

Thus, Saith the Lord—*Psalm 119*

I. The public reading of Scripture—Psalm 119:89-96

II. Introduction

- a. "Let's begin with a parable. Once upon a time in a land before there were any cars or modern machines — a time when horses and carriages and wagons were common on the dirt roads — there was a blacksmith shop with a large, heavy, well-worn anvil. One day a little farm boy, who had never left the farm, came with his father to town for the first time. Everything was new and different. As he walked with his father down the unpaved main street, he heard a loud clang . . . clang . . . clang. He said to his father, "What's that?" His father said, "Come, I'll show you." He took his son to the door of the blacksmith's shop. And there the boy saw a huge man, a strong man, lifting a big, heavy hammer with a long handle and a large head on it high in the air, as if to chop down a tree, and then crashing it down on a glowing piece of metal on top of the anvil. He hit the anvil so hard that it made the boy wince with every blow. His father explained to him that this was a blacksmith who made all kinds of metal pieces for wagons and carriages and plows and tools and horseshoes."
- b. "But the little boy was fixed on one thing: the long, heavy hammer and the great metal anvil. They met each other with such a loud sound and with such a force that he thought surely this anvil could not last long. The big, strong blacksmith paused for a moment to catch his breath, and saw the boy standing in the doorway. "Aren't you going to break that thing?" the boy asked, pointing at the anvil. But the blacksmith smiled and said, "This anvil is a hundred years old and has worn out many hammers.""
- c. "Here's the point of the parable. The Bible is an anvil that has worn out thousands of hammers. In every generation, new, huge, heavy hammers are forged against the truth of the Bible. And strong men lift the hammers and pound on the Scriptures. People with no historical perspective — like little boys who've never been to town — see it and say, "Surely the Bible will be destroyed." But others who know their history a little better say, "This Bible was forged in the furnace of divine truth and has worn out many hammers." ".....and I will add, will wear out every hammer leveled against it forever and forever because of who's it is and because of such statements as these in Psalm 119 "it is firmly fixed" and "it is well tried."
- d. (Isa. 40:8) ⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

III. Outline

- a. Why a message about God's word?
- b. The Language of a Songwriter/Poet about the Word of God
- c. Describing the Beauty of God's Word
- d. Conclusion: Our Calling as pastors is to build on the Rock

IV. Why a Message about the Bible?

- a. As we begin a new year, I want to urge the giving of yourselves to prayerful meditation over the word this next year. I have several Bible Reading plans available to fit your specific desires. Hang around after the service and I will help you decide on one if you do not have one already.
- b. We must come to the Bible with the understanding that this is God's Word. For the Bible to say is for God to say. This is the primary means by which God reveals himself and the Bible is the only sufficient means to know how to have a relationship with God through his only Son that we might be forgiven and counted righteous by faith in Christ.
- c. Not only do we learn how to be saved but also learn how to follow Christ. (2 Tim. 3:16-17) ¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

- i. It is sufficient to teach us, reprove, correct and train us in righteousness, that we followers of Christ may be complete, equipped for every good work. Walking in God’s ways is joyful and blessed and hard.
- ii. And these are more sure than if you heard a voice from heaven. Notice what the Bible says in (2 Pet. 1:17-21) ¹⁷ For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," ¹⁸ we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. ¹⁹ And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, ²⁰ knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. ²¹ For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.
- d. There’s a needed reminder for us: if it’s new, it’s not true. We are to believe what the Church throughout history has always believed. We do not get to decide what is true but rather if we are going to believe and submit to God’s authority. The Scriptures tells us who we are and what we believe. They instruct us on what we do. They aren’t suggestions. However, that has certainly happened throughout history. There are common practices in our day that have become normal that are not what was meant to be. And the old is now seen as new because it’s been left out for so long.
- e. Aside from that though, we need to hear God’s word. It is what the Church lives on and lives by!
- f. Let’s take a look at what the Psalmist thinks and believes about the Word of God in Psalm 119.

V. Exposition

- a. **Using Words to Describe the Word**—The psalmist uses several different terms interchangeably throughout this psalm.
 - i. Law, testimonies, precepts, statutes, commandments, rules, word (or promises), and the way
 - ii. Certainly, redundancy plays a role in the use of these different terms but also God’s word has a range of terms to describe it.
 - 1. Law (torah)—means instruction or direction.
 - a. Interestingly enough, law can mean teach as it does in **Psalm 119:33** ³³ Teach me (law me), O LORD, the way of your statutes; and I will keep it to the end.
 - i. Law has a teaching aspect to it but law cannot make you good.
 - ii. Rules parents tell their children about NOT playing in the street teach them what danger is BEFORE they are able to know what danger is.
 - 2. Testimonies—mean, “what God solemnly testifies to be his will” or more precisely **legal provisions**
 - a. God’s word may testify against us or for us depending on how we responded to his word. You can imagine standing before the Judge and when evidence is asked for the WITNESS is Scripture.
 - 3. Precepts—is defined as “what God has appointed to be done” or instructions, procedures.
 - 4. Statutes—is “what the divine Lawgiver has laid down” or more simply prescription, rule. “Like a statue, it speaks of a permanent fixture. Statues have been engraved and therefore cannot be easily erased.” Kidner
 - 5. Commandments—of course is “what God has commanded.” This word has the sense of authority... “the right to demand.” Kidner
 - 6. Rules—“What the divine Judge has ruled to be right” or fundamental decision, judgement.
 - 7. Word—is certainly “what God has spoken” or promised.

- iii. This does not mean God has given us this revelation of Himself to be merely analyzed. This word is for proclaiming, believing, standing firm on, and soaking in. It is our only source of knowing God's will. And it is the only source of knowing the salvation that is offered in Christ.
 - 1. Application: read it regularly. Think deeply about it. Give attention to it. Make it a priority in your life. Treasure such a gift from the Lord. Pray it back to God in worship. Think God's thoughts after him.
- b. **A Precious Jewel—Describing the Beauty of the Word**
 - i. I want to state all that I found in Psalm 119 and then expand a few of them.
 - 1. The law is the LORD's (or yours); it is righteous; it is my counselor; it is good; it is the truth; it is sure; it is firmly fixed; it is exceedingly broad; it is my meditation; it is sweet; it is a lamp and a light; it is my heritage; it is wonderful; it is well tried.
 - ii. I want to expand briefly on the most repeated aspect of the psalm, namely that the word is the LORD's. It is, in fact, easier to say which verses do not mention the Lord or yours than not—84, 90, 121 and 122.
 - 1. There is no worship of the word here as though it were separated from God somehow. There are religions that worship a book as their god.
 - a. But we worship God according to his word.
 - b. Who is God? One of the most basic understandings about God is that he is all-powerful. That means the Almighty has all authority.
 - c. It stands to reason that if this is God's word, then it is the authority.
 - d. If this is God's word, then we must listen, trust and obey. For the bible to say is for God to say.
 - e. And if it is God's word, then it takes on His very nature.
 - iii. The next most repeated description is that God's word is righteous or right.
 - 1. If you long for what is right, then the safest place to find it is in God's right rules.
 - 2. Praise is offered to righteous rules...not unrighteous ones.
 - 3. God's righteous word is worthy to be kept.
 - 4. If you want to do what is just and right, then obey just and right truth.
 - 5. What does right precepts mean? At the most basic level it means they are not false—or untrue. It means they are right.
 - 6. V. 137 declares God to be righteous. The reason God's word is righteous is because God is righteous.
 - 7. Because they are righteous, they endure forever...live forever.
 - 8. They are worthy to be trusted and obeyed because they are right!
 - iv. It makes sense that if God's word is righteous, then it is also good.
 - 1. Listen to psalmist declare
 - a. **Psalm 119:39** ³⁹ Turn away the reproach that I dread, for your rules are good.
 - b. **Psalm 119:66** ⁶⁶ Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I believe in your commandments.
 - c. **Psalm 119:68** ⁶⁸ You are good and do good; teach me your statutes.
 - d. **Psalm 119:122** ¹²² Give your servant a pledge of good; let not the insolent oppress me.
 - e. God is not evil and neither is His word. His word is good because He is good.
 - v. We have already mentioned it as we talked about the aspect of righteousness, but it is worth mentioning that God's word is the truth.
 - 1. **Psalm 119:43** ⁴³ And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth, for my hope is in your rules.

2. **Psalm 119:142** ¹⁴² Your righteousness is righteous forever, and your law is true.
 3. **Psalm 119:151** ¹⁵¹ But you are near, O LORD, and all your commandments are true.
 4. **Psalm 119:160** ¹⁶⁰ The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever.
- vi. I'm going to combine two that are very similar in nature. The word is firmly fixed and it is well tried.
1. Alluding back to our story we began with, these descriptions stir me with joy! I like standing on that which is solid.
 2. **Psalm 119:89-91** ⁸⁹ Forever, O LORD, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens. ⁹⁰ Your faithfulness endures to all generations; you have established the earth, and it stands fast. ⁹¹ By your appointment they stand this day, for all things are your servants.
 - a. If God word is not firmly fixed, His faithfulness is not firmly fixed.
 - b. If His word is sand, the storms will destroy.
 - c. The earth is a witness that God has firmly fixed His word. For the earth is firmly fixed. It was spoken into being and has remained since creation. Day after day, it orbits the sun. Season after season it makes the same cycle.
 3. **Psalm 119:140** ¹⁴⁰ Your promise is well tried, and your servant loves it.
 - a. How would you feel about the bible if all of it had come about last year? That it was all completely new but really exciting.
 - i. For example, one major drawback to Islam is the fact that it did not begin until 610 AD when Mohammad was forty years old. All of the revelation came through this one man.
 - ii. Far better in terms of plain reason would be a bible that began in 1400 BC with multiple authors with one unified message.
 - b. Or how do you feel about the bible that has stood the test of time and argument?
 - c. Every hammer you can think of has landed on the word of God and it still stands.

VI. Conclusion

- a. To build you up in the word is to build you up in Christ.
- b. To build on the foundation of the Word is to build on solid, firmly fixed and the well-tried foundation.
- c. To build you up in the word of God is to tell you what is right and what the truth is.
- d. To build you up in the word of God is to hand you a light and a lamp for you path. One that will lead you faithfully and sure.
- e. I am not confident in me. David is not confident in David. We are confident in the Scriptures. We have nothing else worthy to give you.
- f. When you lie down to sleep tonight, you can rest in peace because of the promises of God.
- g. When you go to work tomorrow, you can store these sureties away in your heart.
- h. When you tell someone the gospel, you can know that it is the power of God unto salvation.
- i. **Isaiah 40:8** ⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.
- j. **Matthew 4:4** "It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."
- k. **But don't hear this message as a way to make God have favor towards you. Walking in God's ways comes after being born again. Repentance and faith in Christ are necessary first. Come to Christ. Be forgiven and counted righteous by faith in him and then learn from him. Walk in his ways for his glory!**