

Seeing Wonderful Things in God's Word

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Tonight we are going to be orienting our hearts to the magnificent section of scripture which we are going to be continuing on here in Psalm 119. So if you will go ahead and turn with me to Psalm 119 and we are going to look specifically at verses 17-24 this evening. It comprises of this specific section. The stanza is called Gimel. Gimel. In the Hebrew language the letter Gimel is deeply symbolic. It is an acronym derived from a phrase meaning foot in action. Foot in action or rather in motion which serves as a vivid illustration of the believer's walk through this life. And by the way this closely relates the Hebrew word gamal which means camel. So now we can see the connection here. The very animal chosen to transport foot in action. The goods that carry the pilgrim's journey can be long journey for pilgrims through harsh wilderness. Camels are the best for that kind of environment in a harsh wilderness.

So as we dive in this text tonight we are going to see that the psalmist writes from the perspective of a traveler, a pilgrim, and also a servant navigating a hostile world. And by relying completely, and we often use this phrase for short-term travels, traveling mercies. Here in this text it is talking about traveling mercies for the long journey. And we are going to find this the pilgrim that relies solely on the word of God and the grace of God.

Let us look now if you will please stand as out of respect for God's word. I invite you to follow along with me in your Bible as I read from Psalm 119 beginning in verse 17.

God's word says,

“Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live, and keep thy word. Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. I am a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me. My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times. Thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed, which do err from thy commandments. Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have kept thy testimonies. Princes also did sit and speak against me: but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes. Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors.”

May God bless the reading of his word. You may be seated.

And look at verse 17 which at the very beginning he is pleading for grace. He is pleading for grace. Look down with me. He says deal bountifully that means deal graciously with me thy servant that I may live and keep thy word. This stanza is entreating the Lord with profound humility. Just think of the posture of his not only the spiritual side of it but also the physical. I can imagine the psalmist bowing before the Lord. I can imagine him kneeling at the throne of grace with true humility asking for grace. Notice carefully that he does not approach God with a demand. He does not demand anything here. He bases it completely on God's merit, not his own. He explicitly throws himself as it were upon God's grace, pleading for bounty, for grace, unmerited favor. He steps into the position of a humble servant, acknowledging God as his master. Master servant. He is the only master and he is the only great master. Amen.

And so he recognized a fundamental spiritual truth that he cannot even live. You see that? That he cannot live let alone remain faithful to his word and obedient to his instructions namely in the word of God. He cannot depend upon his own strength. He asked for physical and spiritual life for one ultimate purpose. Not to spend it on his own pleasures, but so that he may keep and honor God by his word. That is where we are called to be right as Christians to honor God by his word. Notice that the servants of our heavenly father all have enough both physically and spiritually. Just look at your own life. Examine your own life, brother and sister in Christ. You have exactly what you need both physically and spiritually, namely the word of God physically as well as the Holy Spirit spiritually. May we live physically and keep his word spiritually through entreating the Lord for his help in both of these areas because we are ultimately sons and daughters and heirs of eternal life and we are found in Christ and that is the sole reason why we can be called sons and daughters in Christ. He gives us the inheritance.

So the psalmist knew his spiritual needs were too vast for a small supply. So he appealed to the generosity of a bountiful God. He uses the phrase bountifully. He does not say small, a small amount of grace. No, bountifully. Think, imagine the throne room of grace. There is plenty of grace. Unlimited source of grace. Amen. So how do you approach God in prayer? It is a question I ask you. How do you approach God in prayer? Do you limit yourself? Or do you take heed to God's instructions how the servant prays in this part of the stanza? Do you come first listing all your good deeds? Or do you expect him to pay you a wage for your righteousness? Or do you realize that even your natural and spiritual life is a continual gift of divine bounty? Hebrews 4:16. Continue on the theme of throne of grace. What does he say? He says, "Obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." By the way, that is a continual process. Amen. We must continually obtain mercy. We need to continue find grace to help in time of need. That is what we are to pray and to pray more consistently in that way. Because if God gives us the strength to serve him, whether in your marriage, let me start off actually with your singleness, if you are single here, your marriage, your children or ministry here at Calvary Road, or even your work,

your vocation, it is only because he first poured his grace into us. He poured his grace into your singleness. He poured his grace into your marriage, into your family, into your ministry, and into your work. It is all passed down to us what you have right now. So let your prayer constantly be a plea for bounteous grace as you see more and more responsibility in your life making him the supreme object. Yes, he is to be our supreme object of our faith, our joy for us to live and keep his word.

So now look down with me as we continue in verse 18. This is the request of the psalmist for spiritual vision. He starts off with open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. This is the most familiar verse of this section. Many of us have memorized it. Let us go deep into what this means. Here we find a passionate plea for spiritual illumination. The psalmist acknowledges his own conscious darkness. He understands the dimness of his spiritual vision and his total inability to remove this very defect which is due to sin. By his own power, he cannot open his own eyes. He understands that God's word is a magnificent wonderland teeming with vast and life-giving treasures. However, those wonders remain completely invisible to the natural human mind and our human capability. And what the psalmist is doing is he points directly to God's divine power, his majesty and salvation. The barrier to understanding is not a veil over the scripture itself. No, the veil is naturally draped over our own blind hearts. We need a supernatural act of God to reveal his revelation to us. He needs to open it. So, let me ask you, how much of the Bible has God opened your eyes to God's power, to God's majesty, to God's salvation? Because it is all throughout this book. How much has he opened your eyes to the deep treasures, the deep well of this spiritual book?

Think of the blind man that he was healed by the Lord Jesus in the Gospel of Mark. When the Lord initially touched his eyes, his vision was partially restored, not completely. And so it was still blurry. He still could not see clearly. He saw men walking around, but they looked like giant distorted trees. He required a continuous deeper work of the savior to enable him to see everything more sharply more clearly. In the same way as believers we may possess a measure of spiritual perception. But what we have already seen should only make us long for a clearer wider deeper sight of God's truth. Amen. It is a sobering reality that we often wander through the priceless privileges of God's word. The precious promises given to us in his word and like a blind man walking through a stunning landscape. Just imagine before you the word of God is a stunning landscape and you just got a glimpse of that landscape. Maybe one part of the corner. Maybe a little bit more. Maybe a little bit more until you see the incredible vista that is before us spiritually, but it starts with darkness first and then it is more clear and clear as the light appears more and more and more. The source of course of the light is Christ. We cannot provide light within ourselves. We are dark because of sin. We need him to help us to illuminate, bring the light to God's word. We do not necessarily need God to give us more benefits. Nor do we need brand new revelations outside of this holy book. We desperately

need the spiritual reality to see the wonders he has already given. He has already given us in his word. Before you open the pages of your Bible, it is good to stop and pray. Lord, open thou mine eyes. Open thou mine eyes. Illuminate my eyes so that I may behold, see more clearly. That is the way it is said to see more richly your word.

Verse 19, continuing this is the pilgrim's guide book. This verse he says, I am a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me. The psalmist exposes a deep sense of earthly displacement. He feels out of place here on earth, confessing, I am a stranger in this earth. He feels as a stranger. He recognized that he is merely passing through this world. That this is not his permanent home. And he craves for eternal spiritual truths far more than what the temporal fleeting comforts of this world. The biblical command here is that as Christians, we are commanded to show truly as we are traveling, not pleasing ourselves, but how we can show hospitality, how we can show Christlike love as we are traveling in this course of what you call life. And whatever command God gives to us, he perfectly exemplified in Christ Jesus. He is the good Samaritan. Amen. He is the one that showed us what it means to travel on this earth. We are to go and look for the one that is injured. We are to go to the one that needs help and restoration that only Christ can offer. And we point them to Christ. We point them to Christ. Therefore, the psalmist uses exile as a plea. He begs God not to hide his commandments. Do not hide your commandments from me, oh Lord, because those divine laws are the only reliable sound signpost that are available for the traveler. This is our guide. Nothing else as we are traveling. I think of the billboards that we constantly see on the highways as we are traveling and how easily we can just veer off and then get off course. Do we really need that thing on the billboard? It is a good reminder. That is how the world is. Do we really need what the world is offering or is this the true signpost that we need to constantly fix our eyes on as we are traveling on in this world? Because it is the most reliable. It is the very guide that helps us in our steps because the way you can imagine it the world is like a wilderness. It is a wilderness. It is not supposed to be this thing where sin looks good. No, it is all dead if it has sin involved in it. It is a dry wilderness. The only life, the only oasis as it were is the word of God. It is the only thing that can give us refreshment for our souls. The world cannot do that to our souls because we are not at home yet. We get a taste of it when we come together and gather as a church family. Amen. We get a taste of that at heaven home. Our true heavenly home, our true permanent home is in heaven.

Think of the Lord Jesus tempted in the wilderness. And what did he constantly say to rebuttal Satan? It is written. It is written. So as you are traveling in this world, you say, "Is that what I am supposed to live by, or is it written here is how I am supposed to live?" Then Satan cannot pull you aside as you are traveling. The Lord Jesus again is our example. Think the opposite of the Israelites in the wilderness. What did they do? They have forgotten. It is written. They only thought about the pleasures of the past. You remember the leeks and the onions and they had forgotten before they left. They said,

“We need to leave.” In fact, they dropped everything. And you remember the Passover reference, we have to leave it quickly. And now they want to quickly go back. It is kind of interesting, is it not? How easily they have forgotten. So let us slow things down, pray, meditate on God's word before we go with our reactions. We cannot trust our emotions. We cannot trust our motives. Let us not follow the example of the Egyptians, but follow the Lord Jesus Christ. You see, as members of Calvary Road, we must come to terms of who we are in Christ and what we are doing for the Lord Jesus Christ. Our identity is important. Our identity is important. And so if you belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, you no longer belong to the world system. Your ultimate citizenship is in heaven. So this world should always feel temporal. It should not feel comfortable. Another way of putting it. So, do you feel like a stranger here? Or have you made yourself comfortably at home here? When you feel isolated or out of place, look to God's commandments. They are given to be your comfort, not the world. The word of God, your comfort, reminding you of home and showing you the exact path to get there. Let me ask you, have you hit a plateau in your life? Have you felt there is no more growth in your spiritual walk? It is probably because you have veered off a little bit too far away from the word of God. Go back and you will continue to grow and you will continue to progress in your sanctification in the Lord.

Now, let us look at verse 20. Verse 20, this is the psalmist heart crushed with a specific longing. He says, “My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times.” This verse captures an intense, persistent, and deeply emotional yearning for the mind of God. The psalmist uses incredibly strong language here, stating that his very soul is broken, meaning crushed, under the weight of his desire. And what is he specifically longing for, you may ask? He is longing, as it says in the text, for God's judgments. For God's judgments. You see, in scripture, God's judgments are final, infallible, immutable court decisions. There is no room for an appeal. He is the final authority. He is the final code of divine justice from which there is absolutely no room for appeal. The psalmist has such an immense reverence for these truths that his desire to know them and to be conformed to them causes a literal heartbreak. True vibrant godliness lies heavily in our desires. God has changed our affections. The one's physical desires have been replaced with spiritual desires, namely to please God and to live righteously before him. So our intense desires can weigh heavily upon our physical hearts as it were and can strain our minds. Think of like a rope being pulled to both opposite ends. It is a really tight rope. And that is often how we feel in this world. We feel the tension going on in our minds, in our hearts. Our minds pulling this way, our hearts pulling this way, and that rope just gets tighter and tighter and tighter until it feels like it is almost going to snap. But notice in the text, he longs for these judgments at all times. That rope is constantly being tensioned. This is not temporary fleeting emotions here. No, this is deep spiritual desires that now reside permanent in our hearts. So that it is not born out of excitement or happiness, but

that it is sustained by God himself, the spiritual desires within us. So it does not die off Monday morning or Tuesday or Wednesday or Thursday or Friday or Saturday. No, it is an ongoing battle. It is a constant steady lifelong spiritual hunger. That is the tension. We want more of God and less of this world. We want more of God's judgment to be revealed rather than our own judgments. Rather, when other people's opinions, but he has the final judgment and we are waiting upon him to come through. Another way of putting it, his timing. Amen. His timing. We do not want to jump the ship as it were. We want to wait upon his timing at all times. See, we live in an age that is truly shallow. And there are so many people that give you half-hearted wishes. So, it is often discouraging. Many people have superficial desires that they take off and put on as lazy as their clothing. Putting on and putting off those decisions, those desires, those physical desires. But the truly righteous person, as the psalmist here is mentioned as, is right at all times. At all times. He is consistent. He is consistent on waiting on God's timing. Do you have a pressing desire to know and execute God's will? Even when it strains your flesh, even if your flesh is just battling, just do it now. Get it over with. Instant gratification. Do not worry. You can flip your story, a page in your book, as it were. Just turn the page. No, a true righteous person does not rely upon his feelings or his own desires, but what pleases God at all times. This is God working in a believer's life. It is amazing. It is wonderful. It is God's grace. So, we ought to look at our own hearts tonight and deeply long for this kind of holy longing described in this text because growth happens when it is consistent at all times. At all times. If you hit a plateau, if you feel no spiritual growth, it is probably because you are inconsistent and waiting on God's timing.

Now, let us look at verse 21. Here we are going to recognize the fate of the arrogant. The one that is proud that relies upon himself. God's word says, "Thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed, which do err from thy commandments." The psalmist transitions to a stark reality here, a reality check regarding the people of the world around him. He observes the proud. He looks at them. He observes their arrogance. Those who are self-reliant, who think they are self-reliant, who live purely for themselves, deliberately choosing their own paths and wandering away from God's will. They act against God's judgment, which is the very definition of arrogance. To say, "I do not agree with you." That is sin. That is Satan himself. Though these proud individuals often appear successful, exalting themselves against God with a proud nose, lifting up their heads as it were to them. And it seems like there is no observable consequences, at least for the time being. The righteous man knows the truth though. There is going to come a time where there will be a divine curse upon the proud as it says in the word and face a terrible inevitable rebuke wrath from the Lord. Look, we have seen some anger in people but I cannot even give you the amount it is otherworldly in his wrath. Think of the most angry person that you know, the one whom you fear. It is way worse than that, to be rebuked by the Lord. It is good to be reminded of that as a psalmist does. You see, history is filled

with examples of this divine word. God rebuked Pharaoh with devastating plagues and utterly shattered his arrogant army at the Red Sea. They really thought that they could chase after God's people through the Red Sea, teaching the ancient world that he would decisively abase those, humble those who walk in lofty pride. Pride is a spiritual plague and a severe torment by the very laws of nature and God. Men who eventually become a massive burden to themselves act on their own sinful desires. And because of that, they are void of God. They are void of God's commandments. And what happens is they are truly empty, truly void. And the only way that they can try to temporarily please himself is sin. But they do not realize that it will never bring true joy and peace, which is only found in Christ. He is the only way to fill that void in our lives. May God help those that are proud among us. If you feel void, it is because you do not have Christ. Arrogance is the single greatest enemy of a believer as well. It still carries on with us. And we must be very careful of our flesh. Desires to walk humbly with the savior is going to always be a battle within us. It is the most serious blinding digression from the path of righteousness. We must remember that vast biblical knowledge can actually be incredibly dangerous if it is not accompanied by grace. Because knowledge by itself can easily puff a person up with pride as you see in the book of Corinthians. So we must always guard our hearts against the myth of it is an honest pride. There is no such thing. So we must daily sit at the feet of Jesus humbling ourselves, bowing ourselves to him and learning from him and not from anyone else because he is the only one that can keep us humble because he was gentle and lowly of heart and he did that perfectly. Amen.

Verse 22, we are going to see what a proud person does to the highest court. Verse 22 says, "Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have kept thy testimonies." Living a life of dedicated obedience to God's word guarantees that you will eventually face the world's biting, scorning, ridiculing, and contempt upon your life. The psalmist felt the heavy, painful yoke of being slandered and despised because he chose to strictly live by God's testimony because his conscience was entirely clear before the Lord. He possessed a perfect standing objectively, but subjectively on this world, he is experiencing the battle. But in the heavenly courtroom above all courtrooms, the final courtroom, he asked God to step in to vindicate his character and as it were roll away the defamation put upon him. Spurgeon put it this way. He gives a wonderful practical illustration of this. He warned about how we should handle personal attacks and insults. He knows that when we try to clear our own reputation through our own frantic efforts, we are usually like an example of a school boy who notices a small ink blot on his shirt. In his clumsy, panicked attempt, he tries to brush it off, making that blot into a bigger blot. He smears the ink all over his shirt until it is 10 times worse than it was originally. It is a reminder leave it to God. You can only make it worse. Wait on God's timing. When people slander you, slander your faith, treat you with open contempt at your workplace or in your neighborhood or your own family, your immediate action should be to pray. To pray. Do

not lash out. Do not be aggressive with your demands of asking for human apology. Again, the best and most effective way to handle slander is to pray about it like the psalmist does here. This is a prayer. Take your case directly to the highest court in heaven and then just leave it there. Leave it there. Do not take it back. Leave it there entirely with the judge, the sovereign judge of the earth. God remove either the slander completely or he will miraculously remove the pain associated with it. He will do that. He will do that. Keep your conscience clear by sticking close to Christ and let your advocate plead your cause. He is the great mediator. Amen. Let him plead your cause.

Verse 23. Verse 23. Princes also did sit and speak against me: but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes. The opposition against the psalmist was not just coming from the common crowd at this time. It is getting worse. He was being now targeted by the highest echelons of society at the time, princes. Think about the most powerful person. It has reached to that level according to the psalmist. The one that is powerful in the world that can influence people. High-ranking rulers sat as you see did sit in council together using their seats of authority as chairs of creating scandal for the psalmist. How to make this big? Let us blow this up. Let us make everyone look how bad this Christian is. Falsehood amplified. Most men will be utterly paralyzed with fear or discouragement even just among common crowds. We are talking about rulers. Think of the fear, the discouragement to know that the elites of the earth were plotting your very own downfall. Yet the psalmist maintains a breathtaking calmness about himself. He completely ignores their malicious plotting and chose instead to use his time meditating deeply on the statutes of his master. Look at the incredible contrast between the two distinct fittings taking place simultaneously in this verse. In one room, you can imagine a room, a private meeting of all these elites, these princes talking amongst themselves, holding sessions of slander, wasting their power to abuse a righteous man. And then go with me into another room where you see the psalmist sitting quietly with the word of God, answering his accusers by choosing never to answer them at all. We see the absolute difference in this text. The flawless fulfillment of this verse in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ who sat before the mocking rulers of his day, the Sadducees, the Pharisees and he stayed silent. He endured the hostility against him at the highest level from sinners against himself. Again, he is our perfect example. Amen. Are you allowing the critical voices of people to distract you from your main call to go to the word? To go to the word. Those who maliciously gossip you or speak against you are not worth your time. Your precious thoughts should instead be spent in devotion to God. When the world barks at you, go sit with your Bible. Those who regularly feed upon the word grow. Again, growth here. We are talking about growth. We are talking about stability here. And that you can be completely at peace. When you are hidden in Christ by God's grace, you can step away from the strife of human tongues.

And then we go into verse 24. We see the psalmist delighting. Delighting. Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors. The psalmist brings this Gimmel stanza to a triumphant glorious conclusion here. While his powerful enemies were busy taking counsel with one another to plan his ruin, this traveler was taking counsel with the infallible testimonies of the living God. It reveals how completely and beautifully he depends on God's word amongst the most severe attacks in his life. It serves a dual purpose in his life. We see here in times of deep sorrow, the scriptures are profound delight. So if you are sorrowing here tonight, you can find delight in God's word. But at the same time, you see another purpose here. In times of immense difficulty and choices in your life, you can trust the word of God as your counselor, as your true counselor. Ultimately, the beautiful and comforting words of our justifying king are the absolute best answer to the lying accusations of earthly rulers. You truly desire to find deep lasting comfort in the scriptures during your seasons of affliction, you must first completely submit your life to the counsel of God's word. And when you follow the counsel of this precious book, it must never be done out of a sense of bitterness. Notice the delight. You must have genuine delight. Ask for genuine delight in his word. Let the word of God have the final governing say over how you live, how you react to hurt and how you live in this life.

So as we close tonight, I want us to leave with these thoughts. What you heard was to anchor you, to keep you steady, to keep you stable in your Christian walk, and also to keep you on the right path. But as soon as you go out, you have your choice. You can choose to just go off and do what you have been doing if you have not been either growing in Christ or you have not even begun walking this path of righteousness. Remember this whole stanza was about our foot in action, foot in motion. How are you going to walk out these doors? You are traveling through a world that is fundamentally hostile to the things of God. The line of attack upon us, brothers and sisters in Christ, and those that are lost among us as the enemy wants you to not believe God's word. He wants you to believe his lies. What I have given to you was all truth from the final authority, God's authority. This week when you face difficult decisions, when you feel the painful sting of being misunderstood or despised for your faith, or when the pressure of this life weigh heavily on your soul, do not look to the culture for direction. Do not look to your own heart for direction. Do not try to fight the battle using carnal weapons or your own intellect. Instead, shut out the noise of the world and allow God's voice to be louder and clearer than all voices. Sit down with the Lord Jesus. Open this glorious, wonderful treasure of a book and allow the testimonies of the Lord Jesus to be your absolute delight. Delight in the Lord. Delight in the Lord. At the same time depend upon your ultimate counselor, the ultimate counselor, the Holy Spirit. Shall we pray?

Father, we thank you for this time of gathering. Lord, you are so good to us. You take good care of us by giving us clear instructions and not only giving us clear instructions

but you give us testimonies like the psalmist that we read from tonight who many of us can relate in so many levels. Some as our children have not experienced as much as our aged but all of us are experiencing some form of attack, some form of difficulty, some problem in our life that if we do not go to you with them and we rely upon our own willpower, we will fail. We will fail. As we come to your throne room of grace to obtain mercy, to find grace to help in time of need, I first pray for my brothers and sisters in Christ. Lord, if they are stagnant, have found themselves at a plateau of growth, Lord, help them to consistently walk according to the path you have laid out by the instructions of your word as their signpost. Help them to continue to stay on the path of growth in the Lord Jesus Christ. And I pray for those that have not even started on this path. I pray that this message have spoken to them as well that you have opened their eyes. They may behold wondrous things out of thy law. It starts with opening their eyes by you, Lord. I know they cannot do it because I could not do it. You must, Lord, open their eyes. Please, Lord, do this. We know it is your will to save. So I pray that they will be saved tonight in Jesus name. Amen.