

Your Word is a lamp to my feet

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Date: 28 October 2018

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- [0 : 00] If you would turn back with me please to that portion of the Bible which we read in Psalms in the book of Psalms and at Psalm 119, Psalm 119 and at verse 105 I'm going to read three verses again.
- Psalm 119 and at verse 105 words we know very well. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.
- I have sworn an oath and confirmed it to keep your righteous rules. I am severely afflicted, give me life, O Lord, according to your word.
- In his treasury of David Charles Spurgeon wrote 349 pages on Psalm 119 alone.
- Yet even Spurgeon was beaten by the Puritan Thomas Manton who wrote a three volume work with each volume comprising of between 500 and 600 pages with a grand total of 1667 pages.
- [1 : 15] This work has 190 long chapters, more than one for each verse. So that's over 1500 pages on Psalm 119 alone.
- These men were meticulous. So why the great interest in Psalm 119? Well it is simply this, the Psalm praises God for his word, the Bible.
- Because God has given us this Bible and through this Bible we can come to know who God is and how to praise him.
- As Francis Schaefer said in the 70s and in the 1980s and he wrote, he is there and he is not silent.
- We worship a God who is there and we worship a God who is not silent. We worship a God who communicates with his people.
- [2 : 17] Now another striking feature of Psalm 119 is that each verse of this Psalm, and it's a long Psalm, it's the longest Psalm, we know that, each verse of this Psalm with only a couple of exceptions refers to the word of God, the Scripture.
- Now the number eight is also stamped all over this Psalm. You see each section has eight verses and there are eight special names for God's word, the Bible or the Scriptures in this Psalm.
- Words and phrases such as law, such as regulations, such as precepts.
- You see the word eight in Hebrew means abundance, to have abundance, to have more than enough and in the Bible we have more than enough to come to know this God who communicates.
- And the big picture of the Psalm is this, if you seek to live your life in conformity to the word of God, you will be blessed, you will be blessed by this God who communicates his grace and his love to us.
- [3 : 43] Of course the opening to the Psalter shows us that, I think the Reverend Murdo might be preaching on Psalm 1 tonight, I saw that in the bulletin. The opening to the Psalter shows us that, blessed is the man whose delight is in the law of the Lord.

In other words, blessed is the man whose delight is in reading the Scriptures and reading the Bible and communicating with God. And in a sense, Psalm 119 is very much an exposition of the beatitude that is Psalm 1.

Listen to Psalm 119's opening words, blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who walk, see that word again, who walk in the law of the Lord, blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart.

You're seeking the Lord, where do you find him? You find him in his word and by the power of the Holy Spirit he will communicate to you through that word and through the beauty of his spirit.

If you have the Scriptures, that is all you and I need for life and for godliness. It is all we need.

[4 : 58] Let's not complicate matters. If we have the word of God, it is all we need to live a life of godliness. Indeed, more so, this Bible, this word of God points to a saviour.

It points to God's Son, every page of Scripture points in one way or another to the Lord, Jesus Christ. It points to a saviour who is the living word.

So as we study a couple of these verses, we're only going to look at three verses here this afternoon. Another thing that's going to be made clear to us is what the old theologians used to call it, the doctrine of the clarity of Scripture or the doctrine of the clearness of Scripture or the doctrine of the perspicuity of Scripture.

In other words, the great theme of the Bible is clear enough even for a child to understand. Yes, there are difficult parts in the Bible.

We all admit that. The Bible is absolutely crystal clear that even a child can understand it, that we are fallen, that we are sinners and that the God who has created us and made us has given us an avenue of salvation through the life and the death and the resurrection of his Son, Jesus, to deal with your sin and to deal with my sin because we cannot do it on our own.

[6 : 56] Even the children in Sunday school can understand that the clarity of the Scripture, the clarity of the Scripture.

Frank Dellage, the famous German commentator wrote, he says of Psalm 119, listen to what he says, here we have set forth an inexhaustible fullness, he says, what the Word of God is to a man and how a man is to behave himself in relation to it.

John Frayne more recently in his book, The Doctrine of the Christian Life, wrote this and listen to what he says, the point of Christian ethics or the point of Christian life is not to be as liberal as we can be or to be as conservative as we can be, it is rather to be as biblical as we can be, isn't that good?

It's to be as biblical as we can be. Let's not be liberal just for the sake of being liberal, let's not be conservative, just for the sake of being conservative, let's read and understand and look at the Word of God with us, help and let's try to live our lives in the most biblical way we can.

Let's be as biblical as we can be. Now as we look at this Psalm when we read verse 105 again, the Psalmist says, your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

[8 : 25] So the first thing we're going to look at is the pathway, the pathway of the Christian. Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path or the message Bible, the message puts it this way, by your words I can see where I am going in life, isn't that good?

Just saying Lord, by your words, by this scripture, by this Bible, by your words I can see where I am going.

So just as the fire by night, do you remember the fire by night which led the Israelites through that dark wilderness at the time of the Exodus, we too are directed by this communicating God, we too are directed on our path by this God, because we let's not beat around the bush here because we live in a dark and we live in a sinful world and we need God's torches Word to keep us from going astray.

God's Word and the Holy Spirit working through and alongside this Word is absolutely necessary for you and for me to live in this dark and sinful world to see where we are going.

So as a torches essential for any movement when the lights go out, God's Word is absolutely essential for you and I for navigating through this life that the Lord has given to us.

[10 : 05] God only does God's Word shine a light on what we are to believe, but it also shines a light on how we are to live our lives. What are we to believe?

We are to believe in the risen Son of God. We are to believe that He was sent by God to deal with your sin and to deal with my sin.

That is what we are to believe. We are to turn away from our sin and we are to put our faith and our trust in this most glorious Son of God.

That is what we are to believe. You see it is unconditional grace from an unconditional God. This is the Son of God who came to preach good news to the poor.

He came to preach good news to those who could meet no conditions in order to be saved. When you read the Gospel narratives you will meet the guys called the Pharisees and the Pharisees used to preach to those around them that they had to meet certain conditions in order to be saved.

[11 : 13] If you do this, if you do that, if you do this, then you might be saved. Then the Son of God came from glory. He came down into time and space and He preached good news to those like you and me who can meet no conditions.

We cannot clean up our act before coming to Christ. We come to Christ for forgiveness and then He cleans up our act. We cannot do it.

That is what we are to believe. It's the fundamental of the Gospel. It is the most fundamental part of the Gospel that our salvation is free, that our justification is free because the condition has been made by Him.

It has been made by Jesus. The sinless Son of God who died on a cross for His people and all the punishment for your sin and my sin of our trust is in this God was placed on Him.

That is what we are to believe. Secondly, it shines a light on how we are to live. That is only part of the story. What are we to believe?

[12 : 26] It also shines a light on how we are to live. You see, as we read God's Word, it will expose to us wrong and sinful paths.

That is what it does. You see, when I am not following God even as a child of God, even as a Christian, when I am going astray and I am not following God and I come to the Bible and as I read the Bible and as the power of the Holy Spirit will come upon me and it will bring to light where I am going wrong.

And the Word of God by the power of the Spirit will bring to light where you are going wrong. It's a light to our path.

It's a light to our path. I am the light of the world, Jesus says. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life.

If your trust and faith is in this Jesus, you have the light of life within you. If you have Jesus, you know the right direction. I know the right direction.

[13 : 38] But if we have Jesus and we are starting to veer on another path and sin becomes more attractive to us and the lights are glistening and we go down wrong sinful paths, the Lord will come back to us through the power of the Spirit and reading his Word and he says, go farther you shall go but as far enough my child you will come back to me.

By the grace and by his love he will direct you and he will direct me in this life. The pathway, the pathway and within this little verse here there is also a plea when you read between the lines and you read it contained within this short verse there is a hint of a prayer, a prayer to God from the psalmist.

The living Bible puts it this way, says, Lord and keep me from stumbling. Keep me from stumbling Lord. In other words, keep me from going astray.

I tend to veer to the right and I tend to veer to the left. My faith is so small I need you. Keep me from going astray. You know there are often times where we as Christians may become discouraged because the Bible has nothing to say on, let's for example say we're a young Christian and the Bible has nothing to say on whether we are to go to university and get a degree or whether we are to go and get a trade.

Whether we are to marry this person or whether we are to marry that person or whether we are not to get married at all. Whether when we're ill to take this treatment or that treatment or no treatment at all.

[15 : 30] We come to the Bible and it has nothing to say to us really specifically. Yet that does not mean that the Lord is not intimately interested in your life and in my life.

He is. He is intimately interested and he is intimately concerned. You see by faith the Lord will direct your path in every way.

However, as we read the pages of scripture it shows us how to live. Whether we go to university or whether we take a trade, whether we marry this person or whether we marry that person, it shows us how to live upon it, live our lives.

It tells us through the word of God to wait upon the Lord. It tells us through the word of God that we are to pray for wisdom in every decision that we take.

Lord, keep me from going astray as the plea and the prayer of the psalmist. Yet how often in our Christian lives is prayer the last thing we do?

[16 : 39] Life is busy, life is stressful, there is so much going on. Martin Luther once said he said prayers of everything depends on God and then work as if everything depends on you.

Thomas Watson said that Christ went more readily to the cross than we go to the throne of grace. The psalmist is saying Lord keep me from going astray.

It should be your prayer and it should be my prayer. Every day we open our eyes and our beds. Lord keep me from going astray.

I came across a book a number of years ago by a fellow called Kevin D. Young. I don't know if anyone's ever read any of Kevin D. Young's books. And his title to this book is this, to the Christian, to the, it's targeted at young Christians, it's just do something, a liberating approach to finding God's will or how to make a decision without dreams, without visions, fleeces, open doors, random Bible verses, casting lots, liver shivers, writing in the sky.

Just do something. So if the Bible is not specific on aspects of our lives that we want it to be specific on, how then are we to live in this world?

[18 : 12] Well it teaches us whether we work in a supermarket, whether we work in an office, whether we went to university, whether we did a trade. It teaches us this one thing.

It teaches us to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength and to love your neighbour as yourself.

It teaches us that completely, unambiguously. It teaches us also that love is patient. It teaches us that love is kind.

Love does not envy or boast. It teaches us that. It is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way. It is not irritable or resentful for Corinthians 13.

It teaches us that whether we went to university, whether we took out a trade, wherever we are in life, that is what the Word of God teaches us. And more importantly, listen to this.

[19 : 06] It teaches us this. It teaches us to lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely. And it teaches us to let us run.

Let us run, it teaches us, with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and the perfecter of our faith.

The founder and the perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross. It teaches us that. It teaches us that he despised the shame and it teaches us that he acceded that the right hand of the throne of God, it teaches us that.

That is what it teaches us. That is how we are to live our lives. The pathway.

Lord, keep me from going astray. Help me not to become discouraged when I make wrong decisions in my life and we all make wrong decisions in our lives.

[20 : 11] We will make mistakes. We are not perfect. Same way as my mother cut my hair and she made a complete hash of it. We will make mistakes.

But we must remember all these commands and promises that are contained in the Bible and we must remember them if we are to continue on this pathway of salvation.

Secondly, we have the promise verse 106. I have sworn an oath to Samus and confirmed it to keep your righteous rules.

I have sworn an oath, Lord, and I have confirmed it to keep your righteous rules. The living Bible puts it this way. I have said it once and I will say it again and again.

I will obey these wonderful laws of you. You know, in the Samus here and talking about these righteous rules and laws, he has in mind all of what scripture contains.

[21 : 16] Not just the 10 commandments, all of what the scripture contains. You see the Samus here, he has made a covenant with God and God has made a covenant with him.

He has in his covenant with the Lord shown that he takes his faith very, very, very seriously. It's the most ultimate, most important thing in his life is his faith in this God who has saved him and in this God who has dealt with his sin.

I have said it once and I say it again and again. I will obey these wonderful laws of you. He did not say I will select some of what you say, Lord, in your Bible and I will cast away what I don't like, he didn't say that.

The Samus obeyed God's laws as best he could, although ultimately as a sinner he would have failed many times, but he knew that his sin was dealt with by this God whom he worshipped.

He knew. He says in verse 101 of Psalm 119, he says, I hold back my feet from every evil way.

[22 : 40] You see the Samus was fully aware of all the potential pitfalls that were awaiting for him every Monday morning going into earth, for instance. He was fully aware of all these pitfalls that he wouldn't fall into them.

Lord, leave me not into temptation as what he is saying, I am a weak and I am a fragile sinner. You see the law of God, the Bible is like an X-ray.

It will reveal a problem, but ultimately it cannot fix it. We need the Spirit of God to come and work with this word in order to mold us and change us.

In other words, our lives as God's people must be in accordance with the word of God. The Samus is showing that he has a teachable spirit.

Any teacher in here today? Any teacher? Come on raise your hands. Is there anything as endearing as a child with a teachable spirit?

[23 : 49] It's a lovely thing, isn't it, to have a child with a teachable spirit, with the Samus to showing traits of having that teachable spirit.

And ultimately the Lord wants us all to have that teachable spirit. I don't think there is anything more pleasing to God than a Christian with a wonderful sense of that teachable spirit.

A Christian who is able to take correction when needed. There's nothing like it and we all should have it.

He was open to be corrected when he was wrong, for instance. The story is told of Abraham Lincoln. Now Lincoln got caught up in a situation where he wanted to please a certain politician.

And to do this he issued a command during the Civil War to transfer certain regiments from one end of the country to the other side of the country. And he had not consulted his secretary of war.

[25 : 02] Does anyone remember his secretary of war's name? His name was Edwin Stanton. Now Stanton received the order and Stanton refused to carry it out.

He said that the president was a fool. Lincoln was told what Stanton had said. And Lincoln replied, he said, well if Stanton says I'm a fool I must be a fool.

Because he's always right. I'll see to this myself. And as the two men talked, the president quickly realized that he was wrong in his decision.

And he was making a serious mistake and without hesitation he was through the order and he listened to Stanton. And if he hadn't he would have lost the war.

Even as a president of the United States he had a teachable spirit and he was open to correction. Whether he was a Christian or not, I don't know.

[26 : 03] You know, he made a covenant with the American people and he was not too big on himself to be corrected. A teachable spirit and that is what our psalmist shows here.

He has a teachable spirit. Thirdly and finally and briefly, we have the problems that the psalmist has at verse 107.

I am severely afflicted. Give me life, O Lord, according to your word. Listen to the way the message has it. Everything's falling apart on me, God, put me together again with your word.

Isn't that lovely? Everything's falling apart on me, God, put me together again with your word. You know it is not uncommon for the people of God to suffer in this world.

The Christians in Algeria suffering in this world. In the deprived areas of Inverness, like we were talking about earlier, suffering in this world.

[27 : 11] See, God's people suffer in many different ways and we are reminded through the word that we follow a crucified saviour, not a pamphlet saviour, a crucified saviour.

The psalmist's faith and his attachment to the Lord is causing him no end of trouble. He's not specific on the trouble that he's in, but he is going through hard times.

The apostle John many centuries later knew that this would be the Lord of the Christian. He says, the reason the world does not know us is that it does not know him.

The world does not know Jesus. You know, we as Christians may have difficulties in this world that people who are not Christians on off the world know nothing about.

Yet James commands us as the people of God to count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds.

[28 : 13] For you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness and lets steadfastness have its full effect that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

So that you and I may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. You see suffering completes the Christian.

Suffering completes the Christian. And there are times for the Christian to be whole again. He or she may have to suffer.

Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are his judgments and how unscrupable are his ways.

Who has known the mind of the Lord or who has been his counsellor? Why this has to be?

[29 : 15] Only God knows because he alone is God and he alone knows best. Give me life for Lord, he is saying.

The Samistas crying out for help, knowing that God was near when he called upon him. He knows the Lord is listening to him.

He knows the Lord loves him. He knows the Lord is helping him. He knows that the Lord is there, but yet he is suffering. Give me life for Lord according to your word.

In his suffering the Samistas turned to the Bible, turned to the Scriptures and he has found God. He has met the Lord once again.

And in its pages he finds all the promises for the renewal of his life. That's where he finds them in the Bible when he was going through these hard times.

[30 : 11] It was God's presence and it was God's promises that kept the Samistas going. That's what kept him going day after day, was the promises and the nearness of the God who loved him and gave his son for him.

If there was ever a light at the end of his dark tunnel, it was when he opened the Bible pages and perhaps he came across these words, even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.

Perhaps he read that. For you are with me. You rod on their staff. They comfort me. Maybe you opened the word of God and he read, the Lord is my light and my salvation.

Whom shall I fear? The Lord is my stronghold for my life. Of whom shall I be afraid? How you say that here today is your faith and trust in this God.

You know there are times the Lord will calm the storm. But there are other times where the Lord will let the storm rage but he will calm his child.

[31 : 31] How true? How true? Everything's falling apart on me. Put me together again with your word. Make me whole and make me complete.

That is his prayer. Make me whole and make me complete. If you are broken or if you are falling apart inside your soul and inside your heart today, take these promises that we have looked at today.

Take them to heart and read every promise in the word and believe that God is talking to you.

Believe that this God who entered time and space in Jesus Christ, the one who entered into our very experience, you see the reason we can become whole again is revealed by Jesus himself when he said, and you know these words well, what did he say on the night that he was betrayed?

Take, eat. This is my body which is broken for you.

[33 : 05] Do this in remembrance of me. For you and I to be whole and to be complete could not have been made possible without the body of Jesus being broken for us at Calvary.

Take, eat. This is my body which is broken for you. Are you whole? Are you complete?

Have you accepted the invitation? Have you made your peace? Or are you going to walk out of this church today and say no?

It's the promise and the offer is there.

Let us pray. Eternal God, we indeed thank you and we bless you and we worship you. Father, we thank you for Jesus.

[34 : 27] We thank you for all that he did in order for your children to be whole and to be complete in every way.

Gracious Lord, we thank you for your glorious Holy Spirit and we pray that he is indeed at work in hearts today that we may see Jesus and that as we carry on on this pathway of life that we would make that promise on that covenant with him.

Glorious God, would you indeed go before us on this pathway and indeed continue to be that light to help us to navigate through this dark and sinful world for we know, O Lord, that the day will come where you have promised to transform us and mold us and make us into the image of Jesus himself, where we really will be whole and complete.

Give us life, O Lord, according to your word and forgive us for Christ's sake. Amen.