

Good evening and thank you so much for joining us. Tonight, we begin tackling the longest chapter in all of the Bible, so would you please turn to Psalm 119?

In Medieval England there was a custom. Before a convicted criminal swung from the gallows, he could have a clergyman read him a psalm.

When George Wishart was ready to be hung he chose Psalm 119. George knew it was the longest chapter in the Bible - 176 verses. The story goes, two-thirds of the way through the reading of this psalm, a pardon came ordering Wishart's freedom. George's knowledge of the Bible saved his life. If ole George had chosen Psalm 117 he'd been dead in a few seconds.

George Wishart is not the only person who's been saved by Psalm 119. Many a man has been saved - not by its length, but by its content.

Even though the author is unnamed, most commentators believe it's a psalm of David, composed throughout his entire life. Some theologians disagree and think it's from the post-exile era, coming from the days of Nehemiah or Ezra.

And although we can speculate who the author is, ultimately it doesn't matter because if it were important, God would have preserved the name of David to this psalm.

Because there's not a definite flow of thought from the beginning of the psalm to the end like we've seen throughout the Psalms, Psalm 119 was likely written over a period of time and later compiled.

Psalm 119 is arranged in an acrostic pattern. There are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet, and this psalm contains 22 sections of 8 verses each.

Each of the 22 sections is given a letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and each line in that section begins with that letter.

If you're not familiar, Psalm 119 is a psalm glorifying God and His word. In fact it's referred to in almost every verse, in over 170 of the 176 verses

As we've been studying the psalms, we can relate to the different authors' feelings, and circumstances. But in our modern society it's hard to fully appreciate the agricultural references, or the physical war descriptions, or the persecutors trying to murder us. Those are foreign thoughts to most of us.

But here's what makes psalm 119 so unique, and so very special. The very topic of this Psalm is what you and I are holding in our hands this very evening! What a treasure this psalm is, what a gift God has given us!

Psalm 119 contains [SHOW PIC](#) Ten synonyms that are used for the Bible. Law, way, precepts, testimony, word, commandments, judgments, sayings, statutes, truth. [CLOSE PIC](#)

Also in Hebrew, each letter of the Hebrew alphabet is illustrated by a picture. Tonight we'll touch on the letters and their pictures. Psalm 119 is the ABCs of Scripture.

Let's pray before we begin

**SHOW PIC** The first letter, ALEPH, is depicted by an OX - a beast of burden. And the Bible will help carry your burdens if you learn to lean on its wisdom **CLOSE PIC**

ALEPH

1-6

1 Blessed are the undefiled in the way,  
Who walk in the law of the LORD!

2 Blessed are those who keep His testimonies,  
Who seek Him with the whole heart!

3 They also do no iniquity;  
They walk in His ways.

4 You have commanded us  
To keep Your precepts diligently.

5 Oh, that my ways were directed  
To keep Your statutes!

6 Then I would not be ashamed,  
When I look into all Your commandments. The Bible is God's instruction manual for our lives. The word of God directs our steps, renews our minds, and shapes our lives.

Notice too, the psalmist's desire in verse 6 is to "look into ALL the commandments." He's not content to know a little here, a little there.

Paul reminded the Ephesian elders that he had given them "the whole counsel of God." This is the psalmist's desire to know all God's Word.

7-8

7 I will praise You with uprightness of heart,  
When I learn Your righteous judgments.

8 I will keep Your statutes;  
Oh, do not forsake me utterly!

BETH

**SHOW PIC** The second stanza of Psalm 119 begins in verse 9 with the letter BETH which is depicted as a HOUSE. The Bible provides us directions home to an eternity in heaven. **CLOSE PIC**

9 How can a young man cleanse his way?  
By taking heed according to Your word. Notice, he doesn't ask, "how can a little child or a grandma cleanse her way?" Little kids and grandmas are not the most notorious of sinners.

But young men on the other hand... Most adolescent males are hotheaded, cocky, reckless, hormonal, stubborn, and impulsive. If you can cleanse a young man's way, you can affect anyone.

And what performs this kind of thorough cleansing? Its God's word!

Only the Bible can renew a mind - transform a character – tame a lust - create a new outlook - break old habits - produce sensitivity - spawn self-discipline – refocus priorities - and develop faith!

There are a thousand shortcuts that promise results-there's always some spiritual fad that promises instant results. Our only hope is a steady diet of God's Word!

DL Moody said he prayed and prayed for more faith. He prayed for an increased faith until he was blue in the face and it never came. Then he came upon **Romans 10:17, So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**

Moody said he started reading his Bible, and faith had been growing ever since. The Bible has the power to change lives.

**10 With my whole heart I have sought You;  
Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!** God's Word is powerful, but the key is heeding what it says with our whole heart. Love the Word with all you've got and stick to what it says.

**11 Your word I have hidden in my heart,  
That I might not sin against You.** You've likely heard the phrase from DL Moody that says "The Bible will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from the Bible."

12-14

**12 Blessed are You, O LORD!  
Teach me Your statutes.**

13 With my lips I have declared  
All the judgments of Your mouth.

14 I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies,  
As much as in all riches. God's Word means more to the psalmist  
than all the wealth in the world. Sadly, the Bible is a treasure  
chest that many people never open and use.

15-16

15 I will meditate on Your precepts,  
And contemplate Your ways.

16 I will delight myself in Your statutes;  
I will not forget Your word.

**SHOW PIC** The third stanza begins with the letter GIMEL which depicts a CAMEL. A camel is made for the desert. It endures the drought of the wilderness with a minimal need for water. Likewise, the person who drinks from God's Word can go a long time and endure spiritually dry and thirsty places. **CLOSE PIC**

GIMEL

17-18

17 Deal bountifully with Your servant,  
That I may live and keep Your word.

18 Open my eyes, that I may see  
Wondrous things from Your law. The psalmist knows he needs  
God's help to get the most out of God's Word. This is also true for  
us. The Bible is the only book that brings the author Himself with it

to help us understand its insights. To fully appreciate the Word of God we need the Spirit of God.

19-20

19 I am a stranger in the earth;  
Do not hide Your commandments from me.

20 My soul breaks with longing  
For Your judgments at all times. The psalmist has become  
addicted to God's Word. His soul longs for it.

21-24

21 You rebuke the proud—the cursed,  
Who stray from Your commandments.  
22 Remove from me reproach and contempt,  
For I have kept Your testimonies.

23 Princes also sit and speak against me,  
But Your servant meditates on Your statutes.

24 Your testimonies also are my delight  
And my counselors. The psalmist knows that God's Word has the  
answer for every problem we encounter. The Bible is sufficient for  
spiritual health and happiness.

Certainly, the Bible isn't the exhaustive index of all knowledge. It won't tell you how to build a rocket, or change the plumbing fixtures. But when it comes to spiritual and emotional health it's the authoritative source. The Bible applied correctly and skillfully to a person's life is all the help you need to positively change spiritual and emotional wellness.

Don't be duped into thinking you need more than faith and obedience in God's Word. Make the Bible your delight and your counselor and it changes us from the inside out.

**SHOW PIC** The fourth stanza begins with DALETH or DOOR. The Bible is the door that opens up into a world of blessing, and through which we can walk. **CLOSE PIC**

DALETH

25 My soul clings to the dust;  
Revive me according to Your word. This is why we need to be in the word daily. This world drags us down. But time spent in the word is the fuel we need to be about our Fathers business.

26-27

26 I have declared my ways, and You answered me;  
Teach me Your statutes.

27 Make me understand the way of Your precepts;  
So shall I meditate on Your wonderful works. Eastern meditation is all about the closing of the mind. The idea is to turn off your thoughts and focus on a single word or a narrow spot.

But Christian meditation is the very opposite. It's opening your mind to the truth of God and wondrous works of God and focusing upon that.

28-31

28 My soul melts from heaviness;  
Strengthen me according to Your word.

29 Remove from me the way of lying,

And grant me Your law graciously.

30 I have chosen the way of truth;

Your judgments I have laid before me.

31 I cling to Your testimonies;

O LORD, do not put me to shame! Notice, the psalmist clings to Scripture. It's been said, "A Bible that is falling apart is an indication of a life that is not."

32 I will run the course of Your commandments,

For You shall enlarge my heart.

We need to let the Bible run its course. The Word of God is like a seed that has to be planted and watered before it grows. An impatient person after instant results doesn't reap the Bible's full benefits.

**SHOW PIC** The fifth stanza begins with the Hebrew letter HE which is illustrated by a WINDOW. The door and window stand side by-side. The door allows me to walk into God's presence – the window to peer into His character. **CLOSE PIC**

33-37

HE

33 Teach me, O LORD, the way of Your statutes,  
And I shall keep it to the end.

34 Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law;  
Indeed, I shall observe it with my whole heart.

35 Make me walk in the path of Your commandments,  
For I delight in it.

36 Incline my heart to Your testimonies,  
And not to covetousness.

37 Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things,  
And revive me in Your way.[fn] The psalmist has been talking about the wonders of God's Word, but the temptation we all face on a daily basis is allowing worthless things to occupy our time.

It's said an average reader can read through the Bible from cover to cover in about 71 hours. Divide that up over 365 days, and you can read the entire Bible in one year by taking 12 minutes a day. It doesn't take much – just setting aside a few worthless things...  
38-40

38 Establish Your word to Your servant,  
Who is devoted to fearing You.  
39 Turn away my reproach which I dread,  
For Your judgments are good.  
40 Behold, I long for Your precepts;  
Revive me in Your righteousness.

**SHOW PIC** The next stanza starts with the letter WAW – which is depicted by a NAIL or PEG. In other words, the Bible can be trusted. You can hang your life on it. **CLOSE PIC**  
41-46

WAW

41 Let Your mercies come also to me, O LORD—  
Your salvation according to Your word.  
42 So shall I have an answer for him who reproaches me,  
For I trust in Your word.  
43 And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth,  
For I have hoped in Your ordinances.

44 So shall I keep Your law continually,  
Forever and ever.

45 And I will walk at liberty,  
For I seek Your precepts.

46 I will speak of Your testimonies also before kings,  
And will not be ashamed. The psalmists' obedience with God's  
Word has given him confidence before men. Live out the Bible  
and we'll never be ashamed.

47-48

47 And I will delight myself in Your commandments,  
Which I love.

48 My hands also I will lift up to Your commandments,  
Which I love,  
And I will meditate on Your statutes.

**SHOW PIC** The next stanza begins with the Hebrew letter ZAYIN  
- illustrated as a WEAPON. In Ephesians 6:17 Paul calls the Bible  
the Sword of the Spirit. Hebrews 4:12 says it's sharper than a  
two-edged sword. **CLOSE PIC**

49-50

ZAYIN

49 Remember the word to Your servant,  
Upon which You have caused me to hope.

50 This is my comfort in my affliction,  
For Your word has given me life. How often has the Bible been a  
comfort in affliction? A patient in the hospital... a prisoner in jail...  
a soldier in battle... I'm so thankful He's given us His word

51-56

51 The proud have me in great derision,  
Yet I do not turn aside from Your law.

52 I remembered Your judgments of old, O LORD,  
And have comforted myself.

53 Indignation has taken hold of me  
Because of the wicked, who forsake Your law.

54 Your statutes have been my songs  
In the house of my pilgrimage.

55 I remember Your name in the night, O LORD,  
And I keep Your law.

56 This has become mine,  
Because I kept Your precepts. Sometimes a passage of Scripture brings such comfort and speaks so personally and powerfully we consider it our own. It's "mine" - as if it were written by God especially for us.

**SHOW PIC** The eighth stanza begins with the letter HETH or FENCE. The Bible is a protective fence around our lives. Not to hem us in, but to keep harmful dangers at bay. **CLOSE PIC**

57-60

HETH

57 You are my portion, O LORD;  
I have said that I would keep Your words.

58 I entreated Your favor with my whole heart;  
Be merciful to me according to Your word.

59 I thought about my ways,  
And turned my feet to Your testimonies.

60 I made haste, and did not delay

To keep Your commandments. Notice the psalmist doesn't procrastinate. He makes haste to obey God's Word.

Whenever we see our lives are out of sync with God's Word, we need to make adjustments immediately-we need to make haste or else we're just prolonging our own discomfort

61-64

61 The cords of the wicked have bound me,  
But I have not forgotten Your law.

62 At midnight I will rise to give thanks to You,  
Because of Your righteous judgments.

63 I am a companion of all who fear You,  
And of those who keep Your precepts.

64 The earth, O LORD, is full of Your mercy;  
Teach me Your statutes. And you find God's statutes in His Word.

**SHOW PIC** The 9th stanza begins with the letter TETH or SERPENT. The Word of God strikes quickly at its enemies. It injects conviction directly to the bloodstream. **CLOSE PIC**

65-66

TETH

65 You have dealt well with Your servant,  
O LORD, according to Your word.

66 Teach me good judgment and knowledge,  
For I believe Your commandments. There's so many things nowadays to occupy our minds. But when a believer focuses

their mind and heart in the Bible over time it produces wisdom and “good judgment.”

67-70

67 Before I was afflicted I went astray,  
But now I keep Your word.

68 You are good, and do good;  
Teach me Your statutes.

69 The proud have forged a lie against me,  
But I will keep Your precepts with my whole heart.

70 Their heart is as fat as grease,  
But I delight in Your law. How do you stay lean – and avoid the fat of insensitivity? How do we stay trim and in top-shape spiritually? By delighting in God's Word!

71 It is good for me that I have been afflicted,  
That I may learn Your statutes. If trouble drives you to God's Word it's a good trouble. Trouble can get us into the Word in ways we never have before.

72 The law of Your mouth is better to me  
Than thousands of coins of gold and silver. We know that the truth of God is more valuable than money, because God's word can comfort our hearts, and money cannot.

The 10th stanza begins with the letter YOD. This is the letter Jesus referred to in Matthew 5:18, “Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot (Yod) or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.”

The letter Yod is formed by a single, tiny stroke. It's just a small slash. Sometimes it looks like a slip of the pen. Jesus is saying not just every word, but every letter - in fact, every stroke in the Bible is God's Word.

**SHOW PIC** The graphic for "Yod" is a HAND. Notice how this stanza begins... **CLOSE PIC**

YOD

73 Your hands have made me and fashioned me;  
Give me understanding, that I may learn Your commandments.  
Every human being is handmade. God fashioned us in the womb.  
And since God made us it's logical that He knows best how we  
should live out our lives. This is why His Word is the perfect  
recipe for my life.

74-80

74 Those who fear You will be glad when they see me,  
Because I have hoped in Your word.  
75 I know, O LORD, that Your judgments are right,  
And that in faithfulness You have afflicted me.  
76 Let, I pray, Your merciful kindness be for my comfort,  
According to Your word to Your servant.  
77 Let Your tender mercies come to me, that I may live;  
For Your law is my delight.  
78 Let the proud be ashamed,  
For they treated me wrongfully with falsehood;  
But I will meditate on Your precepts.  
79 Let those who fear You turn to me,  
Those who know Your testimonies.

80 Let my heart be blameless regarding Your statutes,  
That I may not be ashamed. Again blameless doesn't mean  
sinless. We all fall short. But is there anything in Gods word that  
we are routinely not obeying?

Are we loving those who are hard to love? Are we forgiving as  
Christ forgave us, or harboring a grudge? Are we loving the Lord  
with all we've got?

We want to give these things to the Lord, b/c as the psalmist  
says, that we would not be ashamed.

**SHOW PIC** The 11th stanza begins with the letter KAPH. Its  
symbol is a WING. And it's God's Word that gives us wings to  
soar spiritually. **CLOSE PIC**

81-82

KAPH

81 My soul faints for Your salvation,  
But I hope in Your word.

82 My eyes fail from searching Your word,  
Saying, "When will You comfort me?" The psalmist's eyes have  
grown tired studying the Scriptures.

83 For I have become like a wineskin in smoke,  
Yet I do not forget Your statutes. **SHOW PIC** Back in the old  
ways, before the ban on smoking, when you walked into a  
restaurant there was always a cloud of cigarette smoke hanging  
in the air. It felt like eating inside a chimney. And the smoke would  
get into your clothes. **CLOSE PIC**

The psalmist feels the same way about living in the world. The odor of sin has soiled his clothes. He's like a flask that absorbed the smoke of the world.

84-88

84 How many are the days of Your servant?

When will You execute judgment on those who persecute me?

85 The proud have dug pits for me,

Which is not according to Your law.

86 All Your commandments are faithful;

They persecute me wrongfully;

Help me!

87 They almost made an end of me on earth,

But I did not forsake Your precepts.

88 Revive me according to Your lovingkindness,

So that I may keep the testimony of Your mouth. He wants relief from his circumstances not so that his life is easier, but that he may continue to proclaim God's word.

**SHOW PIC** Our final stanza tonight begins with the letter LAMED whose symbol is an OX-GOAD or a cattle prod. At times the Word becomes wings that help us soar. At other times it's like a set of spurs that nudge us. **CLOSE PIC**

LAMED

89 Forever, O LORD,

Your word is settled in heaven. God's Word is settled in heaven. It's un-phased by what happens on earth. It will last forever. The

French infidel, Voltaire, boasted, “In 50 years I’ll have this Book in the morgue.” 50 years later, Voltaire was dead, and the Geneva Bible Society was using his house to store their inventory of Bibles.

90-91

90 Your faithfulness endures to all generations;

You established the earth, and it abides.

91 They continue this day according to Your ordinances,

For all are Your servants. As sure as the sun rises, God’s Word will abide.

92-93

92 Unless Your law had been my delight,

I would then have perished in my affliction.

93 I will never forget Your precepts,

For by them You have given me life. When you experience the life-giving power of God’s Word – it’s freeing and liberating effect - you will never abandon the Scriptures.

94-96

94 I am Yours, save me;

For I have sought Your precepts.

95 The wicked wait for me to destroy me,

But I will consider Your testimonies.

96 I have seen the consummation of all perfection,

But Your commandment is exceedingly broad.

The Bible is a prophetic book. It’s a view into the future. God’s Word let’s us see “the consummation of all perfection.” We know

how the story ends. In the last day, Jesus Christ will be on the throne.