

JOD | Give Me Understanding

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[0 : 00] If you'll join me in the 10th section of Psalm chapter number 119. It's nice to have an Irish Christian hymn when we have our missionaries to Ireland tonight. I don't know if that was planned, but it worked out real nicely.

Psalm 119, before we get to it though, I was giving that update. I was wondering who in here might have Irish ancestry. Who in here knows that they have Irish ancestry? Besides Greg, he told me he's 4% Irish.

We saw that, didn't we? And William Avery, that would make sense. All right, they might be Irish. Anybody else in here a lot? Miss Rick? Okay, several of you in here and we'll be praying.

Really loved in the video what was said that we ought to look for him in missionaries is that his pastor said. He's been serving here and we will miss him, but we're excited about what God's doing.

What a good testimony. Graham and Olivia speak highly of the Farrand family. They were in conferences with them and it's really a nice honor to get to meet you. And the voiceover for that video was special to me.

[0 : 58] Those are my Christian school teachers, Seth Wagner. And we talk mission sometimes. He'll call and ask if there's any missionaries out of our church worth supporting. And I say your name sometimes, Kyle. All right?

And I know I say there's always someone I appreciate when he makes that call. And it's exciting to see other churches, seeing people grow up in the church and then be involved and then send out to do the work that they're already doing.

You don't start a ministry. You should be relocating ministry, which is what they'll be doing. And so it reminds me, though, on November the 13th, there should be a box already down here.

That will be the send-off service for Austin and Annie to China. And as it's our tradition, we write a letter to them of encouragement. I want to give you the notice on that. That will be a Sunday night, the 13th.

We'll have that special time with them. Let's look at Psalm chapter number 119. And this, as I said, is the 10th section, the 10th letter of the Hebrew Bible.

[1 : 58] Yod, the smallest in Matthew, where it talks about neither one jot or tittle shall not wise pass away. It is a small letter, but it holds a big message for us tonight.

Before I read it to you, let me give you just a summary. And then as we read it, you should look for these things. The psalmist, knowing that God, that the Lord created him for a purpose, acknowledging that his affliction was part of God's faithful dealings with him, the psalmist will confidently pray for understanding to learn of God's commandments, deliverance from the arrogant who have wronged him, and pray for a blameless heart so that he may not be put to shame.

Verse 73, Thy hands have made me and fashioned me. Give me understanding that I may learn thy commandments. That's our title for the night. And it's also our prayer is that God would give us understanding.

They that fear thee will be glad when they see me because I have hoped in thy word. I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right and that thou in faithfulness has afflicted me.

Let I pray thee thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to the word of thy servant. Let thy tender mercies come unto me that I may live, for thy law is my delight.

[3 : 13] Let the proud be ashamed, for they dealt perversely with me without a cause, but I will meditate on thy precepts. Let those that fear thee turn unto me and those that have known thy testimonies.

Let my heart be sound in thy statutes, that I be not ashamed. In this prayer of understanding tonight, the purpose of affliction, because God is the designer of our lives and he is the creator, I want to see five things together.

First of all, we're going to see that because God made me, I will look to him to understanding. Acknowledging he is the creator is foundational if we're going to look to him to give us purpose and reason in our lives.

Secondly, that our lives can be an encouragement to others. That's reminding us in the middle of this affliction that your suffering doesn't need to be wasted. It was said in the video that God has a purpose for it and that we should declare that God is good even in our affliction.

Me and Brother Freak had breakfast today and as he goes through the book of Revelation, he tells me that occasionally he will pause and I may not get this right. If you're in his class, you may remember this better than I do, but he'll be getting to a complicated part of Revelation and he'll pause and he'll say, I want to remind you that God is always good and God is always right and God will always win.

[4 : 26] And that's a good reminder through Revelation. In our affliction, we should remember that God is good. Number four, we go to God to be comforted in our trials and he knows you need him.

We should go to God to be comforted in our trials and you most desperately need him. And then lastly, the summary is that pray that God would give him a sincere heart and a shameful world.

That no matter what happened to him, it wouldn't change him, but it would cause him to come out with a closer relationship to the Lord, right? Afflictions either make us, what, bitter people or let's say better people.

And for us, better means having a more sincere and close relationship with our Lord. So first off, we said, because God made me, I will look to him for understanding.

That idea, that foundational teaching that God is our creator is not very popular today, but it's so necessary for us as a Christian. It's something that doesn't just come up in an argument or a debate about creation, which is important, but the fact that God is our creator ought to be something that we think about daily, understanding his authority in our lives.

[5 : 35] Verse 73, it says, Thy hands have made me and fashioned me. And because of that, I'm asking that you would give me understanding that I'll learn thy commandments. In the statement that he has made me and fashioned me, we're acknowledging a few things.

If he is my creator, as I know that he is, I'm indebted to him as the giver of life. God is my creator, so I'm indebted to him as my giver of life.

Because he's my creator, he has greater understanding of my life more than I ever will, or more than anybody else will either. He will always understand my life better because he is my creator.

Because he's my creator, he knows what's best for me. I can trust in that. He designed me and he created me. And that our lives, as I acknowledge that he's my creator, I'm acknowledging that my life is connected to someone that is above all and is eternal.

That my life was created by a supernatural God that's eternal, and that my life should reflect that. But there's so much rejection of God's word as a means to reject his authority.

[6 : 45] It's by faith that we understand. Hebrews 11, 3 says, Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

There's an attack upon that to say that God is the creator. Why do we even exist? Or how do we even exist? Every human in this planet should be able to acknowledge that we exist because of his creating power.

All the way back in Genesis. So God created man in his own image, and the image of God created he him. Male and female created he them. That God is the creator.

The tremendous attack that we see today upon man didn't create man and woman has very little to do with gender, and it has everything to do with authority. Is that if we say, No, this isn't what God has done, then people can say that, No, that God is not the creator.

If we weren't created by him, then we're not in authority underneath his authority, which would be such a horrible place to live. You just really don't win, right?

[7 : 48] If any of your kids wanted to ever argue with you, and they'd say, I don't want to listen to you, you could just say, All right, why don't you try to live on your own? They ought to appreciate the authority in which is brought into their lives.

I couldn't imagine the fear that would come if you were to say that I don't live under any authority, not under God's. I am my own authority. So we're created by him, but also we exist for his glory.

Isaiah 43, 7 says, Even everyone that is called by my name, for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him, yea, I have made him. The psalmist is saying that I was made of God, and I was fashioned by him, not just created, but then he didn't stop there.

He has design, and he has a purpose. There's an intelligent design to the life that I'm living. We sometimes wonder about that, right? We say, Is there any rhyme or reason for what's going on in my life?

Is there any purpose in all of this? It's been said by many through the years, but it's well said in this. This is all that we call human history. Money, poverty, ambition, war, prostitution, classes, empires, slavery, is a long, terrible story of man trying to find something other than God, which will make him happy.

[9 : 00] It's the fool that says in his heart, there is no God, but not the psalmist. The psalmist said, God has created me, he is forming me, there is purpose in this, because my life has a designer to it.

So all of us in here, we are rich in something that the world is completely bankrupt in, hate in. The world is bankrupt in hope. They just don't have any. If they're inconsistent in it, they may find areas in which they say there is hope.

But an atheist, famous quote by Bertrand Russell, an atheist said, consistently, he says, if we're just going to deny the existence of God, we just have to be honest about this.

We can't be one foot in and one foot out. If we're going to say there is no God, that God is not our creator, that he's not the designer of our lives, he said, there is a darkness without, and when I die, there will be darkness within.

There is no splendor, no vastness anywhere, only triviality for a moment, then nothing. If there is no God, and there is no designer for our lives, then there's this vast darkness that we will one day be part of, and that is this, this hopeless as it can be.

[10 : 10] Talking to one of the training center students today about what homesickness feels like, all right? Any of you ever feel homesick, all right? Don't look at me, dear. I'm not going back to Kentucky anytime soon. All right?

And that homesickness, you feel it when you first leave, especially around college. Any of you experience any homesickness in here at any point in your life? And it just feels, and the way it was described is that, you don't like being out in the cold without a jacket.

You're not just, you know, you're not going to die. You just never feel like you would if you were at home in front of the fireplace or a wood-burning stove. You just never feel fully comfortable and satisfied.

And that was such a good definition of what homesickness feels like, is that I just need something where I just say, God, I need to feel at home, and I'm not finding it any place in this world.

And the psalmist starts with saying, I recognize, Lord, that you are my creator, that I am not just detached, floating around this world with no purpose, that when I enter into your sanctuary, which is the language used often in the psalms, I understand.

[11 : 16] I feel that warmth that is needed. So it's a prayer for God to finish his work of creation. God made us for a purpose, and to fulfill that purpose, we need spiritual understanding to learn God's commandments.

So to get understanding, which is our prayer tonight, during a time of affliction, it starts with saying, I know my creator. And I know that not only did he create me, but he is still involved and present in the forming of my life.

Secondly, in this psalm, we would see, we'd have understanding is that my life can be an encouragement to others. Your life and my life can be an encouragement to other people.

It's in verse number 74, that they that fear thee will be glad when they see me because I have hoped in thy word. Verse 74, it says, because they will be glad when they see me.

Our lives can be a blessing to others. I think about that when I see Greg in the morning. He had his coffee already. Before coffee, I won't even try, but I think, is this young man, is my friend glad to see me?

[12 : 21] Am I a person that when they see me, that they're glad to do that? They that fear thee will be glad when they see me because I have hoped in the word that my life, hoping in God's word through times of affliction, can create something inside of me that makes my presence enjoyable for other people.

That is something, isn't it? That our lives have purpose to it. That our afflictions can do a work inside of us that not only benefits us, but it benefits other people. Go to good men, study their errors, study their repentance, study their afflictions, study God's mercy to them that they may know his testimonies are true.

That's what you can provide to somebody. I can look out here today and I can say, hey, I know what that person has been through and they remain faithful to the Lord. I'm glad to see them.

I'm glad to get to worship with them. I'm glad for their testimony in my life. Verse 75 says that especially during times of affliction. I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right and that thou in faithfulness has afflicted me.

I know that your judgments are right and that you have afflicted me in your faithfulness. We need each other. During times of affliction, out of times of affliction, going into them, we need each other.

[13 : 44] Verse 79, Let those that fear thee turn unto me and those that have known thy testimonies. Let those that fear thee turn to me. I really wondered about this.

It seems as a selfish prayer, but it isn't. He understands his great need. It's okay to recognize that you need other people. That isn't the Christian position.

When you're going through affliction, for you to say, I don't need anybody, I just need the Lord. Well, it's most certainly true that he is all sufficient, that he is all you need, but that wasn't his game plan for you.

His game plan was for you to be ministered to by other people. It appears that righteous people here had at least stood away from him during this time of affliction.

It may be that they had been deceived by the arrogant in the story and thinking that the psalmist was at fault. We don't know him, but people had turned away from him and his prayer was, I pray that these people, that God-fearing people would turn again to me.

[14 : 47] A man told me recently after going through a hard trial how he visited different churches, but when he did, he would share his story and it felt like everybody just kind of separated from him.

They felt like they didn't know what to do with it. They were like, that's too heavy. I don't know how to connect with you. This is a psalmist praying and saying, I pray that God's people would turn again to me.

The Moravians, they're so famous, they had a, I think a 100-year prayer meeting that never ceased. They sent out so many missionaries, this fascinating story. One of their sayings, which comes from Romans 14, 7, it says, for no man liveth and dieth unto themselves.

It's just a reminder that none of us are on an island to ourselves. You ever get to a place and you'd say, well, I don't have the influence that I want or I'm not making that much a difference. That's contrary to the Bible to say that your life isn't making a difference in other people's lives.

The Bible says that you don't live unto yourselves, that your life will make a difference. Charles Spurgeon said, when a man of God obtains grace for himself, he becomes a blessing to others.

[15 : 55] There are professors or teachers or people whose presence scatters sadness and the godly quietly slip out of their company. May this never be the case for us.

May our presence around people, especially because of what we've went through for the cause of Christ, make us a blessing to others and not something that has become bitter where godly people just want to slip away because we're just scattering sadness where we go.

We need each other through this. We can be an encouragement to them. People can see us and say, I am glad to see them. We'll have testimonies where you go visit somebody to be an encouragement to them and what do you say?

They're going through a hard time but when you leave and you say, I want to be an encouragement to them but they were an encouragement to me because affliction is not a hindrance to that. Having a low view of God is a hindrance to that.

Bitterness would be a problem with that but great affliction isn't a challenge with that. It is a closeness that's available to us. Thirdly here, we should declare that God is good even in our affliction.

[17 : 00] I know, verse 75, I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me. To know that his judgments are right. That is so much stronger.

To say that God has a right to do whatever he pleases, that's one thing to say. But to say that it is a greater thing to say that his judgments are right and that in his faithfulness he has afflicted me.

That God in his faithfulness and not because of a wavering love for me I have been afflicted. Psalm 119, 67, Before I was afflicted I went astray but now I have kept thy word that God in his faithfulness to me has allowed this trial to come into my life.

This furnace of affliction that comes as a sanctifying work into our lives as it comes as a result of sin in our lives at times or maybe it comes as a result of somebody else's sin in our lives or maybe it just comes because God is allowing something to come that is going to draw us closer to him but it isn't because God forgot about you on a day.

It isn't because he didn't have a master plan for your life and you've just somehow fallen off the grid but when you're able to say oh Lord thy judgments are right and thou and your faithfulness has afflicted me and the lives of others that are able to say that as we said we can encourage others when people are declaring that God is good even the reflection it really challenges us Job said it in Job 121 naked came I out of my mother's womb and naked shall return thither the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away blessed be the name of the Lord could you imagine what that did to everybody looking in on the story Eli would say that of the affliction that was told of him concerning his sons 1 Samuel 3 18 and Samuel told him every wit and hid nothing from him and he said it is the Lord let him do what seemeth him good he didn't accuse God of wrongdoing he said God I can trust you David could say it in his affliction as we saw the other day in Lamentations where he in 2 Samuel but in the book of Lamentations we're looking at when the man came to him and he was kicking and throwing rocks the Benjamite he said let him alone let him curse the Lord hath bidden him that he was whatever was going to come into his life he was going to trust that God could use it to draw him closer many of you know the story of Joni Erickson taught him the famous diver and she became paralyzed has written many books it's an incredible testimony really been used of the Lord in many public platforms to speak of God's goodness this is what she says he has chosen not to heal me but to hold me the more intense the pain the closer his embrace there was a person that said that I'm being afflicted

[19 : 55] I'm going through a trial but God is faithful to me and as a result when you saw her you were glad because she was being used as an encouragement moving on here we go to God to be comforted in our trials because he knows we need him verse 76 let I pray thee thy merciful kindness be for my comfort according to the word unto thy servant according to thy word of thy servant his word to his servant it gets very personal here we should read these words and take them personally because we are his servant and also we should read these words and receive them as his mind let this mind be in you that is in Christ Jesus when you read the word of God you should see it as for you as his servant he is talking the psalmist here is saying that I am your servant and he's saying that it is your word and so he goes to it to be comforted and God knows you need him in his mercy to survive verse 77 this is something that many of you have probably prayed using different words and you may never know that it was a psalm the more that we study the psalms and the more that I counsel with people the more that I find people speaking the same things that are in the psalms even if they don't know that they're saying it verse 77 let thy tender mercies come unto me that I may live for thy law is my delight

Lord without your tender mercies into my life I don't feel like I can go on I feel like I'm a person outside in the winter without a jacket there's no warmth without your tender mercies coming into my life I feel like that I just cannot go on living if you've ever considered that God was against you if you've ever considered that God was your enemy let me tell you if God was your enemy you would be absolutely hopeless if God had chosen to destroy you you would be destroyed and so that's faulty thinking when these things come into your life to say that God has become your enemy if we feel completely neglected by God we would be miserable but we should look to God for comfort during this pilgrimage that's why this section starts off so fitting to say God is my creator and he is the designer of my life we should be able to light in his law above all other things all the candles in the world in the absence of the sun can never make the day the whole earth in its brightest visions of fancy destitute of the Lord's love can never cheer nor revive the soul there are not enough candles in this world to light you to be able to see when you're going through a dark time it's only going to come from God and you must turn to him everything else just becomes idolatry it's short lived but it's not going to bring temporary relief but it's not going to sustain you nor is it going to provide that real comfort that you need

I get cold really how many of you get cold in the winter it feels like I won't be warm until the summer but have you gone to a wood burning the Mises they got a wood burning stove there's just something about a wood burning stove that gets all the way to your bones that a heater won't be able to do central heating and air is not able to do there's nothing in this world that is going to meet your needs all the way to your soul like turning to God and so after going through this time of affliction and the response the psalmist is going to pray let the proud be ashamed for they dealt perversely with me without cause but I will meditate in thy precepts ask God for a sincere heart in this very shameful world shame is necessary and needed for the proud it's a good thing to pray when he is praying this he's praying a good thing for them fill their faces with shame Psalm 83 16 that they may seek thy name O Lord Esther prayed and fasted that the Jews would be delivered out of the hand of Haman that God would defend them if you've ever felt shame it has a wonderful purpose in it in our sin it ought to cause us to turn unto the Lord fill your face with shame that you may seek the name of the Lord that's what the psalmist is praying he said let them be ashamed but I will meditate on your precepts because there's nothing in holiness to be ashamed of leads us to verse 80 let my heart be sound in thy statutes that I be not ashamed he asked God and depended on him for a sound blameless heart so much much of the psalm we've looked at tonight is a psalmist asking God to enable him to live a life that's pleasing to the Lord if you look at 76 through 80 see how it starts let I pray they be merciful kindness for my comfort let thy tender mercies come to me let me not be ashamed let those that fear they turn turn unto me let my heart be sound in thy statutes it's praying that God would enable something in their lives enable them to find hope in his word his word is powerful in our lives and when we see him as our creator with the design for our lives so in closing tonight

I'll pray for us from 1 Peter chapter number 4 verses 12 through 19 it's a parallel teaching in the New Testament that the Holy Spirit would give us if you look at 1 Peter 4 12 through 19 look at the exhortation you're going to see here it says do not think it's a strange thing if you have fiery trials one of the hardest things about affliction and trials and Stephen was sharing this with me from the grief share from Sunday night that the opening booklet has all these questions have you felt this have you felt this and have you felt this is that one of the things that you see is those are natural responses to going through trial one of the hardest things that we have when we're going through trial is we don't think it's supposed to happen that apparently that God doesn't exist anymore because I'm not ever supposed to go through something everybody else is supposed to go through things but I'm not we shouldn't think it's strange when there's fiery trials but we should rejoice insomuch that we're partakers of the

Christ's suffering that his glory will be revealed and then we go on to see that we should not be ashamed from this if any man suffer as a Christian let him not be ashamed but let us glorify God during our affliction which will be done by us doing good in verse number 19 it says as unto a faithful creator once again we're not in a seminar about creationism why is it talking about being a creator there's many different ways you can talk about God but during a time of affliction it's really important that you recognize him as your creator because affliction has caused you to believe that you're just spiraling out of control and he has no awareness of what's happening to you but there's great comfort in knowing that the creator has a design and purpose and that our response and drawing closer to him can serve that so verse 19 how will we do this wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of

[27 : 04] God commit the keeping of their souls to him and well doing as unto a faithful creator affliction comes and we should trust him and we do not feel shame believing we have been forsaken but we rejoice and we will do well by the freedom given to us to live before the Lord and glorify him would you recognize today if you're going through affliction or if you're helping somebody who's going through a difficult time to go back to that foundational truth that there is a creator in God and he has not forsaken you let's pray heavenly father I thank you for your words that are expressed in the psalmist Lord he expresses through the Holy Spirit the Holy Spirit through the psalmist will express pain in a deeper way than I would be able to communicate it but it also expresses the solution so much more richly than I ever could and so father we pray the night recognizing that you are the creator that you have made us and you have fashioned us and so lord I pray that you would give us understanding and that in understanding lord we would learn your commandments and that those that fear you lord the god fearing people would be glad when they would see us because our response is somebody that has an expectation in your word that we are hopeful people lord we know that your judgments are right and it's in your faithfulness that we have been afflicted that you have not removed your place in our lives but you are faithful to us so lord we pray for your kindness for us because without it lord we would not be able to move on we are your servants and without your mercies and tender mercies in this world we would not be able to live but it's in your word and your statutes and your law that we find all of our delight for those that are proud those who do not turn to you lord I pray that they would be ashamed that they would treat you as the creator in such a way and that you lord you would vindicate in your timing but lord I am going to stay in holiness

I'm going to meditate upon your precepts lord I pray for all of us in here the day that our hearts would be sound that they would be solid that we would be able to live sincere lives in a very shameful world because we will live simple lives looking to you as our creator and sustainer in Jesus name I pray amen so it's you you you you you you you you you you you