notice that last phrase, verse 114, "I hope in thy word." Now, it's Sunday night, and I get a little feisty on Sunday nights and I like to have a little fun on Sunday nights, and so I'm just gonna go there on Sunday nights. It does not say, "I hope in

November's election." Go ahead and email me, just put your name on it, I don't care. It says, "I hope in thy word."

You realize in the Old Testament, there was a man by the name Samuel. He was fighting a battle. He showed up with 30,000 men. I mean Gideon, showed up with 30,000 men. You know what the Lord said? "Nope, we're not gonna win with 30,000." Now, sounds like a good number to me but why did the Lord say, "Nope, not 30,000"? Because he knew that the Israelites would take credit when they won. So they kept whittling it down. Y'all remember it got down to 300? Now 300 is the number of young people that try out for my high school football team. That's not a lot of people. 300 is less than the graduating class at the two local public high schools. It's not a huge number of people. Now can you imagine being Gideon on that day when he's like, "Okay, we're going into battle and there's just us." So who and who alone could get the credit? God could. Who alone would be their shield? Who would be their hiding place? It says, my hope is in thy word, not in the entities, not in the exceptions, not in all these other things.

So then beginning in verse 115, if you have your Bibles open, you'll notice that for the next six verses, there is this description of all the ways that God hides us, shields us, and defeats the darkness on our behalf. Now, one of the advantages that you and I have tonight is that we don't just study Psalm 119 as it is written. We're 2,000 years on this side of the empty tomb. Not only that, but we know that the overwhelming majority of statements that were made about the Messiah Christ Jesus in the Old Testament were not actually about his first coming, they were about his second coming. And even though there might have been some confusion in the days of Isaiah and Jeremiah and Ezekiel about what was up and when was when, you and I have the beautiful advantage of what we call hindsight. You know the old joke, hindsight is 20-20. How many times have you said this statement, "If I only knew then what I know now"? You know, that's a nice way of here in the South saying, "I used to be stupid because if I could go back with what I know now, boy, I sure would have made some different decisions." You and I have this very distinct advantage tonight, is that we can go back to the Old Testament. We know what prophecies were fulfilled at the Christmas story. We know what prophecies were fulfilled at the resurrection story. And we know what prophecies have yet to be fulfilled.

And so one of the great statements that we've used when it comes to studying the second coming and end times is this great phrase, "already but not yet," and what that means is, is that the Lord has declared it and it will be but we haven't seen it, we haven't lived it, and it may not happen in our lifetime. So when we say it is already true but not yet, we're not sitting here saying, "Well, those prophecies may or may not happen." No, we're saying they will happen. It may or may not be in our life, our lifetime, but there is going to come a day, quote, on the other side where we have witnessed, we have seen, and we have experienced all of it.

Now, if you'll notice in verse 115, there's really three, for lack of a better term, categories and the first one is this, that he says that you can have respite. Now, the older I get, the more I like that word, respite. It's a break. It's a relief. I don't know about you, but I'm gonna quote my wife tonight, and honey, forgive me for doing so. Oftentimes, we say our

life's a lot like Jurassic Park. Y'all seen the movie Jurassic Park? This is the entire movie in 30 seconds. You ready? Run! Run! Run! That's all they do. They just run from crisis to crisis and issue to issue. Respite. What does it say? "Depart from me, you evildoers." Oh, the idea that there's no more running. The idea that there's no need for a hiding place. The idea that to have a Bible in your possession or to actually state what you actually believe will not be condemned or in the case of many athletes today, it just won't be shown on TV during the interview. I don't know if you know that, but in recent days, there's been a lot of athletes. They've tried to talk about Jesus during this basketball tournament, it just didn't make it to your TV. It's funny how that happens.

"Depart from me, evildoers. Uphold me that I may live." There is zero promise, there's hope but there is zero promise that all evildoers and all those that mean ill against God, you and I as the church, will be dismissed prior to the Lord coming out of the sky. I hope it happens. I pray it happens. But there's no promise that it will happen. In fact, I believe one of the great erroneous teachings that came out of the great mission movement of the 17 to 1800s was this ideology or this thought that somehow, some way that we, the church, would see the entire world converted. I just don't see it happening. You say, "Why don't you see it happening?" Because Jesus said broad is the way of destruction and narrow is the way of righteousness. Jesus made it very clear, if I can put it in very crass terminology, there's going to be more people in hell than there are in heaven. So the thought or the idea that somehow all evil will be banished and there will be none that oppose us, it's not much of a here and now concept, but it is one that will be one day. In fact, the more you read toward the end of your Bible, the more you'll discover that those that are classified as evildoers, according to Revelation chapter 20, they end up in the lake of fire for all of eternity.

The second one beginning verse 17 or 117, "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe: and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually. Thou hast trodden down all them that err from thy statutes." Man, what a great promise. Let me put that in quote Southerners: God is gonna get all those that are against him. That's what it says. Now some of you are aware of this but, you know, the Bible mentions in 1 Corinthians chapter 12 spiritual gifts. Some of you have the gift of discernment. Some of you have the gift of faith. Some of you have the gift of all kinds of things, right? Did you know there is a spiritual gift, it is not listed in 1 Corinthians 12, that is actually mentioned in Revelation chapter 11. You say, Revelation chapter 11? There's two men that come on the scene in those end days called the two witnesses. Now we could debate who they are, where they come from, but do you know what their spiritual gift is? It says that when anybody opposes them, they breathe fire on them and they die. Now, have you ever been in a confrontation and wished that was your spiritual gift? You can be honest tonight, it's okay. But that's not what God told us, did he? There is nowhere in the letters of the Apostle Paul where he said, "Hey, just destroy those, eliminate those that are opposed to you." In fact, the same Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians chapter 12 says, "There's a messenger of Satan who is a thorn in my side that I begged God to get rid of three times. He said, No, my grace is sufficient for you."



I mentioned it this morning. I'll say it again: revenge is God's and not yours. The church, there is nowhere in your New Testament where the church is commissioned or commanded to take out the opposition. We're never commanded to take it out. What are we commanded to do? Hide. When I say hide, that doesn't mean run. It's to stand stiff and tough. That's what it says in Ephesians 6. When all you can do, stand and let God be our shield. Let God be our hiding place. By the way, when Jesus said turn the other cheek, he didn't say get beat up. He said stand your ground. That's what he meant. So there isn't a running and retreat. There is no retreat for the church and there is no conquering for the church. Why? Because he is the one that is our shield. He is the one that has the revenge. "Revenge is mine," saith the Lord.

Last but not least, verse 119, "Thou putttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross: therefore I love thy testimonies. My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments." You know, the Bible says there's actually coming a day where God is gonna take all the wicked ones and they're gonna depart. They're gonna be dismissed. You know what the problem is? That's not today and that's not tomorrow. You say, "Well, when's it gonna happen?" According to your Bible, it happens in Revelation chapter 20. It says there is coming a day where all the dead will stand before him and the books are opened up, and those that are not written in the book of life, they will depart to the second death into what you and I know as the lake of fire.

Notice that last verse, "My flesh trembles for fear of thee. I'm afraid of thy judgments." What a perspective. What an angle on things. Have you ever used this statement, "By the grace of God there go I"? It's a great statement, is it not? What you're basically realizing is God has been so good and so gracious and so merciful to you that you do not find yourself in a situation that obviously somebody else is walking through. It is by the grace of God through Jesus Christ that we're not condemned to the lake of fire. It is by the grace of God through the blood of Jesus Christ that we do not experience the second death. In other words, when it says put away the wicked there, my flesh trembles for fear of thee.

You know, the Bible speaks in Revelation chapter 21 that there will be no more tears, there will be no more heartache, there will be no more pain, there will be no more remembrance of former things. I don't know about you. I can forgive, I struggle with forgetting. You're probably the same way. Not only are we incapable of serving two masters as we talked about earlier, we're incapable of forgetting and I can prove it to you. You ready? Here's a little exercise. Right now, do not think of the number nine. What are you doing? You're thinking the number nine. All right, you ready? Forget the number nine. That's all you're thinking about, right? All right, I forgive you for not doing what I told you to do. It's easy. But you can't forget it. The thought that one day he will put away all of the insufficiencies, he will put away all of the shortcomings, all of the failures.

"My flesh trembles for fear of thee." This passage begins with "I hate" and it ends with "I fear." So what's the distinction? To fear is not to be afraid of. To fear is to have an unbelievable respect for.

Tonight I'm gonna close with a story about one of my mentors in life. He's no longer here on earth. His name was Roy Fish. He's one of my heroes. I don't know if you've ever had the chance to meet one of your heroes, but you're fearful to do so. I had the privilege of sitting under him. He was my professor for seven years. I'll never forget, I was in a doctoral seminar with Dr. Fish, and I was so in awe of him, I was so fearful of him that I never spoke to him. I never made my way around him. I just kinda kept an arm's distance of him. And I'll never forget it, one day, it was after one of our seminars. I mean, I had known him for years. I had sat in his classes for, who knows, untold hours. But now I was in an environment where there was a little bit of an intimacy there, and I guess he just felt uncomfortable, because one day after our seminar, he said, "Mr. Meyers, I need to see you in my office." Now, this is not a good thing for me, right? So I roll up into his office, and I know it doesn't mean anything to you, but he had this old 1961 yellow vinyl chair. I mean, they just don't make them that way anymore. So nonetheless, I made my place in the chair. I'll never forget what he did. Pulled his glasses off. Started rubbing his nose. This is a man in his 70s. And he started crying. I said, "Dr. Fish, are you okay?" He said, "What have I done to you? What have I done?" I said, "What do you mean?" He goes, "You don't speak to me. You don't acknowledge me." He said, "What have I done to offend you?" And I said, "Dr. Fish," I said, "you got it all backwards." I said, "I am in such awe of you that I just don't want to disrespect you." And he said, "Son, you got this all backwards. You got it all backwards." To fear God does not mean to avoid him. To fear God does not mean to somehow distance yourself from him. To fear God is to revere who he is and to understand that he wants us to love his law and hate anything that is opposed to it. When it says fear him, it doesn't mean distance. It doesn't mean absence. It means to have such a respect for, such an intense for.

We got done with that meeting. Dr. Fish dried his eyes up, went out into the foyer of his office where his wife was his assistant. Her name was Jean. And he said, "Jean," he said, "anytime this man calls, put him through. Put him through." You realize this passage ends by saying anytime you call the Lord, he puts you through. He puts you through every single time. May we hate what he hates, but may we call on him for anything that we need of him.

Let's pray.

With our heads bowed, our eyes closed, tonight, though it be Sunday night, you may be that person here, for whatever reason you made your way here in person or online and there's never been a time where you have owned up to and you've admitted your own sin. Maybe tonight's that night where you call on Jesus to save you. It's as simple as Romans 10:13, whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Maybe tonight's to do so. Or maybe tonight you'd be willing to admit, you know, you've been a believer for years or decades but you've been caught up in this old world and you don't hate the things God hates, you don't despise the things God hates. Maybe tonight, like the song we sang, you're gonna be resolved to see it from God's perspective. Or maybe tonight, it's about fearing him, realizing he's your hiding place, he's your shield, he is your shelter. But you gotta call out to him, you gotta cry out to him, you can't be absent from or distant.

Tonight as we close, one of the beautiful things about the word of God is he takes his Spirit and he speaks to each and every one of us right where his word needs to be placed. Hebrews chapter 4 says the word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword. For some of you tonight, God has cut you and he has convicted you. For others, he has comforted you. Nonetheless, he has spoken to and he has addressed your life this night with his word.

*Heavenly Father, tonight, thank you, that no matter where we find ourselves in this whole thing called life, that you address every situation, you address every scenario and, God, you make it very clear tonight where you stand on things and what it means for us to join with or be in opposition to. God, I pray tonight that whatever the decision, public or private, we would fear thee, we would so respect and revere thee we would despise the very thought of doing, advocating, promoting, or allowing anything contrary to you. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.*