

What Scripture Is

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Bible Verse: Psalm 119
Preached on: Sunday, June 27, 2021

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Well, we read Psalm 119 just a moment ago in the service, the entirety of it for the benefit of those who hear this on later media. I had planned to address Psalm 119 in a single message but I reconsidered that this week when I realized something, I had 17 points and subpoints and so I had better thoughts about what you would be able to endure. So the plan as it stands right now is to cover Psalm 119 over the course of three messages, in part because I want this Psalm to not hit you like a sudden harsh downpour that all runs off because the ground is not able to absorb it, rather I want the ground and the soil of your heart to be able to absorb this more like a gentle rain and have it sink into you and develop and deepen your convictions about the nature of the word of God.

Psalm 119 is the longest Psalm in the Bible and it is the longest chapter in the Bible. It is a poetic masterpiece of matchless greatness in the Hebrew language. In form, it is an elaborate acrostic Psalm. It has 176 verses and there is a mathematical reason for that. Those 176 verses are divided into 22 stanzas of 8 verses each, $22 \times 8 = 176$. The beauty of it that you don't see in the English language but is very evident at a simple glance at the Hebrew text is this: each verse of each stanza begins with the sequential 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. So for us in English, it would be 8 verses that begin with the letter A, 8 verses with the letter B, and so on all the way through the letter Z except our alphabet has 26 letters instead of 22. So in other words, the first 8 verses start with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, aleph. The second set of 8 verses start with the second letter, beth. And so on. And so you do the math, 22 verses in the Hebrew alphabet, 8 verses attributed to each letter, you come out with 176 verses, and that form drives the substance of the Psalm more than a strictly logical progression from stanza to stanza.

The headings that many of you see every 8 verses, then, in your English Bibles are simply the consecutive names of the Hebrew letters. And you know, for years before I knew a little bit about biblical Hebrew, I wondered what those headings were. Now I understand and now you do also if you never knew that beforehand.

So that gives us a sense of the form of the Psalm and the form alone causes us to respect this Psalm for the greatness of the thought that went into it under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Whoever the writer of this Psalm is, is not designated for us in the heading, some certainly hear the echo of David in this Psalm, whatever we say about the form, someone took a lot of time and put a lot of thought into this even as the Spirit of God was

leading and guiding them and produced this wonderful form that we have in front of us. Moving from form to substance. In substance, this Psalm is about the word of God. It is about the Bible. It is about Scripture. Each verse of this Psalm in one way or another refers to the word of God. There are a small number of exceptions depending on how you interpret certain phrases. Maybe one, maybe three, maybe five exceptions, at the minimum 171 of 176 verses are referring in some manner or another to the word of God, to the statutes of God, to the ordinances of God, and that unmistakable emphasis should have a great impact on our thinking about the word of God in its entirety.

In the wisdom of God, in the work of the Spirit of God, in the collection of the word of God over time, the longest chapter in the Bible is about the Bible, and that immediately causes us to dismiss those who would push Scripture aside in favor of the theories of man or push Scripture aside in favor of other kinds of revelation. This immediately arrests our attention and causes us to pay heed, then we're going to spend three weeks explaining this. There is something unique about the Bible that you hold in your hands. There is something special about it and the length and the majesty and the form and the unanimous substance of Psalm 119 brings our heart to reverence and to respect the Bible which is the word of God and that's our starting point here.

Now I should say this, I suppose. Commentators have handled this Psalm in many different ways. The 1888 edition of Spurgeon's "Treasury of David" devotes 398 pages to Psalm 119 and that pales in comparison to the three volume work of the Puritan, Thomas Manton. In his commentary, Steve Lawson devotes five chapters to Psalm 119. James Montgomery Boice devotes 14 chapters to it. I have a friend in California who did 22 messages on Psalm 119, one for each stanza. And so there's just a variety of ways to approach this as commentators have shown over the centuries.

I plan to do it this way, I plan to address Psalm 119 not in a verse-by-verse method but rather to address it thematically, to highlight various themes that we see coming out of Psalm 119 that are dispersed throughout the Psalm. We want to gather some of these themes up in particular groups to see the emphasis that the Psalmist is making throughout the Psalm that might be lost if you went through it in a strictly verse-by-verse method. The verse-by-verse method would be a wonderful way to study this Psalm, we're choosing to do it a little bit differently here today in a way that is validated by even the commentator, Derek Kidner, who approached Psalm 119 in a primarily thematic way. And so that's what we're going to do.

So we're going to have three messages on Psalm 119 to highlight three primary themes. I'm not saying they're the only themes, I'm saying they're primary themes, primary themes that will have a spiritual nourishment for your soul and that will bring you to a greater perspective, a deeper perspective on the word of God. I do believe that these are three really essential messages for you and for the life of Truth Community Church and that's why, although primarily we've done the Psalms on our midweek service, Psalm 119 needed to be on Sunday. Psalm 119 needed to be where as many people as possible would hear it. If the people weren't able to come on Tuesdays for Psalm 119, Psalm 119 will come on Sunday, is the way that I see this.

So three messages. What does Psalm 119 teach us about Scripture, about the word of God? Well, first of all, we're going to see this, we're going to see that Psalm 119 teaches us what Scripture is. What Scripture is and that's the title for today's message, "What Scripture Is." Psalm 119 makes definitive declarations about the very essence and character of the word of God and so it teaches us what Scripture is. Next week, Lord willing, we'll see that Psalm 119 teaches us what Scripture does. What Scripture does. Scripture according to Hebrews 4:12 is living and active. It has an active function. This is not a dead book. This is not like literature that is written by dead men that has no real impact or implications for your life. This book has implications. It's alive and living especially in the hearts of those who believe. It does things to us and for us and we're going to see that next week. What Scripture is today, what Scripture does next week, and then, thirdly and finally, if Scripture is what it claims to be and Scripture does what it claims to do, we need to understand, thirdly, that Psalm 119 teaches us what Scripture requires. What Scripture requires. The Bible is an immensely beautiful book, it is a multifaceted diamond of infinite worth. Picture having a 20 pound perfect diamond in your hand, holding it up and twisting it and looking at it from different angles and seeing the radiance reflected in different ways, so in Psalm 119 we see different aspects of the brilliant splendor of Scripture for us. What it is. What it does. And what it require.

Friends, understand that the Bible requires a response from your life. Every man will ultimately be judged in one manner or another by what is revealed in the pages of Scripture. We cannot evade its authority, we would not want to if we could, and the Bible brings blessing and we would not want to miss that for anything in the world. And so you could think about it this way. Over these next three weeks, Psalm 119 will teach us to respect Scripture for what it is. What Scripture is evokes respect from us. Psalm 119, next week, will teach us to rely on Scripture for what it does. The word is living and active. The word is to be believed. The word can be trusted, and as a result we depend upon it as our very spiritual lifeline from a holy and loving God. Thirdly and finally, Psalm 119 will teach us to respond to Scripture for its inherent excellence. We will respond to Scripture, not just obey it in an external fashion but come to love it for its superior excellence and to give ourselves to it and to love it and to receive it, believe it, obey it, and defend it, and proclaim it, and assert it. All these things coming from the very nature of what the word is, what it does and what it requires from us. Psalm 119 casts a very wide net over our souls and every thought, every word, every action or our hearts is brought into conformity with the word of God as a result of it.

So today we ask and answer the question from Psalm 119: what Scripture is. If you're taking notes, that's the title of today's message, what Scripture is, and we're going to answer that with five different points. What Scripture is or what is Scripture, we're going to answer that with five declarative statements that tell us about the nature of the word of God, its essence, what is its very characteristic, what are the attributes of Scripture that we find revealed in Psalm 119. And I'll say this just in passing, the attributes of Scripture are the same as the attributes of the God who spoke it into existence. It's amazing.

1. What do we say about Scripture? In English, what do we say about the 66 books of the Bible, 66 books and no more? I always say that for a reason. Sixty-six books of the Bible, what can we say about them? Number 1 is this: Scripture is the word of God. Scripture is the word of God and before we get to that in particular, we find Psalm 119 opening and declaring a blessing on those who live by the Bible, those who believe the Bible.

Look at the opening verses, verses 1 and 2.

1 How blessed are those whose way is blameless, Who walk in the law of the LORD. 2 How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, Who seek Him with all their heart.

The Psalm opens with a proclamation of blessing on those who order their life according to the word of God. This is not simply coming to church on Sunday. This is not occasionally pulling a Bible down and reading a few verses and then putting it back and looking for it later when you've forgotten where you placed it. This is talking about a life-hearted fullness of response to the word of God.

The walk, "Who walk in the law of the LORD." Walk is a metaphor for the activities of daily life and so this blessing is the starting point that frames his entire perspective on God's word and it's the starting point that frames everything about what follows in Psalm 119. It's all in one manner or another reinforcing this opening blessing that is pronounced upon the one who gives himself over to the word of God.

And look, let's just be candid with one another, let me be honest with you. There are more people that say they love the word of God and give lip-service to the Bible than there are those who have actually given themselves to it, aren't there? We know this from personal experience in people that we've known, and from what we see in the church around us. Lots of people give lip-service to the Bible but it's one thing to flap your lips, it's another thing to walk in daily activity, in daily submission, daily meditation to the word of God. The blessing is reserved to those who are full-hearted in their response to the word of God and that is the starting point for Psalm 119.

There is an obvious echo in the beginning of Psalm 119 to the very first Psalm, and I want you to turn to Psalm 1 so that you would see this echo. Psalm 1 is about the word of God. Psalm 19 is about the word of God. And Psalm 119 is about the word of God. One is short, one is medium length, one is long, and 119 gives us a mnemonic device to remember these three Psalms and their emphasis on the word of God. And so just as Psalm 119 opens up with this blessing, the entire Psalter, all 150 Psalms are introduced by the same theme of blessing on the one who gives himself to the word of God.

Look at verse 1 and 2 of Psalm 1. "How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night." Do you see it there? This is not a casual acquaintance with the word of God. This is the dominating theme of the mind of the one who would be blessed by God, that the mind is

given over to a meditation consistently on the word of God day and night. It is coming back again and again in the corridors of your mind and it drives out worldly thinking, it drives out worldly preoccupations and elevates our minds to the wonder and the splendor of what God has revealed in his word.

So Psalm 119 opens and says, "Blessed is the one whose walk is in the law of the LORD." Psalm 1 had already said that, "Blessed is he whose delight is in the law of the LORD." And the promise of blessing there in verse 3, "He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers."

Now it may be, some of you are here and you're conscious of the fact that you've lived a mediocre Christian life and you're convicted by the thought that this precious jewel of the word of God has been something that you have neglected, scorned, some maybe even scoffed at. Well, let me encourage you that there is an opportunity for repentance for you here presented in the word of God. You can change your thought, change your orientation and look with the help of the Holy Spirit helping you, look to the word of God and say, "From this point forward, I want to change that emphasis. I want my mind to be in the word of God. I'm going to read the word of God. I'm going to hear the word of God. I'm going to increase my faithfulness to be under the preaching of the word of God." This blessing can be yours but you can't superficially fall into it. It isn't a happenstance matter. This is something that you seek. This is something that you recognize the value of and you aim your life after it. Let that sink in. Look at it there, Psalm 1:2, "in His law he meditates day and night." Psalm 119, "Blessed are those who walk in the law of the LORD."

Now a similar echo of the themes of Psalm 119 is found in Psalm 19, a similar echo to Psalm 119 found in Psalm 19 beginning in verse 7. It says, "The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes." Do you see how it talks about what Scripture is and then what it does? This is just a summary of Psalm 119.

Verse 9, "The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether. They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward." God blesses, God honors, God rewards the man, the woman, the boy, the girl, that gives themselves over to the word of God and I invite you to come to the word of God in your life and give yourself over to it in that manner and say, "Lord, I see the statements about what Scripture is. I see the Scriptures, what the Scriptures do. I see what Scripture requires from me and I want to give myself over to it." Here's a place for you to start. Here's a place for you to start over the next week or two, and to kind of launch you if you're lacking direction on what to do with that. Take Psalm 1, take Psalm 19, take Psalm 119 and make those the portions of your reading and your devotion day-by-day over the next two or three weeks and let your mind be saturated with what Scripture says about itself. If

you need a turning point in your life, if you need some direction on how to get back from where you have strayed from, and oh, isn't that an awful place to be? Having known at one point what the blessing of Christ is, having walked with him in close communion, and yet you find yourself days, weeks, maybe months later and you say, "I've strayed and I've wandered from all of that, and my mind is just clouded with darkness as a result." Well, my friends, God is gracious in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit is gracious to help you come to the word, breathe a prayer of help from the Holy Spirit to help you, and trust him to reorient your mind because the blessing of walking in the word of God can still be yours today and in the days to come. And those of you that have strayed into darkness with your lusts, with your anger, with your gossip, with your pride, with all of those things, this is a great invitation from God delivered to you personally today by his Holy Spirit, delivered in a sweetness of spirit from his word that says, "Blessing is still open to you. Just come back to the word of God," because God blesses us, God blesses his people through his word. Period. Full stop. End of sentence. End of paragraph. End of chapter. End of book. God blesses his people through his word and there's no sense in seeking his blessing in other places, in other realms when he said how blessed is the one who walks in the word of God.

That blessing, my friends, is certain because the author is God himself. This is God's word. This is the word of God. And so we're saying that Scripture is the word of God. Where do you see that in the text itself? Well, go back to Psalm 119 with me. Psalm 119:1. Just read it for what it says. "How blessed are those whose way is blameless, Who walk in the law of the LORD." The prepositional phrase tells us whose law it is. It is the law of Yahweh. It is the law of the God of the Bible.

The entirety of Psalm 119 connects the word to its author. It does it in many ways. It does it in the expression "the law of the LORD." It is God-breathed. It is his very word to man. And it does it in another way that is not really subtle but it needs to be pointed out for you to appreciate it. The writer uses at least eight different terms to refer to Scripture and throughout the Psalm as he's speaking to God, he uses the possessive second person adjective, second person personal possessive adjective "Your," and he speaks about it like this, "Your judgments. Your commandments. Your law. Your testimonies. Your statutes. Your precepts. Your ordinances. Your word." Judgments, commandments, law, testimonies, statutes, precepts, ordinances, word. Read Psalm 119 for yourself and look for those terms, you'll find that they're scattered throughout the entire Psalm and each of those nouns is preceded in many many cases by the adjective "Your." This is yours. Speaking to God, "This is Yours. This is what You have done. This is what You have revealed. This is what You have commanded. This is what You have made known."

So Scripture is the word of God. If it was anything else, it would be blasphemous for the Psalmist to say, "This is Yours," if, in fact, it wasn't. But because it is the word of God, it is appropriate for us to speak to God and to say to him, "I honor Your word. I believe Your word. I come to Your word," because it is his, because it is what he has given to us. Scripture is from God and all of these terms in one manner or another speak to the authority of Scripture, meaning that it has power to and prerogative to command us on what we are to believe, speak and do. Scripture is authoritative, telling us what we are

even to believe and how we are to think. Scripture tells us and commands us how we are to think about the world in which we live, about God, and about ourselves. And then Scripture is also because it is from God, it is dependable. It is reliable as we will see later on. The fact that Scripture is the word of God means that it is more than a human work, it is his very word to us. When you read the Bible, you are reading the very mind of God.

The Apostle Paul said the same thing about his preaching in 1 Thessalonians 2:13. He said, "you received from us, the message you received from us, you received it not as the word of man but for what it really is, the word of God." 1 Thessalonians 2:13. Scripture is not the word of men but it is of the word of God as the Spirit worked through human thoughts, human personalities, the human experiences of the author, worked through those to make sure that what the authors produced was exactly what God intended so that the final product of their written work was exactly what God had spoken to man. It is the word of God and that has a lot of implications, beloved, and Psalm 119 draws them out for us.

First of all, the fact that it is the word of God, our second point for this morning is this, is that Scripture is true. Scripture is true. In other words, Scripture is certain. Scripture is dependable. Scripture is right. Scripture is correct. Scripture is accurate. All of those things falling under the umbrella of the assertion that Scripture is true. Let's look at a few passages that assert this for us, again remembering that we're treating things in a thematic way here.

Look at verse 41 for a start. For the sake of continuity, we'll start in verse 41.

41 May Your lovingkindnesses also come to me, O LORD, Your salvation according to Your word; 42 So I will have an answer for him who reproaches me, For I trust in Your word. [And here it is,] 43 And do not take the word of truth utterly out of my mouth, For I wait for Your ordinances.

"Your word, O God, is the word of truth." Look at verse 142.

142 Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, And Your law is truth.

Verse 151,

151 You are near, O LORD, And all Your commandments are truth.

And finally in verse 160,

160 The sum of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting.

It reminds me of what our Lord said in his high priestly prayer in John 17, "Sanctify them in the truth. Your word is truth." Old Testament, New Testament, Psalm 119, the lips of our Lord Jesus all speaking to the reality that Scripture is true. It is accurate. It is correct. It is honest. It never deceives us. It never leads us astray in anything that it asserts. Everything that it says is completely reliable.

And as a result of that, my friends, Scripture is the one and only means by which you can come to know the living God. A man who does not read the Bible, a man who does not expose himself to Scripture, a man who does not know what the Bible says is a man who is far from God, and until the Spirit of God brings his mind into contact with Scripture, until he brings himself into and under the authority of the word of God, he remains separated from God because it is only in Scripture where the truth about God and the truth about salvation is made known. There is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved. There is an exclusivity to the truth claims of Scripture. Scripture is true and everything else is judged by it.

So true faith must be built on the truth of Scripture. You know, it's frightening. These are simple propositions. I get it, these are simple propositions in one sense that we're talking about, but it's because people ignore the simplicity of the truth claims of Scripture and these simple propositions are ignored that people's souls are in eternal danger. People say, "You know, well, that may be what you believe but I believe something else." Or, "You know, you have your God, I have mine. You have your truth, I have mine." No. No. Scripture is true. Scripture is the place where all human thought is evaluated for whether it's accurate or not, and thought that is contrary to Scripture, apart from Scripture, is false by definition. It's not a question of whether you think you have a God of your own or not, the question is whether your God is the one that is revealed in Scripture because that alone is where truth is found. And if your faith, your beliefs, your thoughts about God are not rooted squarely in Scripture, I wouldn't want to be in your shoes. I really wouldn't. I really wouldn't. No matter how good it makes you feel for the time being, at the end there is an accountability for believing lies and rejecting and ignoring and disdaining the truth of the word of God. Scripture is the word of God and Scripture is true and that means that we must study it and come to grips with all that it says.

Now thirdly, there's another aspect of Scripture that we find in Psalm 119. It's this and it's sweet. Scripture is sweet but that's not the point that I'm making here. Scripture is faithful. Scripture is faithful. Faithful in the original language is closely related to the word "true," and it has the idea that the word of God is firm. It is steady. I know some of you are like me and you don't like a lot of change. You know, you don't like it when new buildings go up or roads get redone, or whatever the case may be, and the changes in society and the changes in life and the changes in relationship, and there's just so much change constantly churning around us. I don't like that. It's the nature of the world that I live in but I don't naturally embrace that. The refuge that you and I have in this is that Scripture is faithful, Scripture is firm and it is steady, and it is something that we can stand on knowing that the ground under our feet is not going to shift or move.

Look at verse 30 with me of Psalm 119. The Psalmist says,

30 I have chosen the faithful way; I have placed Your ordinances before me.

In verse 86 he says,

86 All Your commandments are faithful;

And in verse 138 he says,

138 You have commanded Your testimonies in righteousness And exceeding faithfulness.

What God has said in his word, he will uphold. What the word teaches us is something that is steady, it is firm, it is reliable, you can build upon it. As life changes, as trials assault you, as sorrows weigh down on your head, you can always come back to the word of God and find it saying the same things that it has always said. For those of you that were raised in Christian homes, you find it is saying the same things that you were taught on your mother's knee, that it is repeating the same things that an earnest father pleaded with you to hear and to respond to, and as pastors have spoken to you in different places over the years. Those that have pointed you to the word of God, do you know what? It is as true today as you look in it as they were faithful to tell you those things in the past. It's the same now. It is firm. It is steady. It isn't shifting as the philosophies of the world change. It's not shifting as political parties come and go or political leaders come and go. It doesn't change when loved ones come and go. It doesn't come when prosperity comes and goes. Some of you have walked in severe lack, seeming like there was never going to be an end to the financial pressure upon you. The word of God was true to you then, now that it's changed, the word of God is still saying the same thing. Our circumstances change, our people change, our environment changes, our leaders change, but the word of God is faithful. It is the same all along.

There is a faithful friend beside us as we walk through this world and it is the faithful, true word of God, and when you start to realize that, the truth of the word of God, the faithfulness of the word of God, you start to love it. You start to appreciate the fact that Scripture is like that, that there is a genuine anchor, there is a cornerstone in my life that I can always build on, that I can always rest on. This word is precious because of what it is and those of you that have been greatly harmed by unfaithful people who have treacherously betrayed you in life, those of you that have been harmed by unfaithful spouses, harmed by unfaithful friends, harmed by parents or children who have failed you or strayed from you and rejected you, and you see all of the carnage that that leaves behind and the baggage that it injects in our lives, beloved, you can leave the baggage outside and find in the word of God that which refreshes your soul because it's true, it's faithful, it can be relied upon.

And I can picture somebody saying, "Well, this is really wonderful to hear. It that's true, then that means that we should really be giving ourselves over to the word of God so that

we could be blessed by it." Yes, exactly, that's the whole point of Psalm 119, how blessed are those who walk in the law of the Lord. Do you know what you experience in life as a result of that? You experience truth. You experience faithfulness. You find something sustaining your soul that nothing else can do. That's the whole point. Because of what the word is, you give yourself to it to walk in it. Not out of external obligation but out of an inner presence of mind, an inner affection that says, "This is really precious and I want to know this word. Let me get rid of all of my stuff. Give me a table and a lamp and this book and I've got all I need." That's the far-reaching consequences of the true and faithful word of God.

Now closely aligned with those thoughts, point number 4 here is this, is that Scripture is unchanging. Scripture is unchanging. Because it's true, because it's faithful, because it's the word of God, we find that it doesn't change. God does not change. One of his perfections, one of his attributes is that he is immutable. What he has always been, he always will be. He has never changed. God does not go through mood swings. God doesn't respond to external stimulus and alter his frame of mind. There is just an ongoing stability and reality of his character and when Scripture talks about God being angry or delighted or things like that, it's not because his emotions are flipping up and down as day to day events unfold, it's simply expressing in human terms something about the permanent, eternal outworking of his character toward a changing world in a way that we can understand. But God himself, he doesn't change, neither does his word.

Look at verse 89. Psalm 119:89,

89 Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven. 90 Your faithfulness continues throughout all generations; You established the earth, and it stands.

"Lord, Your word is settled. It's settled in heaven where men cannot attack it and change it. It is settled forever. It is secure. It is final."

Look at verse 152. Psalm 119:152,

152 Of old I have known from Your testimonies That You have founded them forever.

And Psalm 119:160, we looked at it a moment ago.

160 The sum of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting.

God's word today is the same as it has always been in the very distant past. God's word today is the same as it will be in the very distant future. How great is that constancy? How comprehensive is that unchanging essence of the word of God? Well, our Lord Jesus gave us a sense of perspective on it when he said this in Matthew 24, he said, "Heaven and earth will pass away but My words will not pass away." The known world

that we see all around us, we look at the earth, we look at the heavens, that's all going to change one day. You can read about that in 2 Peter and the book of Revelation. Everything that we assume about the constancy of the stars and all of this, heaven and earth are going to pass away. God's word, no. God's word is in a realm of its own, of constancy, of changeableness. Scripture states it, compares it to heaven and earth and Jesus says, "They'll pass away but My words won't." In a macro sense it makes that comparison. There's a micro comparison that it makes with daily experience, "The grass withers, the flower fades, the word of our God stands forever," Isaiah 40:8. Men live and die, God's word stays the same. Biblical critics come and go, liberals spout their theories, people chase after them, then those men die and their books lie unopened, dusty on shelves a few years later, the word of God living, active, unchanged, still powerful, still working and accomplishing the will of God through the outworking of the word of God as it's proclaimed by his people. The word of God is an anvil that people wear out their hammers trying to shatter and it never ever works. So it's a rock. It's a Gibraltar. It's Half Dome in Yosemite. A massive testimony to the enduring strength and truth of God unchanging.

So the word of God, it's true, it's faithful, it's unchanging. One final point, fifth point for today: Scripture is the word of God, Scripture is true, it is faithful, it is unchanging, finally, Scripture is righteous. Scripture is righteous. Now the term righteous means that the Bible is just. It conforms to God's character which makes perfect sense since it's the word of God, then it would reflect the character of God, the attributes of God. And this is an especially prominent theme in Psalm 119. Have your finger limbered up to move quickly through these passages, some seven or eight passages here.

Psalm 119:7. The righteousness, the purity, the uprightness of the word of God. Psalm 119:7,

7 I shall give thanks to You with uprightness of heart, When I learn Your righteous judgments.

Verse 40,

40 Behold, I long for Your precepts; Revive me through Your righteousness.

Verse 62,

62 At midnight I shall rise to give thanks to You Because of Your righteous ordinances.

Verse 75,

75 I know, O Yahweh, that Your judgments are righteous, And that in faithfulness You have afflicted me.

Verse 137,

137 Righteous are You, O LORD, And upright are Your judgments. 138
You have commanded Your testimonies in righteousness And exceeding
faithfulness.

Verse 160, we've come to this verse multiple times. It seems to be an intersection where so many of these characteristics of God's word, they meet at this intersection in verse 160.

160 The sum of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous
ordinances is everlasting.

It is the word of God. It is true. It is faithful. It is unchanging. It is righteous.

Verse 164,

164 Seven times a day I praise You, Because of Your righteous
ordinances.

And finally in verse 172,

172 Let my tongue sing of Your word, For all Your commandments are
righteousness.

God's word manifests the character of God himself. The nature of the word itself is righteous. The nature of God himself is righteous. It's right, it's what's true, it's what's faithful, it's what's unchanging. You could say it this way, we'll say things a couple of different ways. God's word exposes sin and it affirms holiness. You could say it this way, Scripture reveals the perfections of God, Scripture reveals the perfections of God and applies them without fear or favor to the character and actions of men. There's a vertical dimension to the righteousness of Scripture. It reveals God for who he is. There is a righteousness about Scripture in that it is utterly pure and true and reliable. It is clean. It is honest. It is accurate. It is perfect in every conceivable way.

And so there's this vertical dimension to it and then horizontally you can understand it in this sense, that the word comes as a righteous judge of the motives, words, actions, thoughts and actions of men, and it judges them all with precision and with perfection, and it does it to the great and to the small. The word affirms the humble believer who trusts in Christ. It condemns the highest level of men. Those with the greatest authority find no position before the word that gives them any benefit that none of the rest of us have. Without fear or favor, the word righteously judges the character and actions of men.

Friends, we have an amazing privilege over the course of time. You have an amazing opportunity in the course of your daily life. We hold in our hands today the only perfect

book. We hold in our hands today the only book that is genuinely living, that genuinely speaks to human hearts, that has the power as the Spirit of God works in it to change human hearts, to give life where death has prevailed, to bring holiness where sin has been an unmerciful master, a word that shines Christ where Satan has blinded eyes, a word that changes you, that changes me. This is the world's only, there is no other book like it. It points sinners like some of you to the fact that Jesus Christ is a merciful, crucified and risen Savior who will forgive all of your sins if you come to him in submission, in repentance, in faith.

The word of God offers hope to broken sinners, offers hope to those in broken marriages, offers hope to parents with sorrow under their same roof. It shows the way of salvation, it teaches us what faith-based obedience looks like. I ask you, my friends, I ask you from the bottom of my heart: what are you doing with this true, faithful, unchanging, righteous word of God? What role does it have in your life? Do you respect this divine book for its holy excellence? Do you think about the Bible as a book in a class of its own? With authority of its own? Unique? The object of your love and affections because it reveals to you the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you love it and respect it? That's what Scripture is. That's the response that it calls forth from us.

Let's pray together.

Heavenly Father, I simply pray this morning that You would please open eyes and open hearts to Your perfect word. I pray, Father, please by Your Holy Spirit to lead each one to true genuine faith in Christ and that faith-based obedience which is the mark of the indwelling Holy Spirit. May it be true of each one of us, Father, for believers increased in greater measure, for those that until this very moment were dead in sin, Father, that Your Spirit would open eyes as You opened Lydia's eyes in the book of Acts, You opened her heart to believe the things that were being spoken. I ask that for each man, each woman, each boy, each girl, under the sound of my voice, that You would have that merciful operation as Your Spirit uses Your word to achieve Your will in bringing salvation to lost hearts. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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