

## **Psalms 19-04-04a**

Good evening, welcome to the Thursday night Bible class at Grace and Truth Bible Church. This is the 4th of April 2019, pushing the envelope forward chronologically to unbroken snow, the likes of which we have never seen before. We continue our study in the book of Psalms.

We're in Psalm 119, and for those of you that are tuning in from afar, there is a handout in the Psalm folder as there was last time for Psalm 111, 112. If you are tuning in from afar, you should be able to grab that PDF. It's just a single page.

You can look at it on a screen or print it out. It's got a little bit of color coding, and once again, we have a two-column arrangement. You will find that it facilitates the experience significantly if you have it before you.

This is the 4th of April 2019. It is our study in the book of Psalms. We'll take a moment to ask God's blessing upon it, and then we'll begin.

Father, we are ever grateful for the wonders of Your grace, Your faithfulness, Your provision for us. We could go on in an unlimited fashion, enumerating the mighty works that You have done to be remembered, for us to remember, to occupy our thoughts, to inform our goals and our values and our actions. We thank You for this portion of Your Word in Psalm 119 and pray that Your Holy Spirit will shine a light on it for each one, that we can see its meaning and its pertinence, its applicability for our individual lives, that we will come away from the spiritual oasis of Your Word refreshed and renewed and revitalized and energized and challenged for the assignments that You have tailored individually for us.

We thank You for our group. We thank You for the fellowship that we enjoy and the upbuilding and mutual edification that we experience from the gifts that You distributed to each one in our midst, and we pray that those will be active and functional, whether in ones and twos or in the assembled group here tonight. We pray that in all things the Lord Jesus will be magnified and glorified, and we pray these things in His name, Amen.

Psalm 119 is the magnum opus of the Psalms. It's the longest chapter in the Old Testament, certainly the longest of the Psalms, therefore, and we looked last time at the first eight verses, all of which begin with the letter Aleph, and we saw that there are synonyms for the Word of God that are going to be used somewhat interchangeably, and yet they do each have a specific emphasis. They do have a purpose and a function, but in our overview we're not going to dig too deeply.

This is something that you can certainly do on your own time. The translations are consistent in translating the Hebrew words with their English equivalents for precepts, statutes, commandments, judgments, the law itself, and so on. But what I want to do tonight is remind us all of what we saw in Psalm 111 and 112 last time, actually time before last, Psalms before last, our last two Psalms that gave us an acrostic experience.

And you'll remember, I can do this without hurting myself and others, you'll remember that we put these two Psalms side by side and saw that by reading across letter to letter, Aleph and Beth and Gimel and Dalet and Hay and so on, that those designated verses inform each other. And you could actually have a new and wonderful Psalm that makes a great deal of sense and gives both cause and effect, purpose and means, as you go across from Psalm 111 to Psalm 112, and just read the Aleph verse sequentially, then the Beth verse all the way down. Well, you will be unsurprised to discover that the same thing is going to happen in Psalm 119.

So if you have had a chance through my tap dancing and bucking wing up here for the first few minutes to access this paper, and if not, you can find it. I will give you enough information that you can circle the words in your Bible. But you'll notice in this Psalm 119 verses 1 through 16 summary here, that I have put the first eight verses on the left hand side.

It's in the King James because the particular online source I was using didn't license the new King James. And when you do get it, it's full of footnotes that I have to delete and edit out. King James is close enough.

So it was good enough for the Apostle Paul, it's good enough for us. So you have the King James, and you'll see verses 1 through 8 on the left. This will be by way of review.

Let's read it. Blessed are the undefiled in the way who walk in the law of the Lord. And you remember, and you can label this, I've not done everything for you.

But remember, it starts by looking at the third person people, they, blessed are the ones, those third person plural people out there who are undefiled in the way who walk in the law of the Lord. It's an observation. Those people are blessed, who are clean, undefiled, unbesmirched.

Verse two, blessed are they, same person, same persons that keep his testimonies and that seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity, they walk in his ways. First three verses, looking at them.

Now in verse four, thou, you could put in parentheses here, O Lord, has commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently. That's second person, capital Y, you, thou O Lord. Then it turns to myself in verse five, O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes.

Still talking to the Lord in the second person, but looking at my relationship, how am I doing? What is my ambition? What is my goal in terms of keeping God's word? And this is the expressed wish, O that my ways were like the ways of these people I just described. O that I could keep the command to hold fast your precepts diligently. I would like to be one of those people.

Verse six, then I shall not be ashamed when I have respect unto all thy commandments. I would gain a benefit. I would be blessed like those people described in the first three verses.

Verse seven, I will praise thee with uprightness of heart when I shall have learned thy righteous

judgments. Uprightness of heart, it's kind of like those people in verse one, undefiled in their ways. Those in verse two who seek him with the whole heart, I will praise you with an upright heart when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments.

Then verse eight, I will keep thy statutes, O forsake me not utterly. And there's a little bit of a turn at the end of verse eight that you don't expect, isn't there? He's been talking about people who are doing the right thing. He addresses himself to the Lord and says, I would like to be one of those people.

If I can do this and I'm going to commit myself to doing it, I will enter into those blessings. I will enter into your pleasure. I will keep your statutes.

This is my commitment. And notice, commitment in the Christian life is not a bad word. We sometimes think of denominational examples and prominent trends in Christianity, and we shy away from some concepts that don't seem to suggest themselves when you're talking about learning God's Word, thinking about it, interpreting it, and then applying it.

But the Bible teaches commitment, personal commitment. You don't have to commit to other people. You don't have to get into a group.

You don't have to get accountability. This is addressed in several different ways. Different facets of it are brought to our minds in Scripture.

One of them is the taking of a vow. Nothing wrong with vows. They are not commanded.

But if you take a vow, it's a serious thing, because it is a formal expression of commitment to God. And if you make that commitment, God is going to hold you to your Word the same way that we hold Him to His Word. He has promised to save us and to keep us and to grant us eternal life, not to change His mind a few centuries into the eternal future, and say, there are way too many people up here in the eternal realms.

I think I'll just, as we used to say, I'll renege. I'll go back on my Word. They can't stop me.

I'm omnipotent. God holds Himself to His Word. We trust God to keep His Word.

And God expects us to keep our Word. So this is commitment. And you'll notice the psalmist here says, I will keep thy statutes.

If you're going to go to God and make this kind of declaration, you got to figure out how to make it happen. It's one thing to say, I will lose 20 pounds by swimsuit season. Right? And you can be as sincere and earnest as you want to be.

But how? You need a means. There's got to be a way to accomplish it. Simply making the commitment doesn't effect.

It doesn't accomplish the commitment. There's got to be a way. Got to have a plan.

It's got to be steps, something you can do. There are pieces to this commitment. And each individual piece has its place.

And they're like links in a chain. If you break one of the links, your chain's gone. Now, let's take a look.

And you can look at this in your Bible. Set your piece of paper aside for a moment. And let's look at the Psalm in situ, if you will, in its context here.

Psalm 119. If your New King James is like mine, you'll see a big Hebrew letter, BATHE. And then the English in all caps, BATHE.

And then verse nine says, How can a young man cleanse his way? Now, this is handy, don't you think? If you're going to walk in an undefiled manner and so forth, it would be great to know how. You can't just wish it into being any more than you can wish. Turnips into watches.

You know, if wishes were horses, beggars would ride. If turnips were watches, I'd wear one by my side. Of course, that's back in the day when people wore their watches by their side.

Now people don't wear watches at all. It's in their phone. But you can't wish yourself into freedom from iniquity.

So how can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to your word, heeding the word. You think, well, that's pretty self-evident. Well, just keep watching.

Verse 10. With my whole heart, I have sought you. Oh, let me not wander from your commandments.

Your word I have hidden in my heart that I might not sin against you. Many of us have memorized that in the King James. Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee.

Right? Your word I have hidden that I might not sin. So what was the question up at the top of verse nine? How can young man cleanse his way? And this is Naar when it says young man. And while it's in the masculine, it just means a youth, somebody who is starting out.

This could be a spiritual youth. You could be as old as you want to be. But once you've made this commitment and you are new to the path and you don't know how this is supposed to happen, this is what's going to tell you.

So how can a youth, how can a neophyte, how can someone just starting out cleanse his way? Well, it begins with seeking, seeking with the whole heart. Your word I have hidden in my heart. So there is reflection on the word and tucking it away.

I say memorize, but memorize tends to make us think of word perfect recitation. It is the concept that is most important. It helps to be accurate and it helps the Holy Spirit keep us on

the path to memorize the exact wording.

It's sometimes meaning will turn on one or two small words and Satan will misquote the scriptures if you're not careful. So we want to hide it in our hearts accurately, that I might not sin against you. This is one of the protections.

Blessed are you O Lord, teach me your statutes. You will notice that so far in these first five verses we have had three requests. Well the first one is a question, but his first request in verse 10 is, let me not wander from your commandments.

This is a request to God. Stop me from wandering. Alert me if I am going astray.

The second one here is teach me your statutes. And by teach this means help me to understand. It always makes more sense when you're applying a formula or using a particular kind of equation if you understand why it works.

If you know what it is you're doing. When you understand that multiplication is a fancy way of adding. If you understand your volume, temperature, and pressure equation and it makes sense to you that if you've got a closed container of some sort of gas like oxygen or nitrogen and you heat it, that with rising temperature is going to come rising pressure.

That's how you pop the tops off of things. Some of us can think of stories in the past where something got heated up in a closed container and then it popped and sprayed the ceiling. Happened in one of the first houses I ever lived in.

It's happened in my most recent house. It's amazing. Pressure, volume, and temperature.

If volume stays the same, as goes up pressure, so goes up temperature and vice versa. So understanding the principles behind a thing is what he is requesting here. Teach me your statutes.

It's not just a matter of memorizing them, but understanding them. What is God's intent? What is his purpose? This is how Jesus knew that it was okay for his disciples to pull the heads of grain off on the Sabbath. That they weren't working.

That they weren't harvesting. Because he didn't just understand the statements of the law of Moses, but he understood that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. And that understanding is involved in this teaching.

And this is something we can ask for. Ask for wisdom. Ask for clarity.

Ask for a good memory. Ask that the Holy Spirit will bring pertinent truth to our hearts and our minds at the point we need it for application. It's a perfectly legitimate request.

And ask yourself this question. If you go to God and you say please help me remember your word and understand its application in my life in the moment when I need it, is God going to

say no to that prayer? No, not going to help you remember my word. I'm going to pull my Holy Spirit out.

He's not going to help you figure out the application. I don't really want you to live in a way that glorifies me. I mean it's just nonsensical, isn't it? But sometimes we have not because we ask not.

Ask for wisdom. Ask for understanding. Ask for perception in the way that things apply.

God will absolutely always answer that prayer in the affirmative. Sometimes he's just waiting for us to remember that it's his strength and his power and his grace that puts that whole power in motion. Verse 13, with my lips I have declared all the judgments of your mouth.

Notice the connection there. With my lips I have declared the judgments of your lips, your mouth. God spoke them.

I say the same thing. Remember what homo logueo means in 1st John 1.9? If we confess our sins, if we say the same thing, homo is the same. Logueo is to recount, to log a thing, to specify it.

Homo logueo. Logos is the word in Greek. Say the same thing.

This is what the psalmist says here. With my lips I declare the judgments that you've declared. I say what you say.

Something comes up in conversation. Well, is this moral or immoral? Is this righteous or iniquitous? Is this good or bad? Is this admirable or shameful? I say what God says. How do you do that? How can you say what somebody else says? I am astonished.

I am taken aback at the things that some people get enthusiastic over. There are blogs about television programs, older ones like Friends or whatever, but there are newer ones that I don't even know I've never seen. But there are communities that get online and people pride themselves on knowing every little detail.

They know the married women's maiden names. They know little tidbits that somebody wrote into a script. The Trek community used to be notorious for this.

I don't know how many of them are still alive. But people that would specialize in and could repeat the dialogue. There's people that memorized the entire Rocky Picture Horror Show or whatever it is.

Was that like a giant snapdragon or something? I haven't seen the movie, but it's a cult classic Rocky Horror Picture Show. Well, there's people that go to that thing. It's a campy, terrible movie, but people will go and they will say all of the lines of dialogue from the beginning to the end.

Never miss a word. Well, if the human mind is capable of that, why would you waste it on trivia? As I've said many times, I'm ashamed at how many song lyrics I know, as opposed to how many scriptures I can quote. But what does he say here? With my lips, I have declared how many judgments of God's mouth? All of them.

I declare all the judgments. I can recite all the judgments, all the things that count out of God's... You know how the Jewish people say, from your lips to God's ear, kind of a thing? It's an old Yiddish thing translated into English. Well, God's Word comes out of our mouths.

When the Lord Jesus was here, He spoke the Word of God. He taught it. He's gone.

We're here in His place. We are the body of Christ. We are to do what He did.

And He spoke all the judgments of God's mouth. Verse 14, I have rejoiced in the way of your testimonies as much as if I just struck it rich. I couldn't be more delighted in the way of your testimony.

What is the way of God's testimony? It doesn't just say your testimonies, it says the way of your testimonies. What does that mean? It's the life. Walking the way is lifestyle.

In Greek, in the New Testament, it's peripateo, to walk around. Walk worthy of the calling with which you were called. As you have received Him, so walk.

It's lifestyle. So, do you enjoy the life of faith? Do you enjoy the ministry of God's Holy Spirit? Do you enjoy taking a few moments, a couple of times a week, to refresh yourself at the oasis of God's Word? Is it an enjoyment? Is it something you look forward to, or has it become kind of a routine or a necessary item in the schedule? Don't want to look bad, don't want to, you know, be thought to have backslidden or gone into reverse process, reversionism, or whatever your word is for getting tired of it all. I have rejoiced in the way of your testimonies.

Now, testimonies is a particular aspect of God's Word. Remember the middle of Psalm 111, right at the center of the butterfly wings there? What was the idea? God has done His mighty works to be remembered. I was looking at a thing.

It could be completely off the wall, but it was, it is fascinating. I don't know how I came across it. I never know.

It's scary, the things that come across my screen off the internet. But I was researching something on a transcript and looking up something or other, and I saw a little thing, and it said, I flew a drone over the real Noah's Ark. I thought, come on, I'm gonna have to take a minute and sidetrack and, you know, what is this strange sight? It's like when Moses saw the burning bush.

I will turn inside and see this great sight. So I went, and sure enough, this guy, he's not well-off or rich or anything, but he said, you know, a plane ticket to Turkey is not very expensive. So I

bought one, and I took my drone that I controlled with my phone, and I went there.

I hired a guy, and he took me out as close as we could get, and we hiked. I can tell you that if you find this video, you've got to skip the first 19 minutes of it. There was a guy underneath that put a comment, and he said, video begins at 19.14. You're welcome.

Because I had started watching the beginning of it, and the guy filmed the whole experience. He gets out, he's walking, you hear him huffing and puffing, and it's uphill, and you know, he's just panting and panting, and I finally read the note, and I thought, oh, good tip. I went to 19.14. Well, here's the drone lifting up, and it shows the guy sitting on this sharp peak and controlling the thing with his phone, and then it flips around.

Long story short, if you find it, just Google, I flew a drone over Noah's Ark, you'll find it. But it's unbelievable to the point that I don't know whether to believe it or not. But there is a boat shape with a prow and a stern that largely looks like a weird ridge of dirt.

It's not something that looks to me like it could occur naturally. All of the terrain around there looks completely different. This looks like a shape, and the distance from the prow, from the tip of the bow to the stern, is the exact biblical distance of the Ark.

It's in Turkey, and some guy has done a bunch of research and found ribs and the rest of it. I didn't look that up. I just watched the drone footage.

But it was fascinating to look at it and think, you know, that could be the thing. It would be exceedingly old and have all turned to petrified whatever. But you ought to look at it.

It's ship-shaped, it's the right length, and it's in the right place, and hardly anybody's looking at it. Some guy has written a book and made a video, but I didn't look at that. But the excitement that you have over biblical truth, would you drop what you were doing and go investigate it? Would you invest your time and your mental energy in the way of God's testimonies? God's preservation of Noah through the flood and repopulating the earth afterward is one of his mighty works.

If you find it interesting, you can be forgiven, because that's what we're supposed to be interested in. And whether or not, you know, I've seen pictures from satellites of weird dark objects sticking out of snow cliffs, but it's related to God's Word. God may have preserved something that we can find.

What is your level of enthusiasm? Are you like the psalmist, verse 14, I have rejoiced in the way of your testimonies as much as in all riches? This is as good as getting a check in the mail, unexpected refund. I will meditate on your precepts and contemplate your ways. This is the path to understanding.

If you want to know the proper application, if you want to know God's will, his good and acceptable and perfect will, some things are in his good will, some things are in his acceptable

will, and some things are in his perfect will. I always think of the good and acceptable and perfect will of God from Romans 12, kind of like the 30-fold, 60-fold, and 100-fold field. God's happy with a 30-fold field.

It's just not a 100-fold field. You can be in God's good will and be bearing fruit and be reasonably healthy, but why not push forward? Why not find the key to maximizing everything that God has given us? Well, the psalmist here is saying this is how you do it. It's one thing to make the commitment.

It's something else to know how to bring it across the line. You want to lose the weight? Here are the steps. Now follow the steps.

Don't just post the steps on your refrigerator and then open it and pull the vanilla ice cream out. Not that I'm speaking from experience, but I will meditate on your precepts and contemplate your ways. It's not enough to wait until there's an occasion and somebody puts a post on Facebook and says, I think thus and such is great, and you say, wait a minute, that's not right.

Wouldn't it be nice if we had already reflected and thought our way through these issues and we have a cogent, scriptural, gracious answer? We're not trying to win an argument. We're offering a point of view. Taste and see that the Lord is good.

Taste and see. You're never going to win somebody to Christ through argument, but you can expose the light. You can offer the alternative.

People who are seeking are looking for something better than what they've got. They're going to be off-put by harshness and hostility and rancor and many words, but there are some people, and I know some of them personally, who really have a gift for presenting an alternative in a way that if somebody decided to ask questions and pursue that, they're not going to have to lose face. They're not going to have to give in or say, well, I guess I was wrong, because you haven't told them they're wrong.

You said, here's an alternative way of looking at it. This is what the scripture shows. If you want to choose that, look at where it'll get you.

And it's non-confrontational. We try to keep pride off the table and have truth on the table, but to do that we have to reflect. We have to meditate.

We have to spend time thinking it through and thinking about ways to present God's truth in a persuasive manner, but in a manner that draws. Jesus said, if I'm lifted up, I will draw men to me. No man comes unless the Father draws him.

There should be a draw of light and truth that's reflected when we declare with our lips the judgments of God's mouth. It should be approachable. Look at verse 16.

I will delight myself in your statutes. I will not forget your word. Notice 14, 15, and 16.

14 says, I have rejoiced in the way of your testimonies. 16 says, I delight myself in your statutes. I meditate and contemplate.

I will not forget your word. 13, 14, 15, and 16 are how. This is how to get it done.

It's a key for success. Now, having looked at that, take your handout, if you don't mind, and you'll see that these eight verses have been placed side-by-side with the first eight from Psalm 119. And we're just going to look at the first verse side-by-side with the ninth verse.

Notice at the beginning of the psalm, under Aleph, it says, blessed are the undefiled in the way who walk in the law of the Lord. Are you with me? What are the key things there? The undefiled in the way, walking in the law, right? Look at verse 9 in the in the bait section. Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? What does verse 1 talk about? Those who have cleansed their way.

They're undefiled. Everybody gets defiled. But these people are undefiled.

How do they get rid of their defilement, which crops up from time to time? Well, they know the answer to this question. Wherewithal can a person cleanse his way? So you see the relationship side-by-side? The undefiled in the way, in the way, that's in their lifestyle. Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his lifestyle, his way? Well, in verse 1, they walk in the law of the Lord.

In verse 9, taking heed according to thy word. So they're directly related, and you can see I've highlighted undefiled in the way and cleanse his way, and then walk and take heed. Taking heed is not just a one-time thing or a once in a while thing.

It goes back to walking. This is patterned. This is habituated in the law of the Lord.

Now take a look at verse 2. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies and that seek him with the whole heart. This was the psalmist's observation, that there is a witness. There is an example of people who are undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.

Those that keep his testimony are blessed. Those that seek him with the whole heart are blessed. He has observed this.

He's writing from the standpoint of a young man. He says, I've seen these people. Maybe they're his elders.

Maybe they're his family members. Look at verse 10, right across from it. With my whole heart have I sought thee.

Do you see the seek him in verse 2, and the sought thee in verse 10? Do you see the whole heart in verse 2, and the whole heart in verse 10? So just from looking at verse 1, verse 9, and verse 2, and verse 10, do you think that there is some thought being given to the structure of

this psalm? There absolutely is. And we are supposed to pick up this clue. It's easier, as I say, in the original a lot of times.

But in the same way that we had Psalm 111, 112, that invited us to put them side by side, when you look at a clean and undefiled way, and when you look at taking heed and walking in God's law, when you look at seeking him with the whole heart, it's unmistakable. It's trivially easy to see that these are to be looked at in this way. And when people memorize this psalm, that's what they could easily do, because I've got an aleph, the first aleph verse, and the first bape verse.

I've got the second aleph verse, and the second bape verse. Take a look at verse 3, then we'll go to our break. Verse 3, they, these who are undefiled in the way, that walk in the law, that keep his testimony, and seek him with the whole heart, they do no iniquity.

They walk in his ways. Now look at verse 11. Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.

How is it that these people do no iniquity, and they walk in his way? They have God's Word treasured in their heart. It's hidden away. It's there for safekeeping.

It's treasured. It's preserved, that I might not sin. I've observed these others, and how they do what they do, and I have taken hold of God's Word.

I've listened to it. I've sought it out, and I've stored it in my heart, that I might not sin. They do no iniquity.

This is how I can do no iniquity. So, so far we've seen verse 1, 2, and 3, and verse 9, 10, and 11, with a very close direct correspondence, haven't we? Let's pause here and take our break. When we come back, we'll finish this out.

Our second session will be a little bit short, so hang in there. But we'll look at the remaining verses in the Aleph and the Bait section, and the Psalmist is going to do something clever. It's not going to be a simple berdump berdump all the way down.

It's not just going to be, oh I see, this matches this, and this matches this. As soon as he's established this pattern in the first three verses, he's going to play with it. And he's going to say, just when you think it's just going to be synonymous, I'm going to use this pattern to layer in some additional information that transcends that simple pattern.

But he's established it. He made sure we saw it. Now he's going to use it, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to teach us some really great things.

We'll see that when we come back from the break.