

Psalms 19-07-11b

Let's continue our study now in Psalm 119. We're looking at now together the pair. Again, it's left foot, right foot all the way through.

It's no accident that there's an even number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet and you have two hands and two feet. We saw the hands at the end of the first 10 stanzas where you have yod, which is the open hand of supplication and then you have koph, which is the hand of power as the 11th letter. And we see here that maim and nun go together.

So if they go together, which we think they do based on previous experience, where would we look to see the correspondence? Because we wanna kind of find a summary for each stanza. Where do we look for the summary in a Psalm 119 stanza? We look at the center of the chiasm and we look at the last verse, right? So what was the center of the chiasm in the M stanza, the maim stanza? Count down three verses and read the fourth, that's verse 100. I understand more from the ancients, from history, from what is told to me, from tradition.

I get more out of all of the experience from the gray heads of old, from rehearsing history, from, in our case, reading the Old Testament. I get more from the Old Testament, why? Because I keep your precepts and I understand what keeping precepts is all about. And then the ending verse of that is through your precepts, same word, I get understanding.

What did 100 say? I understand, I get understanding. I get understanding from your precepts and that understanding informs my grasp of what I learned from human history and the old ones, the elders. So through your precepts, I get understanding and that understanding expands to other things.

Therefore, I hate every false way. Here is another clue. If I keep falling for deception, it looks like fruit, but it turns to ashes in my mouth.

There's a way that seems right to me, but the ends thereof are the ways of death. If I keep getting fooled, wouldn't it be great if I had a deception sensor? If I saw a false way and I immediately had a bad instinct, I could see through it and I could see the deception. Think about politics.

Think about social issues. Well, what's the right answer? I used to ask myself this question all the time when I started getting into my teen years and realizing I was gonna launch out into being an adult and I was gonna have to make decisions about candidates and vote up or down on different issues and try to decide, well, what do I think about these questions of the day? Wouldn't it be great if you just had an instinctive hate for that which is false and you had an instinctive truth detector and you would be drawn to the right way? There would be just an almost supernatural ability to find that best answer, both personally in your immediate vicinity and in the larger context of culture and society. Wouldn't it be great if you just, you know, I used to think, I had a high school ring before I had my Navy ring, and I thought, wouldn't it be

great if this stone would light up and tell me just yes or no, like the Magic 8-Ball.

Do you ever have one of those? I'm sure there's a digital Magic 8-Ball now, but it used to be a plastic ball with a little floating thing in it and you'd ask the Magic 8-Ball a question and shake the thing and set it down and some answer would float up and it would say no, yes, or I don't know, or what are you asking me that for? And it had a bunch of different answers, right? And I thought, wouldn't it be great if God would just put a little light inside the stone in my ring, and when I need to make a decision about, well, you know, should I pick this alternative, I would look down and there'd just be a little glow. Be like the Urim and Thummim, my own little personal, well, guess what? There is one. Did you read this? What does it say? Through your precepts, I get understanding, therefore, I hate every false way.

How can you hate a false way unless you can identify the false way? Through your precepts, I get understanding. That understanding gives me x-ray vision into ways. Some of them are true and some of them are false.

Wouldn't you like to have the wisdom to make really good decisions about people, about options, about investments, about time, about location, about effort, about what should I say, what should I not say, what should I do, what should I not do? I've been given this opportunity. Is it real or is it false? Am I gonna wind up going out on a skinny branch and sawing it off for myself? Guess what? God gives us the ability to discern a way that may seem right, but is gonna lead to death. And this is not just physical death.

This is operational death. This is fruitfulness death. This is a dead end.

It's not gonna bear any fruit. It might as well be a dry stick instead of a green shrub. It's just not going to result in anything good.

You can know that, absolutely. You say, well, sign me up. Send me the magic ring that's gonna light up.

It's right here in the Psalm. What was the center verse again? I understand more from past experience, from those who tell me their life experience, the stories of old, God's interactions with his people in the past, all of the ancient wisdom, everything that you know that comes down to you, you're gonna get more out of it because you are dedicated to keeping God's precepts. What about those precepts? Ending verse, through them I get understanding.

I don't always understand why God says don't engage in relations outside of marriage or before marriage, keep yourself pure. That doesn't, you know, there's a lot of arguments people offer me that, well, wouldn't experience be a good thing? And wouldn't I, shouldn't I sow my wild oats before I settle down? And, you know, there's a lot of human arguments. Well, everybody does it.

And, you know, I don't want to be weird and odd. And how can I be, they had some program called the, I don't know, 23 year old virgin or something like, I don't remember how old he was.

But isn't that a bad thing? I mean, all of society and all of culture and everything says, oh, you know, let's all fool around.

And yet God's word says, keep yourself pure. Well, what is purity? And why should I do it? And all the rest of it. If I just keep the precept, I may not understand the ins and outs of it, but it's God's precept.

And I figured God knows more than I do. So even though I may not know why it's a good thing, God says, it's a good thing. So I'm just going to do it in faith.

Faith says, I don't necessarily know why God says this, but he says it. And I've dedicated myself to doing what he says. So there you go.

All the rest of the people can go do what they want and take their chances. But God says, you know, young man, young woman, keep yourself pure, wait. God's timing is perfect.

I'm going to do that. And guess what? If I keep your precepts, the Psalmist says, I begin to see why I'm going to understand from the ancients. And I'm going to get understanding and I will start to hate a false way.

It's going to be easier and easier to not only avoid it, but to be repulsed by it. It might've been attractive at one point. Have you ever seen something like a, I remember the first time when I was little, you could get a piece of gum out of a gumball machine for a penny.

And so you'd go in there and put a penny in, turn the little crank and out would come a little piece of gum. And it had a sweet crackly exterior. And then there was gum inside.

I thought, man, this is great. Well, they had other machines that had great big gumballs. And if you put a nickel in, you could get a big one.

And I thought, well, the little ones are good. The big one's got to be even better. So I had a nickel and I put it in the thing and turned it and stuck it in my mouth and chomped down on it and nearly broke my little pre-permanent teeth because it was a jawbreaker and it wasn't gum.

And it was a completely different thing. It seemed like a good thing to me, a bigger piece of gum, but it wasn't. And I learned by experience and I've never eaten jawbreakers my whole life.

I hate those things. My first experience was a bad one. Never gone back to them.

I just think, why would you do that? It's uncomfortable in your mouth. You can't close your mouth. It sticks out of your cheek.

What is the concept behind this jawbreaker anyway? Why would I want a broken jaw? If I want gum, give me a piece of gum. If I want candy, give me a piece of candy. This is just some kind of an obstacle to success.

You could choke on the thing. So that's what he's talking about here. I keep your precepts and from experience and from your precepts and reflecting on them.

I now hate that way. Well, how does that compare to the noon section? What was the big idea in noon? We go down three verses and read the fourth, 108. Accept the freewill offerings of my mouth, O Lord, and teach me your judgments.

If I want to keep the precepts and I want understanding through those precepts, I'm asking God to teach them to me. Give me a full understanding. I'm inclining my heart to perform these statutes.

Remember the performance in verse 100. I keep your precepts. I'm inclined my heart to perform your statutes.

Verse 104, through the precepts, I get understanding. So accept the freewill offerings of my mouth and teach me your judgments. These things are two sides of the same coin.

They match, they go together. It's all about looking to God for the wisdom to live a quality life that invests in eternity. That's what these stanzas are about.

Well, if you were just reading these seriatim, it might be more difficult to extract these principles, but God has put this structure in there to guide us and to help us focus on what's important. Well, how is this gonna act going forward? What would our next two pairs of letters be? All you gotta do is read them in your New King James there. They've got the Hebrew letter and then they've got the transliteration.

You've got psalmic and ayin, right? Psalmic and ayin. And we're gonna start a new theme here. It's gonna be a different emphasis.

Maim and Nun were very complimentary and very intertwined. Now you're gonna get something new. Look at the psalmic section, beginning in verse 113.

I hate the double-minded, but I love your law. You are my hiding place and my shield. I hope in your word.

Depart from me, you evildoers, for I will keep the commandments of my God. Uphold me according to your word that I may live and do not let me be ashamed of my hope. Hold me up and I shall be safe and I shall observe your statutes continually.

Wake up. Wake up. Wake up.

Wake up. Uphold me according to your word that I may live and do not let me be ashamed of my hope. Hold me up and I shall be safe and I shall observe your statutes continually.

You reject all those who stray from your statutes for their deceit is falsehood. You put away all the wicked of the earth like dross. Therefore, I love your testimonies.

My flesh trembles for fear of you and I am afraid of your judgments." Sounds a little bit negative there at the end, doesn't it? Well, what's our pattern? If you wanted to have at least a provisional theme for this stanza, where would you look? 116, that would be the center of the seven verse chiasm. What does it say? This is an appeal. He's talking to God and he says, uphold me according to your word that I may live.

He doesn't just say, uphold me that I may live. What's the modifier there? Uphold me in accordance with your word. God has said something that pertains to being upheld.

Can you think of any verse of scripture you might have learned in the past out of your Grace and Truth Bible Church memory verse pack that might pertain here? "Fear thou not, for I am with thee. Be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee.

Yea, I will help thee. Yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." Don't believe these translations that say with my righteous right hand. It's the right hand of my righteousness.

God's righteousness has a right hand. That's power. There's power in God's righteousness.

He's not just saying my right hand is righteous. He's saying my righteousness has got power. That's why learning God's precepts and reflecting and meditating on his statutes transfers that power to our soul.

And we can keep his precepts and we can identify the false way because there is power in God's righteousness. I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness. Right? So uphold me according to your word.

Can you pray that prayer to God and know what you're talking about? If you go to God and say, Lord, I feel like I'm sinking. I feel like Peter in the middle of the storm on the Sea of Galilee. I'm feeling a bit whelmed and I'm almost overwhelmed.

I need you to uphold me. I need you to sustain me. I need you to stabilize me.

I need you to put my feet on the rock. Why can you pray that prayer? What makes you think you can ask God to stabilize you and uphold you and put you on solid ground? What makes you think you can pray that prayer? Because God's word tells you you can. Uphold me according to your word.

You're going to invoke the promises of God. Lord, you have said you will strengthen me and you will help me. You have said that you will uphold me with the right hand of your righteousness.

I'm making a claim on that promise because I have inclined my heart to your precepts and to your statutes. I have dedicated and committed myself to keeping them. And your word says that because I'm qualified to make this claim, you will honor it.

So I'm asking you, uphold me according to your word. You pray within the truth of God's word, what you know from it. This is why Bible class is a good thing because you can invest your prayers with strength.

You make a claim, say you want to go get a refund at Walmart. What do you need for them to give you money at Walmart if you go in there saying you want a refund? You need one of two things, right? You either need the item and its original packaging and they need to have a record that you bought it with your card in their computer. They need some kind of a record or what? You need the receipt and you can prove it without them even looking at the computer.

Here's my Walmart receipt. I bought this. I unpacked it and it was broken inside.

But you make a claim because there's a valid premise. You've got a foundation. You've got a valid claim on that refund.

Well, God's word is the valid claim on God's promises. So uphold me according to your word so that I may live. And again, life and death in these statements is not just staying alive like the Bee Gees.

Staying alive, staying alive. You know, I'm a dancing man and I got wings on my shoes and all of that. Staying alive is this is not just physical existence.

This is life with meaning. This is life of quality. This is life of fruitfulness and purpose.

This is life of service. This is life of reflecting the glory of God. When I say in order that I may live, why is God interested in me living? What good is my life? Well, if I've done the main noon thing and I've reflected on God's precepts and his statutes and I've dedicated myself to keeping them, what is my life? My life is a reflection of his word and of his righteousness.

He is bouncing his glory off of me. And I can go to him and say, if you'll grant me this life, all of those things can continue. Remember what the Lord said in the New Testament, shine like lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, right? Among whom you shine as lights in the world.

Was that the apostle or the Lord? I forget. But you shine like a light in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. How many lights has God actually got shining in the midst of this perverse generation? If we're one of them and we're one of the few, the few, the humble, the believers, not the few, the proud, the Marines, we're the few, the humble.

God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble. So I don't use my few, the proud sticker anymore because I'd rather be the few, the humble, right? We can claim God's promises that he communicates in his word. Uphold me according to your word that I may live.

Do not let me be ashamed of my hope. I have confidence in you. You're not gonna put me to shame.

If you are one of the relatively few people that actually lives his life by faith in God's word, do you think God is gonna embarrass you and let your whole effort fall to the ground? There's no way. So where do we get the confirmation of the theme verse in the psalmic section? We went to the center of the chiasm and we found this. Where is it gonna be affirmed and complimented and supported? Somebody tell me, I'm lost.

I get eight verses here. I've looked at the fourth verse and got the theme in the middle of the chiasm. Where am I gonna get the rest of it? The last verse, right? It's number eight.

Seven days and then there's the eighth day. Seven verses and then there's the eighth day. The eighth verse.

It's renewal. The eighth day, circumcised on the eighth day. The leper cleansed and rejoining the fellowship of Israel on the eighth day.

The eighth verse is like the eighth day. You renew what was important in the middle of the preceding section. So verse 120 says what? My flesh trembles for fear of you and I am afraid of your judgments.

We have a problem in that our words for fear are not a true overlap for the words for fear in Hebrew because it's more in the realm of respect, awe, trembling in the sense of being greatly impressed by a thing. It's not necessarily, I'm afraid something's gonna happen to me or I might die, but you're in the presence of something so much bigger than yourself, so much more truly awesome, not the adjective that young people throw around today. Oh, awesome.

They've diminished and belittled the word awesome. Awesome means something that inspires awe, A-W-E. It, you tremble in the perception of its majesty and its grandeur.

And this is a healthy fear. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Well, this is not, oh my gosh, he's gonna squash me like a bug.

This is reverential respect, appreciation for how great God is versus how small and insignificant we are. And yet he has invested us with significance. That's, it's this kind of fear.

So when he says, I'm afraid of your judgments, he's not, I'm trying to avoid the hammer as it keeps banging the table. I'm like a bug and the hammer's coming down. I'm afraid of your judgment.

If I just keep moving, maybe it won't hit me. That's not it at all. I am sobered by judgments.

People say, oh, well, no more tears. So how could anybody be gone to the lake of fire if there's no more tears? Looking at the judgments of God, looking at the judgment on unbelievers, looking at the judgment on wayward and faithless and recalcitrant and rebellious believers in the future, the darkness which is outside, the weeping and the wailing and gnashing of teeth. If you are not sobered by that, if it doesn't make you tremble in your soul to think of God's

response to those who have been bought with the blood of his son and then have counted it as a common thing, have trodden the son of God underfoot, as it says over in Hebrews chapter 10, counted the blood wherewith he was sanctified as a common thing.

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. And we ought to be sober. It's a fearful thing to think about the death penalty in our law.

If you're in the military and you know how far the uniform code of military justice can go in punishing you for treason, for direct disobedience of an order under fire and the like, I've never broken out in a cold sweat over those things, but I have had a very healthy respect in those situations for what the expectation is of me and the consequence of failing to meet that expectation. Dereliction of duty, falling asleep at your post, misusing the authority that is given to you with your rank, and the consequences of that are severe. And you need to be afraid of verily or inadvertently crossing that line.

Well, that's what it's talking about here. We should be afraid of God's judgments. It ought to be a motivation to be as far away from the line.

You say, well, how much difference is there in being leased in the kingdom or not entering the kingdom at all? Why would you want to be anywhere near the line? If you say, you know, some people say it's possible to lose your salvation. I wonder how far you can be in apathy and indifference, but you don't lose your salvation. And what do you have to do before you do actually lose your salvation? Why would you want to be anywhere near the line? This is completely academic to me, whether you can lose your salvation or not, because I have no intention of being anywhere near the qualification that anybody thinks I might lose my salvation.

I want to be pressing toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. I don't want to be some laggardly indifferent darkness, which is outside guy, potentially weeping and wailing and gnashing my teeth. I'm nowhere near that.

It's academic as far as I'm concerned, if somebody can lose their salvation or not, somebody else can worry about that. I have no worries about losing my salvation. You know why? Because I'm trying to be this guy that reflects on the precepts and meditates and goes to God and says, show me my secret faults.

Try me, see if there'd be any wicked way in me. Read Psalm 51. That's the attitude we should all have.

If you're a Psalm 51 believer, you don't have to worry about losing your salvation. Why would you want to be some kind of a laggardly bringing up the rear person to begin with, looking what the Lord Jesus has done? So my flesh trembles for fear of you and I'm afraid of your judgments in the sense that I don't want to be anywhere near the place where those would fall on me. I have a very, very healthy respect for the power of God's judgment.

I've seen it in the past. I've seen it prophetically, what's going to happen in the future. That's the Psalmic section.

And the big idea here is because of that main theme, I'm looking to God to uphold me according to his promise, according to his word so that I can live, so that I can be fruitful and productive and make my time on this earth count. And do not let me be ashamed of my hope. Vindicate my dedication, vindicate my respect and my time spent thinking about and learning about your word.

Then you go down to the end. I am a person who has a healthy respect for you and for your judgments. And because of that, I want you to hear my plea and hear my cry.

I'm not casual. I'm not indifferent. I'm not flippant.

I'm not thinking about God in shallow terms at all. Well, when you start working your way out, why would you hate the double-minded and love God's law? Because you are not double-minded. How will you know if somebody is double-minded? If they're a hypocrite, if they're acting one way and thinking another.

In the same way that you can hate every false way, you'll hate the double-minded. You will detect them. You will sense them.

Your identification friend or foe is going to go off because you are this kind of person. This hate isn't something that you develop and manufacture on your own. It is a characteristic of those who love God.

When you love God, you're going to have a natural aversion to those who are hypocritical. Double-minded is hypocrisy. I've got one mind when people are looking and I've got another mind when nobody's looking.

I've got one thing on my computer screen when somebody can walk behind me and see it. I got something else on my computer screen when nobody's looking. Double-minded.

You are my hiding place and my shield, I hope in your word. When I'm by myself, when I'm looking for security, when I'm looking for safety, when I'm looking for restoration and renewal and comfort, I go to God. So you evildoers, get away from me.

Got no use for you. I'm going to keep the commandments of my God. Bad company corrupts good morals.

If you tolerate and cultivate association with people who don't share this attitude, it's going to drag you down and it's going to drag you away and you're going to start thinking like they do. And you come out of the chiasm on the other side of that. He says in 117, hold me up and I shall be safe and I will observe your statutes continually.

Do you see a common thread through these stanzas? I am making a commitment to God. And

because of that, I can lay claim to his promises and to the fulfillment of his word. And I can confidently and boldly expect that I will not be put to shame, that I'm not going to be judged, that I don't need to fear the return of the Lord Jesus.

Do you realize how many Christians are going to be frightened out of their skulls when the Lord Jesus returns? Because they're not going to recognize him. They don't know who he is. When they see blood running as high as the horse's bridles, they're going to be terrified.

They're going to be shocked. They're going to say, what kind of savior is this? I was expecting the gentle Jesus. I thought he would come, you know, strewing daisies in his path.

And I thought there would be angelic choirs and everybody will be happy over there. There is bloodshed and mayhem and judgment and people being scooted off to the far ends of the earth and the darkness was just outside. I hear wailing, I hear weeping.

I hear teeth that are gnashing. Who is this Jesus? Shame on them. Haven't learned the word of God and haven't gotten on the right side of God's righteousness and God's justice.

If you're on the right side, you have nothing to fear. You're going to welcome him. You're going to be glad that people that don't care about the Lord Jesus and don't care about God and his righteousness are segregated far away and that you're going to be able to dwell with those who share your love and appreciation and share the opportunity to bear fruit and serve and be useful to the God who sent his son to die for us.

You can return the love of God by expressing love toward him. You are not your own. You've been bought with a price.

Are you acting like you still belong to yourself? Are you a runaway slave? Are you busy with self-gratification? Are you denying the Lord who bought you? This is the way to prevent that. We get into God's word, we soak in it, we absorb and begin to reflect the statutes and the precepts and we begin to think like God. We begin to pray in accordance with God's will and our prayers are answered in the affirmative because we know what we're talking about.

I can pray very confidently about any number of things and God honors and answers those prayers because they're in accordance with his will. How do I know they're in accordance with his will? Because I keep your precepts, I understand. Through your precepts, I get understanding and I hate false ways.

I'm not gonna pray for false outcomes. I'm not gonna pray for things that God can't grant. I'm not gonna pray foolishly and ineffectively and pointlessly and for my own gratification, I'll be praying in line with God's will and God is waiting to see who's gonna wake up and recognize this, okay, now that you've seen it, I will do it.

Like Daniel did, we saw that great chapter in Daniel where Daniel prepared himself and spent time in prayer and he said, I've been reading Jeremiah and I know the time is near and we need

to repent and we need to confess, Lord, I am repenting. I am confessing because I know that the time is ripe to claim your promise that after 70 years, there will be restoration. Daniel prayed in line with God's will and God restored the nation and Daniel lived to see it.

You think about Simeon and Anna who were waiting for the redemption in Israel and were praying for it and expecting it and God let them live long enough to hold the child in their arms. What a blessing. Why? They knew the principles that are communicated in this psalm.

Well, we had a chance to look at Aion, the evil Aion section, which we'll save for next time, but just look at it quickly, just the center verse, deal with your servant according to your mercy and teach me your statutes. Do you see a theme? Lord, teach me. I am a willing student.

Now, let me ask you, if you pray to the Lord and say, Lord, teach me, what do you think the answer is gonna be to that heartfelt prayer? No, sorry, I'm busy elsewhere. No, I wanna keep you in darkness and ignorance. My word is not gonna be a lamp to your feet and a light to your path.

By the way, verse 105, a lamp to your feet. Notice that those are two physical things that are attached to you. You've got a lamp in your hand and that lets you guide your feet.

You're holding the lamp and you can shine it so that you can see where to put your foot, right? Your word, it actually, the word order is, a lamp to my feet is your word and a light to my path. Word is in the middle there. So it's a lamp to your feet.

So you've got the lamp in your hand and you say, oh, I see there's an obstacle. Let me put my foot over here so I don't turn my ankle, so I don't bark my shin, so I don't hurt myself, stumble and fall. So you've got this part that you are manipulating, that you are shining, you are directing, and then you are directing your foot in that light.

It's all your immediate tactical advantage, right? How about a light to my path? The light is beyond the lamp. This is the light of the moon or the light of the sun. This is a light that is shining and it's lighting the entire path you can see further ahead.

This is not just, I just need a place to put my next footstep, but I know what to expect. Is it uphill or downhill? Is it smooth or is it rocky? Is it curvy? Is it straight? It's a light and I can see further. This is the difference between tactics and strategy.

I can do the immediate, but I can also see further ahead. I've got a longer range view. Hope is in the long view.

Tactics is in the immediate. It's a lamp to my foot and it's a light to my path. It's got two different functions.

It gives me immediate answers to present needs and it gives me the long view. It fuels my hope, gives me patience, gives me peace. I know what's ahead.

It's the difference between your low beams and your high beams. Your word is low beams and high beams. It's a wonderful asset and we don't want to miss it.

And each of these stanzas turns the gem of that truth in a slightly different light and exposes different facets of it in different beautiful reflections and adumbrations of it. So we'll pick up next time, finishing up psalmic and looking at Ayan. We're rapidly approaching the end of the alphabet here.

And when we finish Psalm 119, we will have finished our Psalm study and we'll be beginning a new study at the conclusion of that. So something to look forward to. If you have any requests for our Old Testament study after Psalms, you can put them in now.

I already have an idea of what I'm going to do, but I could be swayed. So there's a obscure section. We've done Kings and Prophets.

We've done Genesis. We've done Exodus. We've done Joshua and Judges and Ruth and 1st and 2nd Samuel and 1st and 2nd Kings and 1st and 2nd Chronicles.

We did Ezra and Nehemiah. We've done Esther. We've done Job.

We've now taken a representative look at the Psalms. So you can work your way through. We've done the Major and Minor Prophets.

So we've whittled it down to a small number of choices, but you can submit your requests at this point and we'll find out pretty soon what's going to come after Psalms. Anyway, let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the clarity and the emphasis that you have placed on these truths in your word.

We thank you for the encouragement they offer to us. We thank you for the opportunity that you've given us through the Lord Jesus Christ to make every minute, every hour, every day of our lives count toward eternity, that we're not just spending days and spending times to no purpose. We pray that as we reflect on these things, your Holy Spirit will impress them on our hearts and show us the unique and personal application for each one of us.

Help us to recognize the potential that you've given to us in terms of our spiritual gift, our place and time in your plan, the associations and the links that we have to one another and to the wider world. We pray that as a result, we can live our lives in a way that reflects your glory and brings credit to the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray these things in his name, amen.