

PE | Make Thy Face to Shine Upon Thy Servant

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[0 : 00] He said in verse 29, Thy testimonies are wonderful, therefore doth my soul keep them. That word wonderful, it starts with the same letter that is common throughout this stanza.

We're on the 17th letter of 22 letters going through Psalm 119. Pay is the letter. And so this word wonderful is the word. And so in this passage, every generation would have a different word.

Mark Coffey would be like tubular, I guess that's what he would do. And maybe Brett would be rad. All right, Brother John, the bee's knees or something. All right, I don't know what they would have. But we all have a different description generationally of the word of something great.

And we tend to overstate the obvious and we understate the incredible. Because we have small vocabularies, or at least Grant tells me this, Americans, we have a small vocabulary and that he has to limit his vocabulary when he speaks to me.

No, he's never said that. He's thought it loudly, but he's never said it. But 70 times in the Old Testament here, this word wonderful is used and it's almost always expressing something that's beyond human power expectation.

[1 : 03] The psalmist says it well in Psalm 118.23, This is the Lord's doing. It is marvelous in our eyes. That's the wonderful aspect of it. Something that is miraculous, something supernatural, superhuman.

When the word wonderful is used, it's creating a wonder in our mind and our heart when we see it. What is wonderful? Next verse, thy testimony. The first two words, thy testimonies are wonderful.

Follow with me from verse 129 down to 136. We find this in every verse in Psalm 119 except from when. And we find some synonym for the word of God. Some synonym for how God has revealed himself to us.

Which is so wonderful. We would not know him if he didn't reveal himself. This isn't a study that we settled on. But God said, I want you to know this about me. Look at us. Say it. Verse 129.

I'll give you two of them and then we'll see if you can play the game here with me. In 129, it's thy testimonies. Verse 130, it's thy words. Verse 131, it is? Good.

[2 : 06] This is a harder one. 132, thy name. Alright? His name is given here with commandment statutes. 133, thy word again.

134? 135? 136? Thy law. And the boys win the night because the boys never win. Alright? The boys win.

Spurgeon said about this passage, he says, Thy commands are wonderful. Full of wonderful revelations, commands and promises. Wonderful in their nature as being free from all error and bearing within themselves overwhelming self-evidence of their truth.

Wonderful in their effects as instructing, elevating, strengthening and comforting the soul. Jesus, the eternal word, is called wonderful. Wonderful. And all the uttered words of God are wonderful in their degree.

Those who know them best wonder at them most. Those who know them best wonder at them most. I would like to be one of those people that could just be in my thoughts.

[3 : 06] And when I'm in my thoughts, it wouldn't be about the low things of this world. But it would be about the great wonderful things of God. The word of God has earned that right. Therefore, doth my soul keep them.

Because they are wonderful, an enduring, abiding delight in God's word has promoted, prompted in my heart, a greater obedience. And so these are the words of God.

And he has the rights to my life. His words should dictate my life. And his words have won my heart by being wonderful. The Bible is not as Rachel when we wanted to marry Leah in the Bible.

The Bible is not second. It is wonderful. It's beautiful. It is incredible. One commentary put it like this. Holy admiration of the testimonies will kindle spiritual devotedness to them.

Therefore, doth my soul keep them. When we recognize God's word as God's word and we get caught up in the wonder of it, it will prompt in our hearts a devotion to it.

[4 : 06] Because these are the words of God. And so why are they wonderful? They're wonderful because the entrance of thy words giveth light. It giveth understanding unto the simple.

The night that my sister led me to the Lord, I remember beside her bed there was a touch lamp. That seems like something from the 80s, doesn't it? Or 90s. Anybody have touch lamps anymore? All right. But I remember that touch lamp.

It went from completely off to being on a little bit. That night in my life, I went from being in complete darkness to the light was on. But then I continue staring at that and it gets brighter and brighter.

It's true we live in a dark world, but he's as bright as he's ever been. God's word is as bright as it's ever been. And the more that I come back to it, the more that I see. So it says there's an entrance of thy word. And so don't think door here, think tent.

All right. Think about camping around the campfire. There's a tent. There's a flap. You pull back the flap and it lightens up everything in there. The entrance of thy words giveth a light here.

[5 : 05] And that starts with that letter as well. Understanding to the simple. The entrance of thy words, it giveth understanding unto the simple. How many of you in here would identify with simple and say amen to that?

Amen. Some of you said amen for the person beside you. That's okay as well. All right. The blessing for the simple, that God does not forget us. There's a promise here to us that we should expect understanding.

That it's a responsibility. I cannot make an excuse that I don't understand that God says that he gives understanding to us that are simple. And then there's a longing here.

Verse 131. I opened my mouth and I panted for I long for thy commandments. I would love so much and all of you that teach the Bible in here, which should be all of us. We should desire that when we get done teaching the Bible, that if a person didn't own a Bible, the first thing they want to do when they leave is go get a copy.

All right. They may say that person, at least they think it's incredible. I want to get a copy of this for myself. The psalmist here, it's panting. I don't know if he's thirsty or if he's gasping for air, but it denotes a desire and a deep longing.

[6 : 10] Pat Riley was a coach for the Lakers. And there's a few different stories about this. But one story says that at halftime there, his team's losing. And he puts a bucket of water and he sticks his head in the bucket of water and he holds his breath for about three minutes.

And when he pulls his head up, he's gasping for air. And he tells the team, until we want to win as much as I want to breathe, we will never win a game. And that desire, that example that he gave, that's what the psalmist is doing here.

He said, think about something in your life that you just long for. That longing should be for the Word of God. Longing is, if it's not acted upon, it's just wishing. Verse 131, We should never rest content with merely longing.

If that really longing, if you really long, you should not be content with that alone. You should act upon it. You should desire and go after it.

Three words bring great conviction to me. It's these words of Matthew 6, 16. It's not the first word, it's the second three words. Matthew 6, 16, it says... I'll show you right here.

[7 : 23] Alright, Matthew 6, 16, it says, Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites. So in that description there, it says, When ye fast. Those three words bring great conviction to me.

Why would Jesus give an instruction on fasting if he didn't believe it would be part of their lives? I don't see Josh Chris here tonight, but Josh says, Trent, when you cook tofu, I'd be like, Josh, why would you tell me that?

I don't cook tofu, right? There's no reason to tell me what to do when I cook tofu. Alright? Jesus would not give something like, When you fast, if he did not believe that that would be something that would be part of our lives.

That our longing for his presence wasn't so great that it altered our daily lives. So I asked Brother John, which I've said is a Bible teacher friend of mine, and I said, let's talk about fasting for a moment as we're eating breakfast.

Alright? As we're eating breakfast. And he said, you know, the best lessons I've ever heard, I'm ready to write this down, he said it came from Ashley Southerd in the high school class.

[8 : 24] I said, really? And so Ashley, I don't want you to get prideful about this or this fact. A pastor's wife contacted Stephanie last week and said, We had Ashley Southerd and her husband with us this weekend.

And I'm like, alright. And so, but don't get prideful about fasting. But her notes really do help me. I'm going to share some of them with you briefly. 77 biblical references, the fasting mentioned in the Bible.

First thing she said was, It can't be any more straightforward than that, is that I humbled my soul in fasting, that it exposes our need of Him.

Our longing will drive us to fast. Matthew 9, 15 is the verse she had for that. It says, And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken for them, and then shall they fast.

Until the ascended bridegroom, Jesus, returns for His bride, the church, fasting is a spiritual discipline that the disciples will practice. This is the understanding of Christians.

[9 : 43] In the book of Acts, reported in Acts 13 and 2, 14 and 23, if you study church history, it's continued, and we're a generation in which it no longer seems to apply.

But it most certainly should. Number three, she said, Fasting allows us to practice spiritual and physical disciplines. She wrote this to high school students. She said, The same discipline that allows us to say no to the cookie guides us away from the path of sin, saying no to those friends or foul decisions that the devil plants in your mind.

And then lastly, Fasting denies us of our fleshly or worldly desires, whether that be food or video games. Instead of filling your time and mind with the things of this world, replace them with the satisfactory word and relationship of the Lord.

Romans 12, 2, And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. You may prove that as good, acceptable, and perfect will of God. Fasting is the result of people who long for the presence of God to the point that we say we will alter our daily schedule because we need more of Him than we need more of anything else.

Thank you for that. I'll be quoting Ashley's commentaries in the sermons to come, now that I know they're available. All right. And then, Leaning steadfastly upon the Word of God. Verse 132, Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto thee those that love thy name.

[11 : 10] It's wonderful to think that God has a custom, a pattern of action towards those that love His name. And this allows us to trust in Him. Leaning requires trusting, right?

When we say we lean upon Him, we're saying we're fully trusting in Him. And He says, Look thou upon me, and you will order my steps in thy word. Verse 133, Many people want God to direct their steps, many ways, by feelings, or friends, or parents, circumstances, or fate, or comfort.

But it says, Order my steps by your word. If we lean upon God, then that means we're leaning upon His word to guide our steps. And then He goes on in 133, It says, Order my steps so that I will let not any iniquity, have dominion.

Let not any iniquity. I think we have traded this, I am not perfect with His true, into an excuse not to pursue holiness. In every way possible. If you would ask me if I were perfect, I'd say, I'm most certainly not, but I want to pursue being more like Jesus every day.

That is most certainly work that He's doing. I don't want to make any provision for the flesh. I don't want to say that any of this is okay. I don't want to only be mad at one area. One study that I was reading said, Oh, you say that you don't work on the Sabbath.

[12 : 22] Well, it doesn't matter to us because you don't work any other day either. All right? I thought, Man, that's a lively argument. I don't want to be the kind of person that says, I really hate this sin while I protect my own.

And so having a hatred for sin isn't what we're called to do. We're having a hatred for all sin. Let not any iniquity be found dominion over us. The New Testament gives us a promise in Romans 6.14, For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law, but under grace.

And so this ordering of the steps speaks about having a firmness in our steps as we walk. And if you don't want to avoid sin, then you're going to be placed where you're going to avoid God.

Illustration Billy Graham used to give about a little girl who did something wrong, and when her mother found out, she began to ask her daughter questions. Immediately the child lost her smile, and a cloud darkened her face, and she said, Mother, I do not feel like talking anymore.

And so is it with our fellowship with God, is when there's sin in our lives, we do not feel like talking to Him. So if you do not feel like praying, it is probably a good indication that you should start praying immediately.

[13 : 32] Sin will keep you from enjoying that fellowship with God that is available, so we hate it, as anything is that an obstacle between me and my God.

And there is a peaceful walk that is possible. 1.34 and 35. Deliver me from the oppression of man, so I will keep thy precepts. Make my face to shine upon thy servant, and teach me thy statutes.

So it's a prayer. Deliver me. Not only from the iniquity and from the sin that we've talked about, but from the oppression of man. And the psalmist said, God, I want freedom from the oppression of man for what reason?

Not to build my kingdom, not to build my name, but I want freedom from the oppression of man, so that I can obey your precepts. Which means if freedom means that I can obey your precepts, which means that as long as I am able to obey God, that I am free to live my life unto Him.

And so we can't get so bent out of shape when somebody stands in your way, and you feel like they're restricting your freedom, because freedom for us is not to live for our own pleasure, it's not to make an egg grain for us, it's to say that you can't prevent me from obeying and glorifying my God, so you have not taken from me what makes me what I should be, which is a child of God living my life in obedience to Him.

[14 : 47] Then it speaks of a shining face. Make thy face to shine upon thy servant. To know the face of God shining upon you is to be at peace with God, and to know He is at peace with you.

And this should be our desire. This comes from Aaron's blessing in Numbers chapter number 6, which is a beautiful passage in the fact that in Hebrew it's two words, then four words, and six words.

And so it says, The Lord bless thee and keep thee. Then it says, The Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee. And then the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

And so what's central to the blessing is the presence of God. The Lord bless thee, the Lord make His face, the Lord lift up His countenance. That's the blessing.

The blessing of life is the presence of God in every circumstance. In the New Testament, Peter and Paul would say it like this. They would just sum it up. They would say, Grace and peace be unto you.

[15 : 46] That's the blessing that we have as Christians. And then lastly, which I would leave off, but the psalmist didn't leave it off, which means God didn't leave it off. All these five verses are the positive.

Here's the negative aspect of it. 136, Rivers of water run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law. We have seen the truth stated positively and now negatively.

Tears show compassion, and a lack of tears show a lack of understanding. The psalmist here did not sorrow over his own troubles, but over the sins of others, and the consequences of those sins that they would bring.

To really recognize a situation is to weep over it. If you have a right biblical understanding of somebody's sin, anger is not the ultimate emotion, but sorrow is.

This is how it says it in 1 Corinthians 5.2. You know 1 Corinthians, that church is, it's a mess, right? If you ever feel discouraged, just read a little 1 Corinthians, we're doing okay, right? And so 1 Corinthians 5.2, there's a story there, where there's mourning, there should be mourning, but there's pride.

[16 : 55] And so a person is confronted, in 1 Corinthians 5.2, it says, And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that you have not done this deed, might be taken away from among you.

You should be mourning, and brokenhearted, over the sin of others. You shouldn't be puffed up, and pride. That's what the last verse of this stanza says here for us, is that when we see other people not keeping the law of God, it shouldn't create anger, it shouldn't keep pride, but it ought to create rivers of water down our eyes, because we are moved with compassion to say, sin is destructive, I love God, I love this person, and so my response to this, will be sorrow.

So we have a eulogy here of God's word, not that it's dead, but a eulogy in the fact that it's a good saying unto God's word. There's a praise unto his word that's given, then we show an affection that's there, and then we pray for grace, to keep it, and pray that our response would be that we would have sorrow for anybody who would not keep it in their lives.

What a great encouragement for us tonight. What a passage that just makes us hold the word of God closer to us. Before we leave tonight, I want to pray with us this passage of scripture, and just rejoice in what we have here.

The word here is wonderful. The word here was light to you. Remember being in darkness? How completely hopeless you were? And then the light got turned on for you by the gospel being given?

[18 : 28] You still need that same light to guide you, and we should rejoice in the fact that it is available to us, and that we should desire it. Like as it's open, as the word of God is open before us, it would just bring light into our lives, and we would continue here.

And we look to him who would be merciful unto us, because that's what he does to people that love his name, and that should be us. How do we want him to order our steps? By his word.

Which means we don't ask, we don't say we're fully dependent upon God, we want to order our steps if we're not people that are looking for him to guide us from his word. We want deliverance. Not just from people that oppress us, but from the iniquity that is there, and we want to find ourselves in his presence, so that his face will shine upon us.

The person. Not just people that are well rested, but our face would shine, because we'd say these are people that are at peace with me, and I'm at peace with them.

And then our heart should break for anybody that doesn't get to enjoy that wonderful opportunity that we have to enjoy that. Let's pray together before we leave the night. Heavenly Father, Heavenly Father, Heavenly Father, Heavenly Father, your word, your statutes, your principles, your name, all the ways in which it's said here in Psalm 119, they are wonderful.

[19 : 46] They fill our heart and mind with wonder. Father, your word renews our mind, because when we have let it see the lesser things of this world that are so entertaining, and so discouraging, and so not you, Lord, we come back to your word for this renewing.

Lord, it's your word that brings an entrance to light into our lives. Father, we were in darkness until somebody came and not just opened up this book, but showed it to us as the words, your words to us.

So, Lord, we pray that you will look upon us and be merciful, which you have promised to do to those that love your name. Father, we love your name. We ask that you would order our steps by your word, and we pray that you would cause us, Lord, to hate all iniquity, any iniquity, Lord, not just the few things that we have victory in, but any of the things that come in our lives that provide space between us and you.

Deliver us from the pressure of men, Lord, so that we can have the freedom to worship you. Help us, Lord, in our minds and our hearts to not be so preoccupied what others would think, but the focus upon obeying you.

And Father, I pray that your face would shine, that you would cause our face to shine as we would recognize that you are at peace with us because our sins have been paid for by your son.

[21 : 10] We are reconciled unto you. And Father, give us a heart for those that would not obey your word. Lord, move us away from any emotion other than just sorrow. May it be our prayer that everyone we would come in contact with, that we could share the wonderful joy of your word.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.