

Psalm 119

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[0 : 00] Psalm 119 Psalm 119 tells of our relationship to the Bible, God's Holy Word.

! Some striking verses that I found from Psalm 119.! Some repeated themes. And I've got to look at them along a couple of lines.

Three things that he prays, the psalmist. Three things that he prays and three things that he decides. And firstly, the things that he prays.

The psalmist, Psalm 119, he says, Teach me. Teach me. He says that, I counted some nine times. So it's quite repeated through this psalm.

Teach me, O Lord. It's important what we learn, isn't it? It's important what we learn. Psalm 119, verse 12, it says, Blessed art thou, O Lord.

[1 : 08] Teach me thy statutes. Blessed art thou, O Lord. Teach me thy statutes. We can learn all kinds of things. I know we all have some kind of education through school time or beyond.

And we can spend a lot of our energies learning all kinds of subjects and learning. But one thing we all should have that same prayer of the psalmist.

Teach me your word, Lord. Teach me your word. There's no more necessary, no more important information really than this information from God's own hand through the human writers.

Where we be receptive to it. Where we receive it. It's like it's been said. And, you know, sometimes I make this mistake. It's usually Julie helps me get everything right. Amen. But when Julie's not around and, you know, we've got something to assemble, you know, if I don't have that kind of instruction sheet, I get it all wrong.

And it's like that with life, isn't it? And sometimes we could do well to take here to the, quote, if all else fails, read the instructions.

[2 : 20] And when life is failing, here's the instructions. God's instructions. God's information for life. And when we come and sit at the feet of our great teacher, the Lord Jesus, will we be as Mary that sat at his feet and heard his word?

He says to you, learn of me. We come to him to learn of him. Our great subject is to know him. To learn Christ. To learn to know him.

Whom to know is life eternal. What greater knowledge? What greater learning? There was an African chief one day, met with the Queen of Britain at the time, Queen Victoria.

And she asked the Queen, what was the secret of Britain's greatness? You know, it used to be called Great Britain. I don't think it is anymore. And Queen Victoria held the Bible in her hand and she said, tell the chief that this book, the Bible, is the secret of our greatness.

Now, the nation as it was through those times, was built on many biblical truths, as was the USA, I suppose Canada.

[3 : 34] In the old days, in the foundings of some of these nations, the Bible was very much a source of the laws and of the rules of the land. And this is the instruction that we most need.

Yet it seems like, it's almost like when you get on a plane and you're getting this vital information, aren't you? Critical information. It could be the most critical information they would soon go to need to know.

Potentially life-saving information. And what does everybody do when the hostess gets up there and tells everybody what they're supposed to do? They all switch off and don't listen. Do they? It's the most important information that they could potentially hear. And yet, they do the same with the Bible, don't they? Sadly. That this is the most neglected information at times in the world today. And we need that prayer of the psalmist. Teach me, O Lord. Teach me, O Lord. Will we be receptive to this teacher or will we reject it? Someone said, man, do not reject the Bible because it contradicts itself, but because it contradicts them.

[4 : 43] That's why they're not receptive. People switch off to the Bible when it's really so critical, so vital. And what are we to be like those in Berea? That they were more noble than those in

Thessalonica.

In that they received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the scriptures daily to see if these things were so. Will we have open eyes?

As the psalmist in Psalm 119, verse 18, he says, again praying, Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.

And he says in Psalm 119, 165, We miss out on peace if our eyes are closed, if our ears are closed. Let us instead pray. Teach me, teach me, O Lord. Ask the Lord to help you to learn, to grow, to dig deep and to research and dig deeper and deeper.

[5 : 48] You know, it's a whole, it's not so deep that we can't find something more. No matter how well schooled we are in it or how knowledgeable we are of it.

There's always something more. Some wondrous things that we can behold. So, firstly, teach me. The second thing he prays that I found quite a repeated phrase was, Quicken me, quicken me, quicken me.

Some 11 times I counted. He says, quicken me. Or, in other words, make me live. Make me alive. Revive me. Can this also be our prayer? We see it, for example, in verse 37.

He says, turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken thou me in thy way. He says, turn my eyes from beholding vanity. Quicken me in thy way.

It sounds like most people today, doesn't it? Who, sadly, while away their time, in vain pursuits. In empty pursuits, really.

[6 : 54] Quicken me, O Lord. Turn my eyes away from beholding vanity. What is it that our eyes are glued to? So much of the time. It can be true, can't it?

Our eyes can be glued to things that are vain things. And I'm guilty of that, you know, I've got a bit of an interest in politics and what's going on with our dearly beloved Prime Minister and those who would unseat her.

And it's just kind of, you know, it's quite intriguing. And sometimes you can get obsessed with even current events and current affairs. And, yeah, it's, in a way, some of it is fairly empty, isn't it?

Fairly vain. You know, turn my eyes away from beholding vanity. Quicken thou me. Make me alive. Make me live. Give me life. Revive me.

There's a huge contrast here, isn't there, between vanity and life. Between emptiness and fullness. Between the vainness and emptiness of the world and the completeness and joy that is found in him, our Lord and Saviour.

[7 : 58] It's a great contest, a great choice, but it still is happening today. The message of life, that for which you've been created. There's life here. Quicken me, Lord. Make me live.

Revive me. According to your word. There's life here. And we should turn from vanity. Just like those that Paul refers to in 1 Thessalonians 1, verse 9.

He talks of those who have turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God. What a contrast. To turn from idols, from vain things, to serve the living and true God.

And the sands are still going through the hourglass, people. Time is ticking. And we sometimes take very little thought for our eternal destiny and for eternal truths.

This must be what engages us. What really we invest our lives in. Yet what a great tragedy when some, they don't count it of value.

[8 : 57] In Psalm 119, verse 107, the psalmist has repeated references to, he wasn't always having an easy time of it. He says, I am afflicted very much.

Quicken me, O Lord, according unto thy word. Now it's at those times, isn't it? And we've been through those times in our family and no doubt many here have experienced those low times.

Those times of trouble. I'm afflicted very much. Quicken me, O Lord, according to your word. And the psalmist wants that breath of God's life.

He calls for it. He cries for it. That death-defying message. That eternal truth. That life-changing, absolute authority of God's word. It's what Paul calls the word of life.

He calls, in Philippians 2.16, holding forth the word of life. Holding it forth. The Bible is the word of life. And it's one of the names of our Lord.

[9 : 59] As 1 John 1, verse 1 says, We have looked upon, our eyes have looked upon, our hands have handled of the word of life. It's even one of the names of our Lord.

The word of life. And we see from cover to cover that he is here, speaking to us. Not through some mystical, extra-biblical revelation, so much as in the clear print of his word to us.

In the authoritative word of God. Friends, as much as we can learn. There is life in the word. But you know, Psalm 1 is a lovely scripture, isn't it? I'm sure you're familiar with that one. The blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord. And in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season. His leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

[11 : 08] There's a flourishing. There's a nourishing. There's a life there. We're planted by the rivers of water. There's a sustenance there. Quicken me, O Lord. Give me that life.

There's life in the word. Now, there's a popular TV show that's called Life in the Word, but I don't know about the truth of that one. But I know that that statement is true. There's life in the Word. There absolutely is. Quicken me, O Lord. He's the source of life. He's the maker of it. He is life. Simon Peter answered him, Lord, so then shall we go that has the words of eternal life. And in the context there, John 6, 68. Simon Peter said that. And just right before John 6, verse 66, many forsook him and left him.

And our Lord turned to his disciples, and Simon Peter spoke to them and said, To whom shall we go? That has the words of eternal life.

[12 : 08] There's nothing compares with the Word of God, the Word of life. It's like someone put it like this. The Bible is high explosive. It works in strange ways. No living man can tell or know how that book, in its journey through the world, has startled the individual soul in 10,000 different places into a new life, a new belief, a new conception, a new faith.

There's no one else to turn to. Quicken me, O Lord. Give me life. There's new life because of the message, if it can't be received. A new heart also will I give you.

A new spirit will I put within you. Ezekiel 36, 26. It's not just some man's instruction. This is life. The Bible makes us alive.

His Word brings that message of regeneration. He prays, teach me. He prays, quicken me. And thirdly, He prays, make me understand. In verse 169, Make me understand.

In one sense or another, I counted some six times. So again, a very repeated kind of thing in Psalm 119 is not only teach me and quicken me, but make me understand.

[13 : 23] Verse 169, it says, Let my cry come near before thee, O Lord. Give me understanding according to thy word. Give me understanding, O Lord.

Help me to understand your word. You know, it's so simple, really. It's like I heard a preacher put it, that it's not so high that it's just for the giraffes to feed from.

You know, the little lambs can take and be nourished by the Word of God. It doesn't have to be complicated. But yet, that understanding is something that we need to pray for, don't we?

Because it's spiritually discerned. We need to seek the Holy Spirit's help to lead us into all truth. And so we can understand. Because the natural man, it's foolishness unto him.

Because they are spiritually discerned. 1 Corinthians 2, verse 14. In verse 130 of Psalm 119, it says, The entrance of thy words giveth light, and giveth understanding unto the simple.

[14 : 31] Now, the simple can understand it. And it seems almost, in my experience, that sometimes the intellectuals miss it.

You know, sometimes it's those who are so intellectual, they can miss the simple truths. And just seem to be searching in the darkness.

But it says, He gives understanding to the simple. Now, thank God for that. That includes me. You know, as we study, He'll help us to understand.

He'll help us understand. And yet, we're not making light to it. It's just so deep, and it's so thorough. There's so much here that we'll never run out of information to learn, to find something new.

But it takes study. It takes diligent effort. As Paul said to Timothy, Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed rightly, dividing the word of truth.

[15 : 30] Study the word of God. Put that application in, that diligent effort. And one of the key verses in the Bible that helps us to understand the Bible as it is from cover to cover, the message of the Bible, our Lord says in John 5, 39, Search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.

Search the Scriptures. He says, They are they which testify of me. And then, we read in Luke 24, alike to that, as he was talking with the disciples after the resurrection, and beginning at Moses and

all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, the themes concerning himself. You know, Christ is in all the Scriptures. There's books been written about that. There's different authors have shown how in every book of the Bible, Christ can be seen. In some measure, there's some glimpse of him. In every book of the Bible, Christ is in all the Scriptures. And really, that's what makes it make sense, isn't it? We see that some miss that too. They can't see the deity of Christ. They can't see these basic truths that yet are so apparent. Teach me, quicken me, give me understanding.

[16:51] These are three things that he prays for. And then just also, three things that he decides. Three things the psalmist decides to do in response to the Word. And the first one, I'll put it to you, in verse 7.

Some of the I wills of the psalmist as he enjoys the Word of God. And the first one is, I will praise. I will praise.

Verse 7. I will praise thee with uprightness of heart when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments. Now, the Word prompts us to praise. There's reason to praise because of the message of this book, the glad tidings of great joy, of salvation, of new life, of the Word heard, received. It leads us to praise. And we read of lives turned around as we see even still now. As we read in Luke 15 where the Lord speaks of a sinner repenting.

He says, in the presence of the angels of God there is joy over one sinner that repents. There's rejoicing in heaven when a single person turns to Christ in repentance.

[18:06] Praise. I will praise. And we read the Word, when we get the message of the Word, it just makes us want to praise Him. It makes us want to praise Him. Let me quote from a preacher well-known, Billy Sunday, wrote this about the Word of God.

He said, 29 years ago with the Holy Spirit as my guide I entered at the portico or the entrance of Genesis. I walked down the corridor of the Old Testament art galleries where pictures of Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joseph, Isaac, Jacob and Daniel hang on the wall.

I passed into the music room of Psalms where the Spirit sweeps the keyboard of nature until it seems that every reed and pipe in God's great organ responds to the harp of David, the sweet singer of Israel.

I entered the chamber of Ecclesiastes where the voice of the preacher is heard and entered the conservatory of Sharon and the lily of the valley where sweet spices filled and perfumed my life. I entered the business office of Proverbs and on into the observatory of the prophets where I saw telescopes of various sizes pointing to far off events concentrating on the bright and morning star which was to rise above the moonlit hills of Judea for our salvation and redemption.

[19:33] I entered the audience room of the king of kings catching a vision written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and then into the correspondence room with Paul, Peter, James and John writing their letters.

I stepped into the throne room of revelation where tower the glittering peaks where sits the king of kings upon his throne of glory with the healing of the nations in his hand and I cried out all hail the power of Jesus name let angels prostrate fall bring forth the royal diadem and crown him Lord of all. Now there's praise I will praise you can be like the psalmist and say I will praise him the second thing that the psalmist response was was to meditate he says I will meditate I will meditate again we see that through the scriptures I will meditate as we saw in Psalm 1 meditate day and night in Psalm 119 verse 15 it says I will meditate in thy precepts and have respect unto thy ways another way we can use the word of God friends meditate learn to meditate meditate in the word of God I know I heard a preacher talk of switching on the word having a regular devotion as a daily listening habit there's many ways we can meditate on the word we can write it on cards we can carry we can seek to memorize it to put it into our hearts meditate on the word of God day and night dwell upon it take its promises and apply it we hear stories of persecuted

Christians I read this of late in Armenia there was a whole village of Christians threatened and some 60 families were under threat of sword converted as it were to Islam under threats of torture and death and there was only one exception there was a woman there she was 110 years old and she refused she said I'm too old to deny my lord and the Turks snatched her bible from her hands they tore it up and burnt it and she said very calmly you can do that but you can't tear the promises out of my heart she was one who meditated on the word of God as Psalm 119 verse 97 it says oh how I love thy law it is my meditation all the day it's God's word your meditation all the day someone said a bible in the hand is worth two in the bookcase take the bible put it in your hand

I've got another joke that I like you've heard this before but really my favourite bible is not a black bible but a red bible a bible read a red bible that's what we need brothers and sisters a bible we read and I know we all can do with reading it more meditate I will meditate are your thoughts influenced by his word I will praise I will meditate and lastly verse 16 I will delight myself I will delight myself in thy statutes I will not forget thy word there's enjoyment there the word of God is an enjoyment there is a joy from the word of God there's a delight that is found in the word of God it fills us with delight this is the love letter from our Lord and Master now some of you may know that when Julie and I were calling we used to send love letters to each other what a joy it was to my heart I was some several thousand plumes away at this time for several months and Julie was writing to me and I was writing to her and I was in it was quite a bit funny

[23 : 40] I was in a Bible school and they used to keep telling me off because these letters had all these love hearts on them and on the back it said S-W-A-K S-W-A-L-K sealed with a loving kiss and to my darling sweetheart Andrew whatever it said and so I could see there was love from my sweetheart many kilometres away and it was a love letter to me and this is a love letter from our loving Saviour and what we to delight in his word there's glad tidings here of great joy and there's a joyful message from our loving Lord in his great care for us through these pages and we have a delight there's a joy springing up as we realise this is for me he wrote this for me of course we know there's applications of dispensations or certain covenants and what not the sun that are specific to Israel

I'm not denying that but we know that there's a message here in the examples we can learn from the men and women of God right from Genesis through and we can make application more so especially of the New Testament as it speaks to us today but friends we can delight in the word of God in the message that is written for us the joy of salvation the fulfilment of a life lived according to his good pleasure and God's word is a delight for us so just to recap Psalm 119 I'm just scratching the surface so exhort you to look through it and you can notice some of these things that stood out to me I'm sure some may well stand out to you likewise three things that he prays teach me teach me let him be your teacher he says quicken me make him make his word live in your life revive me quicken me and make me understand let that be your prayer and three things that the psalmist decides

I will praise friends if you're feeling like you're finding it hard to praise him open the psalms the book of praise of the Old Testament saints as it were the hymn book of psalms and learn to praise I will praise make that decision I will I will meditate I will open the word and I will search it I will apply it I will make it live in me I will meditate I will make it such that it's hidden in my heart and thirdly I will delight myself I will delight myself in the word I will take the joy of this love letter that he is personally I've got the privilege of holding it in my hands and of having it in my home and of placing it in my heart I will meditate I will delight myself in the Lord let us pray dear Lord we just praise you that we can take these truths and just as the writer of this psalm we can cry out

Lord in prayer we can cry out Lord for your teaching your enlivening of us your making us live for those who have yet to have the new life of sins forgiven of a home in heaven that they might even be opening their lives and hearts even now as your Holy Spirit draws them unto yourself Lord that there might be an understanding that you grant as we search your word help us Lord to make that choice to praise you to meditate and Lord to delight ourselves in your word help us to make it something that we can take time for and instead of beholding vain things to instead put our energies into that which matters in Jesus name we pray a