

Psalms 19-06-20b

Beautiful special music by our instrumentalists as always and we're greatly appreciative. It is a martial theme that appeals to many of us but it is a reminder of the importance of our commitment and that is certainly what is in view here in this section of Psalm 119. We're looking at the Lamed section that begins in verse 89.

Forever O Lord your word is settled in heaven. Your faithfulness endures to all generations. You establish the earth and it abides.

Verse 89 looks at the heavenly origins and the unassailable and unreachable position where God's plan ordaining everything that happens is to be found. It is set up and established there. Then it comes down to earth and the generations that live on the earth and there is not only the sovereignty involved in God's plan but there is also the steadiness, the predictability of God's faithfulness to generation after generation and where there is sort of a static view of God's Word.

You can think of the Ten Commandments on a giant set of tablets in heaven. Although it would be more than the commandments, it would be the entire plan for human history and the individual circumstances throughout the lives of each one of us and each individual in every generation. It's a detailed plan but it is already worked out.

It's been looked at. It's been approved. God in His wisdom has ordained it and set it up in heaven.

On earth to travel that road, to negotiate those circumstances, to practice endurance and faithfulness and obedience in that particular assignment, God is faithful. He is predictable. He will be there to assist us and to provide for us and to deliver us when necessary when we approach Him.

He has established the earth and it abides. Well, by implication, He has established us in His Word in heaven and we will abide. When He says something is going to remain, it remains.

And that is the foundation now for this appeal, this prayer. And there is one final condition and we see that in the next verse. Unless your law, verse 92, was my delight.

Notice had been is in italics. Unless your law was, is, has been, will be my delight. There's no look to the past, present or future.

It's one thing. Your law, my delight, my pleasure. And this word delight we've seen in the past.

It is the word that comes from, it's shashua and it means that which is enjoyable, pleasant. You think about, if I said get a post-it note or a little piece of paper and write down five things you really enjoy. That you just take a delight in them.

They, anytime you run across them or they happen or you meet them or you see them, it's a delight. You could, you could fill out that list. Well, having filled it out, top five, was God's word on any one of those lines.

Is that my delight? Is that my go-to when I want peace, pleasantness, enjoyment, something that satisfies and feeds my sense of contentment and hope and encouragement? Is that in my list of pleasant things? Well, the psalmist says it is his. He says, unless your law, my delight, I would then have perished in my affliction. Interesting comment.

If it wasn't for the fact that your law has been, is, and is always my delight, my affliction would have done me in. This seems like a pretty harsh affliction that you would perish. Is this an actual sin unto death type of death and leaving this life? What is he talking about here? Well, to perish can mean different things and often in Scripture this has the idea of loss.

In the Greek, it's apolumi, which means for something to disappear, to be destroyed, to vanish, to be no more. It is used of those who find themselves cast into the lake of fire. They are, the appellation for Judas, the son of perdition.

Perdition is apolumi. It is loss, utter and complete loss of a thing. And in Hebrew, this is the word avad.

It sounds a little bit like the word for servant, which is eved. But this is avad, A-B-A-D, and it's a soft B, kind of a V sound, avad. And it means to lose, to fail, to be gone in the sense of either having fled or escaped.

You look for it and it's not there. You go to the place where it's supposed to be, it's not there. That's what happened to my glasses.

I'm using my great aunt's trifocals because my prescription glasses have avad. I hope they didn't perish in the way my last pair did when I rediscovered them. They were under the lawnmower and quite mangled and even I could not repair them.

And I can fix many things, but that was beyond all hope. But avad, it means you look for it where it's supposed to be and it's not there. So I would have been completely displaced.

I would have been moved out of my sphere of existence and function. This doesn't have to be death. You could be undone.

You could be destroyed in terms of your effectiveness or your ability to let God's light shine in the place where you are. You become unfit and not present. They're having a formation, you're supposed to be there and you didn't show up.

Doesn't mean you're dead. But for this particular function, you're AWOL. So unless your law had been my delight, what is he saying here? If it were not for the hope and the direction and the confidence and the sustaining grace that I get from your word and my delight in that, I would

have not had the strength to survive this test.

The affliction would have ended me in terms of any spiritual effectiveness, any witness, any opportunity to bear fruit. I might as well have been an Israelite who dropped in the wilderness short of crossing the Jordan into the promised land. I just didn't make it.

So with that background and helpful clue, if I said get out a post-it note or a small piece of paper and list five things in which you delight that give you joy when you see them and when you experience them, we would all now make sure that number one is God's law. For the Old Testament saints, the Torah was the only Bible they had. The Psalms were still a hymn book.

The historical books had yet to be written. And so God's law was the Bible. If the word of God that you have between the index and the maps there is not your delight, it's going to be very difficult to effectively pray this prayer.

Because without that delight, our affliction can end us in terms of spiritual effectiveness, in terms of laying hold of righteousness by faith, in terms of building up reward and opportunity to serve the Lord in the future. All of that can go away. Why? Because we didn't make the right decision, because we didn't know the right thing.

It's because delight is a condition, it's not an action, right? Delight in a thing, if you like to play a musical instrument, if you like to grow certain kinds of plants, if you enjoy an activity like cooking or swimming or boating or motorcycle riding or whatever it may be, that's a pattern, that's a continuous element in your life that you turn to time and again for refreshment, for enjoyment, for delight. It's not a constant thing, but anytime you think of it, anytime you get a chance to do it, it's a wonderful delight. Well, that's what the Word of God must be, so that when the chips are down and we have genuine affliction, it doesn't knock our feet completely out from under us and take us out of our place.

Remember what Jesus told one of the churches in Revelation 2 and 3, if you do not mend your ways, I will move your lampstand out of its place. You will no longer be a church with a light. You will no longer be a witness in your location.

If you're not able to broadcast that light and to reflect the glory of God where you are, I'll remove you. Unfruitful branches are pruned out so that the ones that are left can bear more fruit, Jesus said by his Father. So, unless your law had been my delight, I would then have perished in my affliction.

The good thing is, any of you all listening to the sound of my voice have already demonstrated over time that God's Word is your delight. There's no other reason you would regularly come to or connect with grace and truth except that you're interested in God's Word and God's truth and relationship with God and growing in grace and knowledge through that exposure. All of us share that enthusiasm and that hope that we will, by God's grace and in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, have God's Word make a difference in us.

It's our delight. We enjoy it. We look forward to it.

We're ready to see what's new to us and what God has done and what God has said. And that is in itself a comfort and a sustaining element. Because that is your delight, you can have confidence that you're not going to perish in your affliction.

You say, wait a minute, I'm a God-fearing, Bible-thumping, regularly attending, and not just attending, I listen and I reflect and I go back over it and I think about it. I try to figure out where it applies in my life. So this affliction, whatever it is and however bad it seems, is not going to end me.

I am not going to perish because God's Word is my delight. And you can take that to the Lord and say, Lord, I know this affliction, even though it's in your Word in heaven and it's in your operations on earth, is not going to perish me because your Word is my delight. You've got that get-out-of-affliction-free card to play.

It is a quality. It is a condition. It is a characteristic.

And cite it in your prayers. It's got to be true. You can't fool God if you're attending with the family and listening with half an ear and can't wait for it to be over so you can catch up on the pre-recorded television show you're missing.

That's one thing. But if you have taken some pains and set aside this time and perhaps traveled or perhaps had to fit it in between other events in your busy schedule, but you've come back to it. You found the recording or you've found any source of the teaching of the Word of God and that's your priority and you delight in it.

You know you need it. It's just like a good meal. Even if it's not the tastiest thing in the world, you feel a lot better after you eat it, don't you? It's like I've gotten the nourishment I need and sometimes it's insanely delicious and other times it's just the food that sustains you.

I'm thinking about feeding the dogs up there and sometimes when I put, you know, microwave hamburger and a little bit of that grease on their food, oh my goodness, that is the best thing ever. Other times it's their canned veterinary prescribed food and the canned food isn't much better than the dry food and both of them are somewhat tasteless and it's only near starvation that will drive them to eat it. But either way, it's what they need and they depend on it to stay alive and not perish.

I will never forget your precepts, verse 93. I will never forget your precepts for by them you have given me life. You see the link between 92 and 93 there? Your law is my delight and if it weren't for that, I'd be gone.

And I recognize that and I will never forget your precepts. That is the source of my life. That is the means by which God has given me life.

Regeneration life at the point of salvation and spiritual life on an ongoing, daily, hourly, minute by minute, conscious waking time basis, right? It is the Word of God in the hands of the Holy Spirit that fuels our life and without it, we're done. This is the way God gives us life. Now look at verse 94.

With that foundation, he says, Lord in heaven, I belong to you. And once again, this is the Lamed that begins the verse in the sense of two or four. And he says, to you, I am.

I am to you. I am for you. I belong to you.

I'm in the category of things that are yours. To you, I am. This can mean dedicated to, a possession of, the reason for your existence is for God.

I am yours. And this is just a very simple le-ka. Le is two or four and ka is you with a capital Y. To you, I'm me.

And there's the pronoun that is emphatic. It doesn't have to be there many times, but when it is present, it's emphatic. I myself am yours.

Then you have the imperative. This is giving God a command, as it were, from the word that we also get Joshua or Yeshua. And this is ho-shee-ah.

Ho-shee-ah, save me. And me is ni, N-I-Y. Save me.

Ho-shee-ah, ni. Because, where it says for, that's the preposition kaf, ki, because. Because I have sought your precepts.

Save me because I have sought your precepts. By your precepts, you have given me life. If your law was not my delight, I would have perished in my affliction.

But you've got precepts in verse 93. We saw this before. This is pakud.

And in verse 94, you have the same word again. Pakud. I sought them out.

They are my delight. I know that they are the source of my life. They are my delight.

And because of that, Lord, save me. And this is a pretty direct, I mean, this is an imperative. This is the mood of command in Hebrew.

And this is something of a demand. But it's a well-founded and carefully and respectfully constructed command, isn't it? He gave the basis. He gave the reasons.

We want to be qualified to make a similar appeal. Why does he make this appeal? Because in verse 95, the wicked wait for me to destroy me. Remember our word for be destroyed up above? Abad.

Abad. Same word here. The wicked are waiting to not necessarily kill me or slay me, but render

me helpless and ineffective.

Move me out of my place. You look for me where I ought to be, and I'm not there. I should have been manning the drawbridge.

I should have been holding the hill. I'm not there. I should have been in the driver's seat, but it's a driverless car.

I'm supposed to be there. I'm not there. The wicked have succeeded in displacing me, rendering me invisible, impotent, unavailable, gone from where I ought to be.

And they are waiting to do this. I am a target. And this is somebody that is watching.

They're not just happen to hear that there's a circumstance where they might be able to prevail. These people are watching closely. They are looking and hoping and expecting for there to be an opening where they can shove this righteous psalmist out of the way.

They are looking and hoping and expecting to destroy me, Abad. And the word but is not even there. There's not a wow there.

He just says, I will consider your testimonies. And consider is not really a great translation of this. I think you may have a footnote in your New King James that says something like pay attention to or something along that line.

But this word is it means understand. I will understand your testimonies. I'm not just going to know them.

I'm not just going to appeal to them. I'm not just going to delight in them. I will understand them.

I know that you have allowed the wicked. Why doesn't God just stop their breath? Why doesn't he give them an aneurysm or a stroke? Or why does he allow the wicked to continue lying in wait and watching and expecting and hoping for an opportunity? Why does he let the wicked dig pits for him to fall into back in the previous stanza? Why does God allow that? I understand God's testimonies. These are the eduth.

These are God's truths, God's reckoning, God's word. And I understand that whatever God has programmed into my circumstances is necessary. So even though the wicked have a plan, God's got a better plan.

They're waiting and hoping. God doesn't have to wait and hope for anything, does he? His word is forever fixed in heaven. It's established.

And what he says goes. And he is operating and forming and controlling the things that happen on this earth. So if God's word is in heaven and his work is on earth, these people that are watching and waiting and hoping and expecting to get the chance to displace, remove, quote,

destroy us, what's the likelihood that's going to happen? Zero.

You know, you can shake your fist at God all you want. You can hope to outmaneuver God all you want. But his word in heaven is a part of eternity.

And his work on the earth is going to take place. That's the proper application, as I said earlier, of God's sovereignty. Then in verse 96, he says, I have seen the consummation or the end of all perfection.

Your commandment is exceedingly broad. I would scribble out the word but there. I don't think there is an adversative idea here.

These are two parts of one observation. I have seen the end. That word in Hebrew means the the edges.

I've seen all the way to the horizon. I have seen the this is like the ends of the earth or the corners of the earth. No matter how far I look, I've seen as far as you can see.

I have seen the end of all perfection, it says here. And this just means the complete thing. This is perfect in the sense of remember the King James translated over in Ephesians, until we all come to the to the standard of a perfect man.

Well, it doesn't mean perfect in the sense of sinless. It means perfect in the sense of no missing parts. When you put the last piece in the puzzle is perfect.

It doesn't mean it isn't flawed or doesn't have problems, but it's not missing anything. It's complete. So I have seen as to the ends of completeness.

I've seen everything that can be seen. And, you know, my conclusion is when I when I've looked as far as anybody can see, and I've seen everything that can be seen. Your commandment is big.

I've seen all of the evidence. I've seen all of the circumstances. I've seen all that can be seen.

And your commandment exceeds it in breadth. When it says exceedingly broad, your commandment surrounds everything that can be seen by a If you see as much as you can see, you think you've seen the complete and you've seen to the borders. God's God's commandment is broader.

It encompasses it. It surrounds it. It shapes it.

It decides it. So I can look and see as much as can be seen. God sees more.

God's word comprehends more. God's plan and purpose surrounds conditions, makes sense out of those things. Well, as our final observation here, if you have been able to get or you can get the document, I just want to show you that we continue to have these paired trophies.

This Psalm 119, in order to be memorizable, and it was designed to be memorized. That's why it is an acrostic. It walks on two feet.

Aleph bait, left foot, right foot. Gimel, Dalet, left foot, right foot. Hey, wow, left foot, right foot.

And it continues all the way through. And we've seen you can do this with any two of these, put them side by side, as we've done in many of these documents. And when you look again, he broke that symmetry briefly earlier on, but it is back here in Kaf Lamed.

And this is 11 and 12 in terms of the numerical value of the letters. It is very obvious when you lay them side by side here. In verse 81, my soul faints for your salvation, but I hope in your word.

In the beginning of the Lamed section, your word is settled in heaven. That's why I have such great hope in it. Verse 82 in the Kaf section, my eyes fail your word, saying, when will you comfort me? From a human point of view, that when I look around at the end and I look around at that which seems complete from a human perspective, I think, where's the comfort? But look at verse 90.

Though my eyes fail, your faithfulness is generation after generation. It never fails. My perception is limited.

My perception falls short. Your faithfulness does not. And even after my generation scrolls away and another generation comes along, your faithfulness is a constant.

It is predictable. It is assured. You can rely on it.

When you look for it, it will be there. Now look at verse 83. Remember the wineskin in the smoke? Wineskin in the smoke is in danger of coming apart, of failing to retain its contents, of becoming brittle.

There's a lot of things that can happen. I'm in a dire situation. But the heavens and the earth that were ordained by God's word survive and continue.

God's word in heaven and God's work on earth continue this day according to his ordinances. When God appoints a thing, it stays. Well, I will stay and I will maintain my function as a wineskin just as long as God ordains it.

Not any shorter, not any longer. Jesus talked about this, which of you by worrying can add a small amount to his stature. You can't turn one hair white or black.

You can't add to the span of your life. God determines those things. So in the cough section, looking to God's strength, we realize that we are passive and subject to outside influences.

The wineskin can't roll itself out of the way. It has to concentrate on keeping its contents. But the things that God ordains continue.

Look at 84 and 92 side by side. How many are the days of your servant? It would be great if your deliverance came while I was here to experience it, to reflect it, to testify to it, to be a visible witness to it. And when will you execute judgment on those who persecute me? Well, if it weren't for my delight in your word, I would perish.

My days would come to an end. I would be out of sight and out of mind. Verse 85, the proud of Doug Pitts for me, that's their action on earth.

And they think that by waiting and looking and expecting and watching, they're going to trip me up and cause me to disappear. I'm down in the pit, but you have given me life. So do I look for my comfort and security to people and circumstances or do I look to God? Then verse 86 and verse 94, very clear correspondence in verse 86, help me.

In verse 94, save me. Same position in the stanza. Your commandments are faithful.

I have sought your precepts. When I'm persecuted wrongfully, help me and save me. I belong to you.

Those two ideas can read straight across. You see 87 and 95 very closely synonymous. They almost made an end of me on the earth.

The wicked were watching and expecting and hoping to destroy me. I did not forsake your precepts. I will understand your testimonies.

I will think about their implications. I will think about their pertinence and their applicability. Revive me according to your grace, your chesed, your loving kindness so that I may keep the testimony of your mouth.

Why? No matter how much you look at in this life, you can look to the end. You can see the completeness. God's commandment is broader than that.

It exceeds it, surpasses it. That's what I want to tie my life, my fate, my confidence, my pleasure and my future to is the word of God in heaven, the work of God on this earth and my relationship to him, my opportunity to claim his faithfulness, his predictable grace because I'm doing what I'm supposed to do. I know his word.

I delight in it. I endeavor to understand it. That's the condition and the qualification for which the righteous cannot be moved.

Pits can be dug. Opportunities can be sought, they can lie in wait, they can expect, they can hope. God's salvation is going to come to you and going to come to me based on what God has forever established in heaven and the ongoing work He performs on this earth.

All we have to do is qualify. All we have to do is remember it and delight in it. And this is a great model prayer in times of stress.

Put a bookmark in it, write this section in the front of your Bible, in the flyleaf or someplace, and say, in affliction, go here. Pray after this pattern. Lord, teach us to pray.

Here is the afflicted man's prayer. It appeals to those things that belong to God and are unchangeable and builds on that foundation. Not just a request, but a demand.

Before I die, Lord, I'm expecting your deliverance and here's why. And the effectual, fervent prayer of that righteous man will avail much. Well, that is going to bring us to the next section of Psalm 119, which is the maim and the noon, the M and the N, coming up in our study next time.

But let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the grace that allows us to come before your throne and to make demands upon your promises, upon your faithfulness, upon your salvation. It is a rare and precious privilege granted to us because of the faithfulness and the delight that the Lord Jesus took in your word in heaven and your workings on this earth.

And we pray that we can follow in his steps, that we can take up our cross and follow him in faith and obedience and be able to similarly see your salvation in our lives and reflect the light and the glory of your grace before others so that they will see those works and glorify you, be drawn to you, and enter into relationship with you through the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray all these things in Jesus' name. Amen.