

Psalm 119 "Know the Lord Through His Word Written"

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Date: 31 August 2025

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[0 : 00] Hi, my name is George Sinclair. I'm the lead pastor of Church of the Messiah.

! It is wonderful that you would like to check out some of the sermons done by Church of the Messiah, either by myself or some of the others. Listen, just a couple of things. First of all, would you pray for us that we will open God's Word well to His glory and for the good of people like yourself?

The second thing is, if you aren't connected to a church and if you are a Christian, we really, I would really like to encourage you to find a good local church where they believe the Bible, they preach the gospel, and if you have some trouble finding that, send us an email. We will do what we can to help connect you with a good local church wherever you are. And if you're a non-Christian, checking us out, we're really, really, really glad you're doing that. Don't hesitate to send us questions. It helps me actually to know, as I'm preaching, how to deal with the types of things that you're really struggling with. So God bless.

Let's bow our heads in prayer. Father, we give you thanks and praise that you have created us. We give you thanks and praise that you are a God who speaks. We thank and praise you that you have made us as human beings to speak, to listen, to use language, not only to each other, but also to you.

And we give you thanks and praise that in your word written, you have spoken to us. We ask, Father, that your Holy Spirit would move with gentle power in each one of us today, that we might treasure more and more your word, read your word more and more, ponder your word more and more, and do what you tell us to do in your word. And we ask these things in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated.

[2 : 04] So this isn't a therapy session. It's a sermon. But people who know me know that one of my weaknesses is that I'm not very good at having difficult conversations. I'm a bit of a difficult conversation avoider. And in particular, I'm, I mean, I guess there's some conversations that I'd be fine with, for instance, like asking for money. That's not something which is necessarily difficult for me, for the church, or for some other worthy, you know, project. But I'm not very good at having a conversation where I have to issue a godly rebuke, to tell somebody that what they're doing is quite wrong. And because I love and care for them, and I want to see them flourish, they need to really take it into, take it on. I'm not very good at that. And as some of you know, that over the last couple of weeks, I have had to have a conversation like that. I'm not with somebody in the church. I'm connected to other churches and other organizations, and I'm canon of church planning and all that. So it's, but a couple of people, I didn't want to go into the details, because it should be private, but they knew that I was going to have this conversation, got cancelled, rescheduled.

And I asked people to pray for me, because it's not something which I'm naturally very good at. And one of the things, about an hour, maybe an hour and a half before I had that conversation, I got a text from one of the people praying for me. And it was a text, which just was a quote of a Bible text. And it was such a spectacular word for me. It was such a help to get that Bible text.

It just, it really encouraged me. It made me realize I was doing the right thing, and I had the right heart. And I read it several times between getting that text and having that conversation.

And just thank God for the text and prayed into it. And it just really spoke to me. It was very, very helpful. One of the things you could pray for me is that on Sunday mornings, as I'm working on the sermon throughout the week, I start always on a Monday, usually I start on the Monday, reading the text. And one of the things I pray is that as I'm preparing, as I'm studying the Bible, preparing to speak, I ask that the Lord would speak to my heart through the text. And by heart, I'm not meaning my emotions only, I mean the biblical sense of heart, which is the very center of who I am, which is out where my mind emerges, my will, my emotions, my affections, my desires, all of that flows out of my center, my heart. And I ask that the Lord would speak to me in his word, to my heart.

And I think every week he does. And sometimes it shows up in the sermon. But once again, because this isn't a therapy session, but a sermon, sometimes it never shows up in the sermon, because it's just addressing something very personal in my life. Maybe making some sin I need to repent of, a blind spot that I've become aware of, maybe sometimes an infusion of joy or hope. But I ask every week that the Lord would speak to my heart through his word, and that when I preach, I would be able to have the word speak to your heart. And if you would pray into that, that would be very, very good, if you're trying to think of how to pray for me week in and week out. Now, I mention that because all of us have that type of experience where the word speaks to us very, very deeply and powerfully. But we also have other different types of experiences with the Bible. At times, the Bible can seem spectacularly boring. I mean, it can't be spectacularly boring. It would be dreadfully boring.

[5 : 40] And sometimes for us, if we're honest about the Bible, we find it incomprehensible. And sometimes we find the Bible offensive and don't quite know what to do with it, or extremely puzzling. I mention all of that because today we're going to look at Psalm 119. Not all of it. It's 176 verses.

Um, Morris asked me the other day, should he print all 176 verses in the announcement that goes out? And should he warn everybody to bring a packed lunch? Because the sermon was going to be exceptionally long as I went verse by verse through all 176 verses. And I said, no, we're just going to look at the first 16 verses. But the Psalm 119 is a love poem, a love prayer, a meditation upon the beauty of God and the beauty of his word, and its wonderful power and the spectacular place it can have in our lives.

That's what the Psalm is all about. It's a 176 verse meditation and exaltation in God, the God who is there, who speaks, speaks by his word, and that we as his people get to hear his word and have that word have a role in our lives. And that means it's not just the parts that speak directly to our heart in a way that we can think of a time, like I could tell you that time just a couple of weeks ago, but that I'm telling you all this because the Psalmist wants us to persevere in reading the word because of this wonderful power. So let's have a look. If you open your Bibles, it's Psalm 119.

If you don't have a Bible with you, there are some here that you can use or keep as a gift from us. And if you don't have a Bible, it's going to be up on the screen, but there's something about having your own Bible. And I want the congregation to be able to look and see if I'm playing fast and loose with things and have the Bible come into your hearts for yourself. And actually, here's the, if I was to give you my own summary and my own words of the message of this Psalm, it would be this.

I'm sorry it's not written up there. It's just, just listen. The triune God truly speaks, and he speaks so you will truly know him. And the more you know him, and the more you seek to know him, that the more you seek to know him, the more you will want to hear him speak. So read the Bible regularly, ponder it deeply, and do as it says. That's the big message of the, of the Psalm. That the God is, Francis Schaeffer back in the 70s wrote a famous book at the time called He is There and He is not silent. And so the triune God is there. He speaks, he speaks the truth. He speaks so you will know him, and you want to know him more. And the more you know him, the more you'll want to hear him speak to you. So read the Bible regularly, ponder it deeply, and do as he says in his word. That's sort of a big summary of it. But you can have this other summary of it, which is the very first word of the Psalm, which says the same thing. And I would, one of the reasons I actually didn't put the, my summary up there is I'd rather have you memorize the first verse, because that's God's word.

[8 : 52] I gave you a summary. It's better if you heard God's word than my word. But one of the, one of the things I tried to pray into this week about my sermon is I could spend all this time explaining different problems and very little time actually just having the word proclaimed. And that sort of, I, in attempting to, to help the text, I'd undermine it. I want you to know God's word. I want you to all hear it yourself. So look at this first verse, which is in many ways is a, is another, is, is the summary of the whole Psalm. It goes like this. Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord.

So the word blessed, for some of you who don't know what it means, we get confused by it. Blessed means that God moves and does something with power in the life of a person. And the way he works in power in the life of a person can be either something to do with preparing you for eternity and making you right with God, or it can be something that has to do with your, just the, the current world that we live in, or it can be a bit of both. So a bit of a surprising thing. One of the ways to be blessed, I was thinking about that this week because I had a couple of things that came up this week that humbled me. And I'm, I'm, I'm a normal fallen, sinful human being, and I don't find being humbled a pleasurable experience, but I realized that's one of the ways that God blessed me.

Pride isn't a blessing, being humbled is a blessing. Because humility is, is, is, is, we're made to be humble, right? But so it, you know, it could be, you know, you could, the blessing, the ability to thrive. So it's God does something that leads you to thrive. And it could be thriving in a sense of, of, you know, of a deeper life of prayer, reading his word, of humility, of a better ability to use your spiritual gifts. It could also be a blessing of the, the normal, just created order. He blesses you with finances, with a promotion, with a house, with, with health, with strength. And it can be one or the other, or a bit of both. And so that's what this is saying. Blessed, it's a, something that God is doing are those whose way is blameless, who walk. And, and walk here just means how you do your day, right? How you do your day, moment to moment throughout the day, who do your day in the law of the Lord. And it uses the, the idea here that the, the Lord has spoken and created the law. And we'll talk about that in a moment. But there's an important thing here that you need to understand just off the beginning. And I know this could get people off on a tangent, but one of the common problems that we human beings have is that we doubt that God's word is connected to our thriving.

So if you just went up the hill a little bit to the church, just up the hill, if you went into that church on a Sunday morning, you would see for pride of place in the, in the front of the church, a huge gay pride flag. And if you talk to the people in that church, they'd probably try to tell you that the Bible doesn't say what the Bible really says, but that the Bible is just very clear on this particular issue. But if, if you really pressed underneath all of that would be a sense that you have thriving and you have God's word. And sometimes God's word works against thriving.

And as good Canadians, if you have to choose between thriving and God's word, choose thriving. But this text, it's very, look at it again, blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord. It shows here that that's never a choice that we have to make.

[12 : 38] That God's, God works with his word. It's the power of, that his power to come into our lives, to help us to thrive, works with his word speaking. And as his word speaks, it works with this power that comes from God for our thriving. It's never a choice that we have to make. I mean, we can look at it and puzzle over it and ponder over it and come and ask others in your small group or your, you know, your spiritual mentors or your pastor about how to, you know, how to, how, how to, you know, how do these things work together? How does generosity work with me thriving financially?

You know, how to, I mean, being financially generous. How does, how does the Bible's word on, on sexuality help me to thrive sexually? Like we can be puzzled about it, but, but God's word is saying right off the beginning, we never have to make that choice. God has this power to make us thrive.

And he has, he speaks his word and the two of them work completely and utterly together in harmony. They help each other. And that's this fundamental idea of the scriptures. Now, before we go any further, there's a couple of problems that some people have with all of this.

Like if you look at it again, blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord. And the first one is just this whole idea of, of law. Like, I mean, you know, if, if we were honest, I mean, I know there's some lawyers in the room and they might actually really like the word law, but for most Canadians, they'd probably say, I wish I could have gone back in time and just had a bit of a conversation with the psalmist.

But forget about that for a moment, because it's not just the psalmist, it's ultimately God. But we wish that we could say to God, you know, God, pick a better word than law. Like, it's not very attractive.

[14 : 27] Seems a bit, I don't know, like legalistic, a bit judgmental. It's not something that Canadians are going to, going to, going to resonate with. And that's the, that's the first thing.

And, and, and we'll, we'll, we'll deal with that, you know, a little bit in a moment. But the, the other idea that we have problems with is, okay, George, the Bible just says that, but you don't have to, you shouldn't believe it just because the Bible says it, should you?

And, you know, if you're a Christian, you, you should believe it because the Bible says it. But if you're outside of the Christian faith trying to understand it, or even if you're within the Christian faith and you'd never thought about it, I don't have the time to sort of, I mean, it would be a whole other talk just to do this.

But here's how I would argue that this is a, in fact, true. Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord, that God does actually speak, and his speech is found in the Bible, and his speech is something that we should be walking in, we should be keeping in, and living by.

And, and we don't have to just take it initially just purely by, by blind faith. And here's how I would argue for it. I would say, first of all, let's just take this as a, as what it originally was, a series of ancient texts and documents.

[15 : 41] And if we take it in particular, just the New Testament for us right now, and I take you through and try to show to you how the, the, the New Testament documents, each of the individual ancient biographies of Jesus and the letters and some of the other things, that these were written by eyewitnesses of Jesus or by people who talked to eyewitnesses.

It was written when eyewitnesses were alive, that we can trust that the documents that we have in our hands are fundamentally the documents that were written back then. And that would be the first thing.

And the second thing I'd say is, and if you read these documents, you get a very particular picture of Jesus. You get to see his, his great wisdom. You get to see his great insight. You get to see his humility. You get to see his love.

You get to see his compassion. And even many people who aren't Christians, like Mahatma Ghani, have been often very touched with just the wisdom and the charity and the compassion of Jesus. And I said, that's going to bring you into a little bit of a conflict, which is talked about by C.S. Lewis of Lord Lunatic and Liar, because Jesus says that he is God, the Son of God, that he comes to die for his sins, that he's going to die and rise from the dead.

And that would be the third thing, that all of these ancient documents and the record of other people afterwards is that Jesus did die on the cross, that he was buried, and that on the third day the tomb was empty and Jesus had risen from the dead.

[17 : 05] And because of the ancient documents and because of those other things about Jesus, it's a completely reasonable thing.

I'm not saying it can be proved like mathematical certainty, but it's a very reasonable thing. In fact, it is, I would say, the most reasonable way to understand the ancient evidence and the start of the Christian faith to accept that Jesus really did die on the cross, he really was buried, and then the third day he really did rise from the dead and the tomb was empty and he appeared to people.

And if that is true, then obviously that is who he is has been vindicated, and then we'd want to know what Jesus had to say about the Bible.

And once again, it's beyond the time that I have right now, but at the end of the day, Jesus was a Psalm 119 person. Jesus said that the Bible was written by God for us.

He believed that. He quoted it in that type of way, and that's why we trust it. Because Jesus is a Psalm 119 person, I am a Psalm 119 person.

[18 : 14] He is well worth your trust. He is well worth your obedience. And so he has told us to trust God's word, to ponder it deeply, and to do what it says.

So that's why it's valid to take this when it says, blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord, to take it that what we're hearing is an authoritative word from God when we read the Bible.

And it's an authoritative word from God to us in our human situation that we should remember, that we should for our good ponder, that we should for our good seek to do, knowing that as we do this, God's power for us to thrive is also at work within us.

Now, I'm only doing 16 verses, and I want to do something that helps you to read later on yourself. And what I want to let you know of is that Psalm 119 has what I call the Russian novel problem.

And by the Russian novel problem, I mean this. The first time when I was in university, 100 million years ago, I wasn't taking an English course or a Russian literature course, but I wanted to become better educated, so I thought I should read a book by Dostoevsky.

[19 : 36] And most of Dostoevsky's books are like this, I mean they're exaggerating a bit, they're big, fat, honking books, right? But he had one book called Crime and Punishment that's only this big, so I thought I'd start with Crime and Punishment.

And so I started reading Crime and Punishment, and I'm having a real hard go with it, like really, really, really hard go with it. But I'm persisting because I want to be better informed, and it's supposed to be a brilliant book.

And finally, I don't know how it is, maybe I was talking to somebody about it, but about a third of the way or halfway through the book, I realized that one of the reasons I was having a hard time reading it is I actually thought there were way more characters in the book than there actually were, because I didn't understand how Russian names worked.

So I didn't realize that you could refer, in Russian you could refer to a person by their entire name, you could refer to a person as part of their name, you could refer to a person as their first name, and you could refer to a person as their nickname.

So I was wondering why there were 12 characters at a certain part in time of the book when there was actually only three characters at that part of the book. And so I was always confused.

[20 : 45] So finally I realized, okay, well that's dumb of me, but how would I know that's how Russians do things? So I went back to the beginning of the book, I got out a pad of paper and a pen, and every time I came across a Russian name I wrote it down.

And I started to figure out, because I talked to somebody how it worked, and so I'd write down all the names of person one, all the names of person two, and then I was able to read the book, and it's a great book and you should read it, by the way, knowing stuff like that.

So the same type of thing can happen when you read Psalm 119. You can think that you're having to sort of take different things and weigh them against each other, or that there's different things going in different directions, when part of the way that Psalm 119 is structured is it's structured, I think, every verse except like eight or something are using one of eight words, different ways to understand God's speech to us, the Bible.

And out of those other, I think, eight times, I might be wrong on the number, I'd have to check my notes, there's a couple of words that just show up a couple of times that basically fit with those eight, and I think there's three times where it has no mention of word whatsoever.

So what we're going to do is we're going to sort of go through a bit quicker the other verses, and we're going to look at the eight different words that Psalm 119 uses to help us understand God's speech to us.

[22 : 06] So verse one, blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord. And the word law is the Hebrew word Torah, or Torah, I can't remember how to, I don't know how to pronounce it, so don't take that I pronounced the Hebrew correctly on that.

And so it could either mean the first five books of the Old Testament, it can mean what we Christians call the Old Testament, and our Jewish friends either call the Torah or the Tanakh, the entire Old Testament.

And it also actually can just refer to, it refers to instruction. That's fundamentally what it means. But it's not just any old instruction, it's that God's word instructs us authoritatively, just like law, instructs us authoritatively about how we are to live.

And that's one of the first words. The second word that comes up is in verse two. Look at it. Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart. So you see, this is really important, because it's not as if, you know, you have the law bit, and you have the testimonies bit, and you have to figure out how they balance each other, and they're not going in different directions.

These are just eight different word images or pictures, all trying to help us to understand this one thing that God does, which is speak. And he's spoken in a public way through his word written, the Bible, which is an open revelation, a public revelation.

[23 : 35] And it's just eight different ways to understand the full aspect and range of what God does when he speaks. And so the word testimonies, in the original language, is God solemnly testifying as to what his will is and what is important and valuable.

That's what the word testimony is, trying to communicate that when God speaks, he's communicating to us. It's a solemn thing, and he's letting you know this is really important. This is really valuable.

This is really worth paying attention to. And that's what the word testimonies means. Blessed are those, verse two, who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart.

And this is another thing. Just note that what the Bible keeps together, we human beings want to keep separating. It's not, I mean, there are some people, you know, when we were starting Ryle Seminary, and I talked to professors and students about this sometime, what we don't want to have is like a completely online program that you can just read text and you can live in your basement and never actually talk to people and become, you know, keyboard jihadis who fire off angry emails to people, denouncing them for minute...

I just got a letter, an email the other day for a blog that I wrote for the Gospel Coalition that was such a nitpicky, dumb thing to say and making me claim like I didn't believe the Bible and was not being a faithful teacher.

[25 : 08] And gosh, that person needed to get out of their basement and actually talk to people and not be a keyboard jihadi. Like, I don't know how I'm going to respond to her because I feel like saying, get a life is my response and don't be such a, you know, a dumb nitpicker, right?

Anyway, sorry, this is therapy. I'm sorry. I shouldn't have used the sermon for part of that. But the point is that you don't... Listen to Psalm 119, verse 2.

Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with all their heart. God's word and seeking him personally and relationally, they fit together. You know, it would be impossible for me to say that I want to know my wife more, but I never want her to speak to me.

If every time I came home, I said, Louise, you're going to have a vow of silence and you're going to, you know, wear something that covers all of how you look for the next little bit.

And yes, I really want to know. No, that doesn't work for human beings, right? So there's nothing at war with that. It's a seeking of him. The third word is really neat as well.

[26 : 17] In verse... Sorry, the third word comes up in a moment. Verse 3, Who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways. And the word ways is, I think it's either two or three times it shows up.

It's one of those, you know, non-eight big words, but it's... The ways here does, in the original language, imply something written. So to get a bit of a sense, it's really like as if, in a sense, you're seeing a verbal map of something.

That's behind the word ways. So verse 3, Who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways. Verse 4, You have commanded your precepts to be kept diligently. And the word precepts here is a neat word.

And so it's... What it is, it's things which are very, very important, but it's a detail word, okay? So I know there's a... You know, if you take a technical writing program, you want to have somebody who's able to take instructions and give all of the details so that you can follow each step.

I hate it when I try to get instructions somewhere and it's skipping five steps or it's ambiguous. Precepts is a detailed word. And the details all being important.

[27 : 27] And that's what precepts is. So verse 4, You have commanded your precepts to be kept diligently. Verse 5, Oh, that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes.

And the word statutes there in the original language has this idea that it really is... Like, this is like a non-negotiable law, okay? You shall... You know, you don't kill people in Canada.

You're not allowed to kill people. That's like a... That's not a negotiable law in Canada that's all right to kill people. No, no, you don't kill innocent... Yeah, I should qualify. You can't kill innocent people just willy-nilly.

And so, but in the word statute, it's something which is really deeply laid down. It has binding force and permanence. And then verse 6, Then I shall not be put to shame having my eyes fixed on all your commandments.

And commandments is the word to help me to remember that God is in fact God and I'm not. It's the word of a superior speaking to somebody who's subordinate to the superior.

[28 : 33] So that when we're hearing God's word read to us, I am to have the attitude, the heart posture, that he is God and I'm not. He's an authority.

He's the creator. I'm not an authority. I'm a creature. And when he speaks, I should listen because he's over me. Properly over me. And within it, it's...

The thing which is really important about this, if you use a bit of a military analogy, what you would never want in the military... I know there's at least one person present who used to be in the military.

What you would never want is 5,000 privates let loose with weapons, with no officers. That would be a nightmare, to have 5,000 privates running around with weapons.

You need authority over it. You need to have officers. You need to have a mission. You need to have a chain of command. And that's all implied in here, that we should see ourselves not just as privates doing whatever we want, but that there's an authority over us.

[29 : 36] And then the next thing is in verse 7, I will praise you with an upright heart when I learn your righteous rules. And rules is a good word. It also can sometimes be translated as decisions.

It means that God has in fact made certain decisions. He's made certain judgments about certain types of situations. He's made decisions around the fact that our thriving in a world with money should open the door for us to be able to make money, and that we should pray for systems that allow people to make money.

But you can't thrive in terms of money and making money if you're not also generous. It's rules around sexuality. It's decisions about how these different things go if we want to thrive in the area of our sexuality.

And then verse 8, I will keep your statutes. We talked about that earlier. Do not utterly forsake me. Verse 9, how can a young man or a young woman keep his way or her way pure?

By guarding it according to your word. And this is the most general word. It's just emphasizing that the laws, the precepts, the commandments, they're actually words.

[30 : 42] God himself actually speaks to us with words. It's the most general of all of the words. And then there's just one more. Verse 10, with my whole heart I seek you.

Let me not wander from your commandments. Verse 11, I have stored up your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. And there the word translated as word is a different word in Hebrew.

And that word emphasizes, sometimes in Psalm 119, it will be translated as promise. So it's a word that emphasizes that it's not just that God is saying, don't do these things, but he's also making big promises that there's something wonderful and beautiful and anticipatory.

It would be in a little bit like if you had kids or grandkids and you say, let's get in the car, we're going to go somewhere. Come on, hurry up, we're going to go somewhere. And the whole idea about the command to come into the car and go somewhere is the implication isn't going to be that you're going to go pick some kale and eat it, which would not excite most children.

But maybe that you're going to McDonald's for ice cream cones. There's something in there of promise and delight in those words. And so that gives you a basic sense. In all of these cases, it's God who speaks.

[32 : 01] He speaks words to us in our human condition. He speaks words to us in our human condition so that we will desire to truly know him. And the more we truly know him, the more we will want to know him and the more we will want to hear him speak.

And so because of that, we should read the word regularly. We should ponder it deeply and we should do as he says. But there's a bit of a problem for some of us.

And that is this. George, could you just go back? Like, look at that. Remember you said, George, that first verse of Psalm 119 is sort of a summary of the whole thing.

Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord. And even in like verse nine, how can a young man keep his way pure by guarding it according to your word?

George, so here's the problem, George, with all of what you said. You've made it sound very, very convincing. You've made it sound very, very delightful. And I should do that. But George, like I'm thinking of people, you know, sometimes people who've left the Christian faith.

[33 : 07] I think of sometimes people who talk to me from outside of the Christian faith and they just say, George, there's no way in God's earth I can ever be blameless. Like I tried, I tried, I went to church for a while and I tried to live a really, really good life.

And I don't know, you know, then I, you know, then I, I just can't, you know, and God's word, you can say all of those things, but it just crushes you sometimes. And George, if you're honest, like that word blameless there, George, do you think you're blameless?

I remember one person said that, George, do you think you're better than me? You think that's why you're going to go to heaven, you know? And the implication was you're not, like I know you, you're not.

Well, the, they, those are really, really good concerns. It's really interesting that in the providence of God, this, the gospel text that we just read before I preached was that story, the parable that Jesus gives of the Pharisee standing off, like at a place in the temple and sort of, you know, standing there with his chest puffed up and looking really, really, really self-satisfied about how great a guy he was and how much better he was than other people and looking down his nose at people.

And, and in many ways, that, that whole parable and then the tax collector, the one who's not viewed very well in society and his beating his breast.

[34 : 28] That, that word blameless and pure in some way in the original language, it, it, it, there's a great mystery and a great promise in that word. Because I, I guess I would say, I am, I am blameless.

Now, don't roll your eyes. The original word is, is capturing something. It's capturing not just, it implies the need for forgiveness and being forgiven.

And so, you see, in some ways, that parable that Jesus talked, gave, is a, a, a window into two different ways of coming to the word.

It's on one level because he hadn't died on the cross yet. It's a way to understand two different ways of reading the Old Testament. But even after the death and resurrection of Jesus, it's two different ways to be a Christian.

And one way is that you read texts like this and you, you think you've got to be blameless. And you, you try to pretend that you're blameless. And, and that only, all it does is make you into a phony.

[35 : 39] All it does is make you into somebody who does things and pushes people away so they can't actually see what's going on beneath your facade.

And, and, and many people get into that and see it and they just get sickened by it because they, they just, they can't live all those rules.

They can't, they just can't. But these original words are opening the door to this mystery. mystery. And the mystery is that the only way to be blameless is to be forgiven.

And that human beings desperately, desperately, desperately need to be forgiven. It's hard to go a month or two weeks without hearing somebody, somewhere, talk about our need to forgive ourselves.

Talked about it other places, not going to talk about it now, but forgiving yourself will absolutely, absolutely, absolutely, absolutely, absolutely, absolutely never work. What we are sensing is our need to be forgiven by God and to be able to accept it.

[36 : 52] And so that's the, it's pointing to this wonderful thing and Jesus is helping us to guard against two wrong, like the one wrong way of reading the text and the right way of reading the text, which is, see, when God, one of the reasons we don't like the Bible is because it's an intervention by God into our lives and most people, when they have people making an intervention, like the other day when I've had to speak to somebody, it was really, what they needed to understand is that it was an intervention and we don't like interventions when they're happening but afterwards, we're glad that somebody intervened to deal with something that was going on in our lives and that we could have a blind spot dealt with or that we can have an evil in our lives dealt with or something like that but God intervenes with his word and it challenges our pride and he intervenes most spectacularly and most deeply by having his son come and die on the cross and he dies on the cross in our place.

He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He is the one who dies so that we will be forgiven. He is the one who dies on the cross and can speak to the one guy on the cross who began the day also being crucified beside him haranguing Jesus but then comes and turns and realizes something about the divinity and the beautiful the beauty and the grace and the compassion and God being at work in that many people are just they're just castigating them but he sees something powerful about the compassion of God and he asks that when Jesus will remember him when he comes into his kingdom there he is dying on the cross and Jesus says today you will be with me in paradise and that can only happen if that man's sins are forgiven and so there's this profound promise in the scripture yes if you come to know Jesus your sins are forgiven they are forgiven and it's because they are forgiven that's that's how you're going to stand before God in all eternity you still do wrong things and those wrong things that you've done they're also forgiven and so there's this whole promise and dynamic that you hear text like this blessed are those whose way is blameless who walk in the law of the Lord that I want to hear his word and when I start to realize that there's things in my life

I don't have the hope I should or I haven't been thankful as I should or I haven't been as pure as I should I haven't held to the truth as I should I've listened to lies and I shouldn't have and I can ask his forgiveness for that at the same time in light of forgiveness that I can press on to try to make my life a better life knowing that as I read his word and hold fast to the cross that there's a power from God that comes into my life for me to thrive that's how this song it begins by pointing us to the point to the cross that we can't read the scriptures if we try to read it without the cross we're just going to become terrible legalistic arrogant stuck up people who think they're better than everybody else and everybody will run from us we need to be humbled right off the bat so brothers and sisters blessed are those whose way is blameless who walk in the law of the Lord read his word regularly if you have problems reading and not everybody's a reader get the YouVersion app on your phone and for all of the major English translations you can listen to the Bible if you have trouble reading listen take in the bus drive in the car out for a walk put on your headphones and listen to the word don't have to read you can listen but get it into your life and when there's things that you don't understand and things that confuse you that's why there's the church that's why there's Bible studies that's why there's a woman's group that's why there's a youth group that's why there's a men's group that's why there's Bible study groups that's why there's sermons for you to understand understand and grow and thrive invite you to stand let's bow our heads in prayer

Father we give You thanks and praise that You we're not just talking into the void we're not just sort of talking out loud that You hear You hear and that Jesus is present and the Holy Spirit is at work that You hear and You want us to speak to You and we give You thanks and praise that You speak to us in the Bible Your Word written and Lord we ask that You help us to be Psalm 119 people help us to trust that You will cause us to thrive as we hear Your Word and take it and take it as an authoritative word in our lives as we ponder it and as we seek to try to live it we give You thanks and praise that You know our weakness and our frailty and our need for a Savior we give You thanks and praise that You have intervened by sending a Savior the Savior that we need and we give You thanks and praise that every word of Yours is an intervention into our lives that we might become more like Jesus that we might be fit for the new heaven and the new earth that we might bring You glory so Father make us as individuals

Psalm 119 people and make us as a church a Psalm 119 church all for Your glory and we ask these things in the name of Jesus Your Son and our Savior and all God's people said Amen