

I have Your Word in My Heart

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- [0 : 00] Let us resume our public worship of God and we shall sing to his praise from Psalm 18.
Psalm 18 and we're singing from verse 28 down to verse 35. The Lord will light my candle so that it shall shine full bright.
The Lord my God will also make my darkness to be light. By thee through troops of men I break and them discomfort all.
By my God assisting me I overleap a wall. As for God, perfect is his way. The Lord his word is tried. He is a buckler to all those who do in him confide.
Who but the Lord is God? But he who is a rock and stay. It is God that girdeth me with strength and perfect makes my way.
- [1 : 12] He made my feet swift as the hinds. Set me on my high places. Mine hands to war he taught.
Mine arms break both of steel in pieces. The shield of thy salvation thou didst on me bestow. Thy right hand held me up.
And great thy kindness made me grow. And so on. We sing these verses of Psalm 18 from verse 28. The Lord will light my candle so that it shall shine full bright.
The Lord will light my candle so that it shall shine full bright.
The Lord my God will also make my darkness to be light.
- [2 : 21] By thee through the fruits of men. Thy bridge and then descends the dawn.
And thy might my God assisting me. I over thee follow.
As foregone fair faces with the Lord, his word is right.
He is a power to all those who do in Him confide.
Who but the Lord is all but He, who is our all can stay?
- [3 : 38] 'Tis God that girdeth me with strength and perfectness my way.
He paid my peace with us the high set me on my high places.
My hands to worry, all my arms break, who stops here in pieces.
The shield of Thine salvation, Thou didst on me show.
Thy right hand held me up and gave Thy kindness made me go.
- [5 : 01] Let us join together in prayer. O Lord God, as we come into Your presence as a worshipping people, grant to us that spirit of worship by which what we engage in is recognisable, not just to ourselves or to those who might be mere spectators, but to the God with whom we have to do business, even in this act of worship.
that You see in us not just a people who are paying lip service to our requirement to come into the presence of God.

because You ask and You tell us and You insist upon it, that You created us for Your own glory, and that You created us in order to be those who would praise and magnify Your name, not just periodically or occasionally, but regularly, even more so at all times, that our very life would be a life of devoted praise to the God who is worthy of receiving our praises.

We confess our many shortcomings. We confess that we do not behave as we ought, not just in public but in secret.

There may be many who look upon us and they are all aware of our many glaring shortcomings, the many ways in which we fail to live up to human expectations, let alone divine expectations.

[7 : 23] We confess that and we acknowledge it and we do so with a heart that You have consecrated to that end, so that our confessions are confessions that are based upon Your own self-revelation, a revelation that teaches us that You know all there is to be known about us.

You know our going out and our coming in. You know our rising up and our lying down. You know the thoughts and intents of our heart.

There is nothing that we can hide from the all-seeing eye of the One with whom we have to do. So in our confessions enable us to be earnest and honest in respect of our relationship with Yourself, our God.

God help us to be aware of the many ways in which we do fall short of Your glory. So bless us by making note to us how we can achieve the least of what is expected of us even in our gathering this evening.

Draw us to Yourself. Draw us to Yourself. Consecrate our hearts and minds that we may dwell upon the things that are of God.

[8 : 59] That Your word might be sweet to our taste, even as honey on the comb was sweet to the taste of the psalmist. We pray that You would draw from us this desire after Yourself.

That we would have an earnest and an honest desire after the things of God.

So that we would find Your meeting with us, even in this place at this hour. In mercy pour out Your Spirit upon us that Your people might be encouraged.

There is much in their own life that may deflate them and discourage them and make them feel that they are not of that number that, that may be your name, they may feel that you have placed distance between you and them and you and us as a congregation, us as a nation.

That you have deliberately put distance between you and ourselves because of what we are. There are many fears that riddle the heart of men and women in this world.

[10 : 25] But you would never span that vast distance that exists between Creator and created.

Sinner and a holy God who is without sin, were it not for the fact that You are a God of mercy and a God of all grace. We plead the merits of another when we come, seeking Your blessing.

Thankful that we can come in Christ's name and that we can plead what He has wrought on our behalf. As the basis for our coming and as the basis for our asking and as the basis for You responding to our need.

Remember each and every soul that is here gathered. Those that belong to You, those that belong to You, that are yours by virtue of the blood that has been shed.

May they know that sense of ownership, that they are under the cover of the blood, that they have sought salvation at the hand of Christ.

[11 : 37] And that they know that they know the redemptive power of His blood on their behalf. The sacrifice for sin has ensured that they have redemption.

We pray that You would encourage them, each one to know that and to know their safety in Christ. We pray for those who may not know that salvation, who may know nothing of it, even though they have heard much about it and have been exposed to the testimony of Your Word and the witness of the truth concerning Christ.

And they have been in company with those who are able to testify in their own lives to the Christ of the cross and what He has wrought in them and for them.

May the eyes of their understanding be opened, measurefully undertake for them that they may be one with us who believe in Your name. May the Lord, that they may know what it is to have Christ as Lord of their life.

We pray for those who cannot be with us this evening and thankful for those that are here and we are reminded of those who can't be because of the circumstances of the present age.

[13 : 01] We know that there are many who, because of the infirmity of old age, they have denied access to the public means of grace. Others, because of Covid, are fearful and timorous concerning meetings such as this one.

We pray for any who have illnesses to deal with associated with Covid and we pray that you would continue to watch over them and heal them from such illnesses.

Others with illnesses that are not related and yet are terribly ill and perhaps some who are beyond recovery except it be by divine intervention.

We pray, Lord, for grace to aid such and that you would minister to them in inner man that they may know the blessing of God as their portion, if that is true of them.

Remember those who are grieving and sorrowful within our communities you have spoken to us repeatedly in the last few weeks and we acknowledge that your voice is speaking to us and that we ought to heed it.

[14 : 18] We cannot trust in the frailty of the flesh to sustain us any longer than you are loved because you have decreed not just the day of birth but the day of our death.

No one knows when that day will come but we know that it truly will. We give thanks for those who are celebrating new life and we pray that you would bless them in their celebrations and that they would have their heart directed towards God by reason of your goodness to them.

We remember our island and those who are celebrating new life and that they would have their heart directed towards God by reason of their life. We remember our island and those who reside within its boundaries, our nation likewise, those who govern us and those who rule over us.

We are mindful of the Queen in her old age and we pray that you would keep her and where the grace of salvation is in evidence wherever it may be found may you magnify it and may those who are witness to it may they acknowledge it as you are doing.

We pray that you are in essence rebels and enemies of the cross.

[16 : 06] We pray that you would have mercy upon them and us too in Jesus name. Watch over us, cleanse you from sin in heaven. Amen. Amen.

We are going to read from the scriptures of the Old Testament and we are reading from the book of Psalms in Psalm 119.

Psalm 119 and we can read from the beginning and we can read down to verse 32. Psalm 119 verse 1.

Blessed are they undefiled in the way who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies and that seek him with the whole heart.

They also do no iniquity, they walk in his ways. thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect unto all thy commandments I will praise thee with uprightness of heart when I shall have learnt thy righteous judgments I will keep thy statutes O forsake me not utterly wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way by taking heed thereto according to thy word with my whole heart have I sought thee O let me not wander from thy commandments thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee blessed art thou O Lord teach me thy statutes with my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth

[18 : 05] I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies as much as in all riches I will meditate in thy precepts and have respect unto thy ways I will delight myself in thy statutes I will not forget thy word deal bowtie fully with thy servant that I may live and keep thy word open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law I am a stranger in the earth hide not thy commandments from me my soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed which do err from thy commandments remove from me reproach and contempt for I have kept thy testimonies princes also did sit and speak against me but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes thy testimonies also are my delight my counselors my soul cleaveth unto the dust quicken thou me according to thy word

I have declared thy ways my ways and thou heardest me teach me thy statutes make me to understand the way of thy precepts so shall I talk of thy wondrous works my soul melteth for heaviness strengthen thou me according unto thy word remove from me the way of lying and grant me thy law graciously I have chosen the way of truth thy judgments have I laid before me I have struck I have stuck unto thy testimonies O Lord, could we not to shame I will run the way of thy commandments when thou shalt enlarge my heart and so on may the Lord that his blessing to this reading of his word and to his name be the praise we're going to sing Psalm 130

Psalm 130 and the whole of the psalm Lord, from the depths to thee I cried my voice, Lord, do thou hear unto my supplications voice give and obtain to bear Lord, who shall stand if thou, O Lord, shouldst mark iniquity but yet with thee forgiveness is that fear thou may speak I wait for God my soul doth wait my hope is in his word more than they that for morning watch my soul waits for the Lord I say more than they that you watch the morning light to see let Israel hope in the Lord for with him mercies be and plenteous redemption is ever found with him and from all his iniquities the Israel shall redeem the whole of Psalm 130 Lord, from the depths to thee I cried

Lord, from the depths to thee I cried my voice, Lord, do thou hear Lord, who shall stand if thou, O Lord, shouldst my heart and to my supplications voice give and obtain to bear Lord, who shall stand Lord, who shall stand Lord, who shall stand if thou, O Lord, shouldst my heart Lord, choose my iniquity but yet with thee forgiveness is that fear thou mayest me

I wait for yon my soul my soul love my hope is in his word more than they die for morning watch watch my soul which heart the Lord I say for not may not to watch the morning light to see let let Israel hold in the

[23 : 35] Lord for with his mercy be and when Jesus redemption redemption is ever found with death and from all his iniquities he Israel shall redeem he Israel shall redeem him like us to turn to the passage that we have read and for a short time just to think of the words that we have in verse 11 psalm 119 and at verse 11 thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against thee thy word

I have hid in mine heart that I might not sin against thee those of you who were here this morning will remember that I spoke briefly to the children about the parable of the sower and in that parable Jesus emphasises the need that there is to listen attentively to the word of God and we know that this isn't a solitary parable where he emphasises that need we are repeatedly reminded of the need that there is to pay heed to the word to listen attentively take heed how you hear he says elsewhere take heed how you hear and we may think that that is a message to the unbeliever unbeliever that this is a message that is directed to those who are careless about how they hear but that's not the truth there are many people who are unbelievers who are never where God's word is to be heard so you can't believe that the word take heed how you hear is addressed to them more often than not when Jesus uses such words he is speaking to those who are his own people those who are his his disciples those who are his followers and he asks them requires them to consider how they hear and in that sense when we think of our relationship with the word if we are professing believers in

Christ then there is well there is a known is placed upon each one of us to be alert and to be aware and to be attentive to the word that is being written read heard by us the written word that we hear and the written word that is set before us a frequent speaker at the Keswick Convention minister by the name of Eric Alexander he was a minister in the Church of Scotland an excellent preacher and at one of the occasions he was invited to preach or to lead the discussions or talks at Keswick he said the following we are not here for refined spiritual picnic a refined spiritual picnic we are here to meet with

God more precisely we are here to meet with God in his word it is possible to come to Keswick with the vague idea that we have come for a blessing but we do not believe in blessings which are not anchored in and ministered through the word of God we are here to submit ourselves heart and mind and spirit to the word of the living God through which he chooses to bless his people and that's a word which I sincerely believe in a truth that every one of us should have in mind because very often when we discuss what we have heard or where we have been especially with regard to conferences or preaching of the word we are not as articulate as we could be about what we were actually doing about what we were actually doing about what we were doing about what we were actually doing about what we were actually engaged in doing it is a privilege to hear the word of God read it is a privilege to hear the word of God expound it doesn't matter who the expositor is because it is the word of God and because it is the word of God we are under it and it is designed for our good and for our for our edification and for our encouragement now this evening

I want us to narrow the focus of our attention so that we are considering the words of the psalmist and there are two things that he says here concerning the word he says the word I have hidden in my heart hidden in my heart and then he adds to that that I might not sin against thee he tells us what he has done with the word and he tells us why he has done this with the word and I want us to examine or try and explain what the psalmist is bringing to our attention in that statement now aside from being the longest psalm in the Old Testament the psalm here is a psalm that is designed to teach a psalm that is designed to teach it is a didactic psalm

[31 : 22] I am sure you know that anyway and because it is a didactic psalm a psalm that is structured in such a way that the reader or the hearer of the words of the psalm if he is attentive or she is attentive to the words that they retain what they hear and they are able to practically apply it to the areas of their life to which the psalm is directing attention the psalm itself we are told has it is even in the verses that we read this evening you will see particular words featured and they are featured throughout the psalm for example at the very start of the psalm blessed are they and defiled in the way who walk in the law of the Lord blessed are they that keep his testimonies and that seek him with the whole heart they also do no iniquity they walk in his ways and so on there are ten different

Hebrew words that are used which essentially could be interpreted using one word the law of God or the word of God or the word of God or the word of God but you'll find that the psalmist used the law or the way or the word or something along these lines I won't go into it but just read it for yourselves and you'll find that there are various words that are used by him but essentially what he's talking about is God's word and he speaks about the word of God as a word that is meant to help us understand who he is and help us understand what he expects from us who know who he is the commentator the commentator Charles Breaches has written a commentary on this psalm just focusing on the whole of Psalm 119 and he says this it contains the anatomy of experimental that is practical spiritual godly true religion it contains the anatomy of experimental spiritual godly true religion now the word that I would emphasize there is the word practical because the psalmist designs the psalm so that we learn what God expects us to put into practice in our lives in our relationship with himself and it's and it's if we think of what the psalmist is saying that is of the utmost importance as far as he is concerned now he describes himself as hiding this word in his heart and when you

I remember speaking to Dr. Malcolm McLean speaking about a preacher that I heard in his congregation there was a polity there and he was discussing the type of ministry that he had himself and the type of ministry this other person had and he said of this other person and he understood at once what he said he he he preaches in pictures of course he used words but the words that he used were words that immediately created in your mind images pictures of what was conveyed by the words now some other preachers they convey the meaning using language and language is the focus of what they're saying but the language of some people it immediately translates into a picture I mean image in your head picture

I mean image in your head now if you imagine for a moment that the psalmist here is creating a picture and the picture is of God's word and he is saying of that word I have hidden it in my heart what kind of picture do you have in your mind what are you thinking of is happening when God's word is being hidden in your heart well I suppose my own instant instinct was to think of of maybe a safe place a safe or a cupboard and you're taking the word and you're placing it inside that cupboard and it's hidden from view from view or it's considered to be precious and you're placing it inside this place where because of its preciousness it's kept safe but is that really the picture that you're meant to have in your mind the second part of the verse would make no sense if that was what was meant because what is hidden in the heart is meant to produce a result an effect it says the word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee so if you're going to put something away and hide it from view and perhaps put it into storage as it were then obviously it's not going to have practical use so that image is wrong

I remember when I was at university there were a number of people who studied there, men and women who were retired folk and they had gone to university some had never been there before but some had they had come to the end of their careers and they were studying some topic of their own choice and what was clear from their studying of whatever topic they had no interest in applying what they were learning in a practical way they weren't doing it in order to advance their careers their life was lived as far as career was concerned they had reached retirement but they were studying whatever topic was in order to advance their knowledge increase their knowledge and to perhaps learn something new now the psalmist is not really thinking of a situation like that what he has in view surely is not an area of intellectual study study that will benefit the person purely mentally but something that needs to be applied something that needs to be put to use something that will advance that passion as far as the relationship with God is concerned and that is how he is speaking of the word of God he is expecting the hearer of the word of God to treat it with respect and to treat it in a way where it is hidden in the heart but in order to use it in the best way possible another author that I quote frequently is A.W. Toser and he is speaking about the word of God and he refers to it in different ways but he says something that is relevant I think to this subject that we are working on this evening he says by far the greatest portion of the book the Bible is devoted to an urgent effort to persuade people to alter their ways and bring their lives into harmony with the will of God as set forth in its pages an urgent effort to persuade people to alter their ways now do you believe that that is the case he believes and he he teaches that the bulk of what we have in the scripture is not just simply a book with history or a book with poetry or a book with whatever in it but at the heart of everything that we find here whether it is referring to liturgy referring to the history of the

[40 : 55] Jews referring to poetry referring to the prospects of the future as far as Messiah is concerned the teaching is designed to influence life in a practical way so that when we read when we hear when we interact with this word it will advance us in a relationship with God it will bring us forward from where we were to somewhere where we were not in a book again to continue the quotation further on he says this you will not find a single book of the Bible that does not have godly exhortation there is not a single Bible portion that God wants us to study just to get a cranium full of knowledge or learning the Bible always presents the truth and then makes the application now if this is true you ought to do this or do something about it now when we think of that when we think of these words of the psalmist and we believe that what is suggested suggested by these theologians is true then we need to ask ourselves in what way am I going to take this word and to put it hide it in my heart to what end what is it that I expect to accomplish by it now what the psalmist means by his words is not that he has committed the word as I said to a museum or a mausoleum he has put it into the engine room of the spirit life of the believer that is the heart of spiritual activity so that the person who takes this word and hides it in their heart is expecting the response that the heart will give to that word now there is no doubt that some part of the scripture is taken by some of us and we bury it out of sight because the part that we don't like or the part that is offensive to us because it expects of us something that we are not prepared to do it requires us to behave in ways that we are not comfortable with it requires promise actions or activities in our life that we are not willing to exercise because it requires more of us than we prepare to give more often than not more than we prepare to give

God there are parts of the scripture that make us feel uncomfortable because they speak about our feelings and our flaws and our shortcomings and we bury these out of sight we don't want to interact with them don't want to think about them because they demand of us more than we are willing to give the accommodator Charles Breach reminds us it is hidden not for concealment but for security what does he mean hidden for security that it may be ready for constant use the psalmist is saying this is the reason why this word is hidden by me I am putting it aside not for storage but for ready access so that I may use it when needs be when I am confronted by situations where the word is the only resource that I can truly apply to as a believer and there are many perhaps many different areas of our life that we need to think about this for ourselves what does it mean for me to hide God's word in my heart well we said in the morning that if the word of God is not something that we believe in it has to be a word that we believe in it has to be a word that we that we look at as declaring the will of God declaring the will of God for the future or for the present even we need to be able to to to believe that and that God has revealed this to us through the word when it comes to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ he has been revealed to us his activity in the world has been revealed to us the purposes for that activity has been revealed to us do we believe that do we believe that the word the word is the the main channel by which God speaks to us concerning his purposes and when he reveals these purposes to us when we see what he is saying do we believe what he is saying do we believe what he is saying well we should we should understand it in order to believe it we should be directed by the word we should be directed by it so that in all areas of our life we know that what we are doing we have the the confidence in God's word that what we are doing is right well the second thing we have here is equally important because it is based upon what we have laid upon in our heart he says thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee how important is it to the believer that they don't sin how important is it to the believer that they do not sin against God knowingly see each version says about these words

it is the best thing in the best place for the best purpose the best thing in the best place for the best purpose that must mean as far as he is concerned the best purpose for which the word of God can be put into practice in our lives is to keep us from sinning against God how does God's word keep us from sinning?

and just think about the Lord Jesus Christ for a moment he was without sin and yet when he was in the wilderness he was tempted by the devil so that he would sin and we are told expressly that the way that he that he dealt with the devil who tempted him to sin was by way of the word of God that was his first defense that was his only defense he used the word of God and the devil was soon on his heels the devil had no choice but to turn tail if you read through the Psalms you'll find the life of David brought to our attention and David was frequently the focus of the attention of many enemies of various descriptions and one thing he announces quite clearly is this that he is thankful to God for his word so that he can exercise restraint when his enemies come to tempt him to do something now you'd think

I think it's in Psalm 17 one of these Psalms anyway and for somebody like David whose hands were stained with the blood of many of his enemies he gives thanks to God for the restraint that his word proves to be because he does not want to be guilty of the blood of enemies when he is simply doing it out of spiteful revenge Calvin says about David there to keep ourselves from howling like wolves for impetuous revenge brother brother she says never avenge yourselves but leave it to the wrath of God for he will take it into his own hands the execution of vengeance on those who injure us strange advice I suppose but advice nonetheless because the danger to which we are exposed in this world again and again is to commit sin in some way shape or foreign and the only restraint the best restraint the most effective restraint is to have the word of God if not in our mouth in our heart the word of God keeps us from sinning against the most high his words keep keeps us when we have himself before us when we think of the Lord Jesus Christ he is before us and when we are ready to sin when you read the psalm that we have here in the metrical version it just says so that we won't offend God he does not desire to offend the Lord so what do we do what do we do with the word of God what do we do with it well surely we familiarize ourselves with the content of the word we familiarize ourselves with the author of the word so that we understand better what this word is teaching us and telling us we familiarize ourselves with the ways that this word has been used by others as we saw today

[53 : 09] Jesus took the word that spoke of the fact that he was going to be numbered amongst the transgressors he took the word how do you think it would have been and I suppose it's not really a question as such Jesus knew that he was going to be numbered amongst the transgressors but if the scripture had not said that about him if he was convinced that he would be treated as an innocent as an innocent and that he would be free from any scandal being alleged against him but he knew from the word of God directly that this was the life that he was going to lead that this was the death that was going to await him because he was aware of the word of God and how many of us would genuinely be spared very much grief and sorrow if we were as familiar with the word of God even partially familiar with it in comparison with the Lord whose word it is the prayer of the psalmist in the of this when he goes on open my eyes he says that I may behold wondrous things out of my law he wants familiarity with the word of God so that this word will be the source of strength to him when he has to deal with issues that he did not expect when you have to deal with events that were not part of your plan so that you have to deal with adversity coming from sources that you did not expect but when you go to the world you will find that you are not doing something or experiencing something that is unheard of that is not known as being an experience that belongs to the children of God the word of God thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee there are many ways in which we can sin against God not just in our actions but in our thoughts when we accuse God even secretly of allowing us to experience things that we did not expect to experience and if if we understand from God's word that our expectations were wrong what we thought would be things that we would never encounter that they are not that our thoughts concerning these were is not right we would not offend God we would not offend God by our thoughts where then do you place the word of God this evening have you placed it in your heart have you do you have this word as your constant companion and the more that we have it committed to our minds and our hearts the more we will be assured of that and that in turn gives us the the assurance that we will not be guilty of offending our God

well may God give us grace in order to in order to handle his word aright and to not only possess the familiarity with it but to possess it as the most precious of all words may he bless to us these thoughts let us pray Lord God we give thanks that your word is a word unlike no other it's a living word it is just as alive today as it was the day it was first breathed out and came from the mouth of your servants whoever they were be the prophet or priest or apostle we give thanks that when we familiarise with ourselves with these words that you have the ability to use these words to enliven our souls when sin has deadened the life within us and we confess that on many occasions when we struggle as your people to live as your people ought to live we pray that your word would be much in our hearts and in our minds continue to watch over us cleanse from sin in Jesus name amen we are going to conclude our service singing the words that we have been looking at this evening we are going to sing from verse 9 to verse 14 psalm 119 from verse 9 to 14 by what means shall a young man learn his way to purify the fee according to thy word thereto attentive be and faintly thee have I sought with all my soul and heart

O let me not from the right path of thy commands depart thy word I in my heart have hid that I offend not thee O Lord thou ever blessed art thy statutes teach thou me the judgments of thy mouth each one my lips declared have more joy thy testimonies way than riches all ye gave these verses to God's praise by what means shall a young man learn his way to purify by what means shall a young man learn his way to purify if he according to thy word if he according to thy word there too much and to me unfiltered me unfiltered me unfiltered me have I sought with all of my soul and heart

O let me not from the right path of thy command depart thy command depart thy word I in my heart have hid that I don't mend not thee O let me not from the right path of thy command depart thy word I in my heart have hid that I don't mend not thee O Lord thou ever blessed art thy statutes teach thou me me

CHARTER pantalla my testimony is with the riches God became in the grace, mercy and peace of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, rest and abide with you all now and always. Amen.