

Psalms 19-08-29a

Good evening. Welcome to the Thursday night Bible study at Grace and Truth. We're continuing our look at Psalm 119.

We'll be looking at the 19th and 20th letters of the Hebrew alphabet tonight, which is Kof and Resh. There are only two more remaining, which is Shin and Tau. And we may or may not get to start that pair tonight, but we will certainly cover Kof and Resh, which begins at verse 145.

So Psalm 119, 145. And this is a wonderfully encouraging section. The psalmist has traversed a lot of territory in looking at the vagaries of life on this earth and the contrast between those who dedicate themselves to God and to his word and to seeking out his precepts, his statutes, his ordinances, his commands, and those who do not.

And the contrast is being drawn ever more sharply between these two groups. And even among those who claim to be believers, who may in fact have trusted Christ for their salvation in this dispensation, that is not the denominator for fellowship and for effective function in this life and for future reward and blessing. It is not just being saved.

We make much of that in the modern day, but this is in being faithful, in being dedicated. And God is not interested in mere salvation. He is interested in service, in righteousness by faith, in growing in grace and in knowledge of the Savior.

And that's what these sections of Psalm 119, oddly enough in the Old Testament, are helping us do. And we're getting wonderful direction, encouragement, a lamp for our feet and a light for our path. As we look at these wonderful pairs of letters out of the Hebrew alphabet that conjoin so closely and effectively.

And we're going to see that again tonight, that Kof and Resh are bound together thematically and by vocabulary and by concept. And then the final two letters, Sheen and Tau are going to do the same thing. And it's a great memory aid.

Certainly if you're memorizing them in Hebrew, which I've tempted myself to do, I think it would be great if I could just recite all of Psalm 119 in Hebrew. But that's pretty ambitious at my age. I'm doing well to remember where I put my Bible.

But at any rate, we're going to pick up here at Psalm 119 verse 145. Let's ask God's blessing on our fellowship and on our study. And we'll get started.

Father, it is such a wonderful time to spend together looking at your word and being blessed and refreshed at the spiritual oasis that these truths and these concepts represent for us. We find ourselves encouraged and restored and strengthened and given a perspective that puts things that to a human eye seem to loom large and to be a great threat to our happiness and to our peace put in their place. And we find the eternal truths and the green pastures and still

waters into which you lead our souls.

Such a wonderful respite from the cares of the day and from the vagaries that do face us as we traverse the hours of the day and interact with people and circumstances. We pray that as we look at this portion of Psalm 119 tonight that your Holy Spirit will minister it to our hearts, help us to see its pertinence and its relevance to our own circumstances. Although these words were penned so many hundreds of years ago, your word is alive and powerful.

It divides our soul and spirit cuts to the very heart of our experience and is the means by which you enable us and empower us to live the life to which we've been called. We pray that as we spend this time of fellowship together, that each one will be encouraged, that our mutual fellowship and conversation will be edifying and pleasing in your sight. We ask these things in Jesus name.

Amen. Well, it's always good to read the passage before we start talking about it. I don't always remember to do that, but I should.

And having covered in the preceding pair of letters, the pay and Sade, uh, we saw how these were linked together, uh, the everlastingness of God's righteousness and the everlastingness of his truth and the, uh, concepts that we saw there in a verse one 42, for example, your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness and your law is truth. Uh, verse one 44, the righteousness of your testimonies is everlasting. Give me understanding and I shall live.

And so we pick up now tonight under the letter Kof Q O P H at verse 145, Kof, by the way, this letter, each of the letters has a value and was especially significant, uh, conceptually to, uh, people who had Hebrew as their native language and even later on into Aramaic. And the letters that you find printed here in your, uh, Bible are the square Aramaic script. I wish they would have used the old Hebrew letters.

They're, they're interesting to look at and are closer to the original pictographic idea. But, uh, we'll, we'll live with it here. So you have this thing that looks like a backward Q, um, for Kof, but this originally started out as a picture of the sun.

And in some cases, the sun on the horizon, many of these letters have, have rotated 90 degrees or more. So you think about the letter a that we have. And if you, if you turn it counterclockwise a little more than 90 degrees, it looks like an ox's head with two horns.

The legs of the a become the horns of the pointed ox's face. Well, there's a similar thing here. If you take this Kof and rotate it 90 degrees counterclockwise, there's a circle and a line, and this is the sun or the sun on the horizon, the sun rising perhaps.

And so it's this, it's a circle. It's the sun. It comes to, to stand for time.

Uh, we saw all through and, and Ken had a very, uh, helpful observation last week about how these concepts tie into Ecclesiastes and, uh, Solomon's words, uh, the Lord Jesus talking about,

uh, when I say last week, I'm talking about last Sunday, uh, when Jesus was talking about the, the lilies of the field, they toil not, neither did they spin. Yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed as one of these. And we were talking about daily bread and tomorrow's bread and, and sufficient to the day is the evil thereof.

And Jesus mentions Solomon and it takes you back to the, to Kohelet, to what we call Ecclesiastes. And that whole idea of what happens under the sun and these things I've seen under the sun and, and Solomon began to feel confined and restricted, uh, under the sort of the glass ceiling of, of a limitation of the old, uh, covenant and, and of the limitations of time. And wouldn't it be great if you could transcend, you know, you do all this work and it's going to be turned over to another.

Wouldn't it be great if you could do work that lasts and that would invest in eternity? Well, the Psalmist here recognizes that there is righteousness. It's not works on this earth. It's not buildings and acquisitions and, uh, accumulations of, of treasure.

Uh, Jesus talked about this in our Sunday morning study and in Matthew chapter six, that it's do not lay up for yourself treasure on earth where, uh, moth and eating, uh, diminish it and thieves break in and steal, lay it up in heaven. Well, this is where these concepts of eternity are coming in and Psalm one 19. So Kof suggests to us very prominently and formally the idea of time and of what can be done under the sun and what can't be done under the sun, the limitations of, of temporality and ephemeral, uh, human existence.

So, uh, Kof, uh, is a circle. It's the sun time. It also talks about that, which is last or least.

And you get the idea that, that, that sun on the horizon may be the sunset and that it's, it's the finality and the last or the least of things. Um, where Raish coming up as the next letter is going to be Roche, which is the head, uh, Roche Hashana, the head of the year or the beginning of the year, new years. And so you have least and greatest juxtaposed here.

You have Kof, which is least and Raish, which is greatest. And remember when Jesus said, uh, so many different times, uh, the last shall be first and the first shall be last. Even in the Hebrew alphabet, the least comes before the greatest Kof comes before Raish.

So, but it also has this bears this idea of, uh, time. And I'll talk more about Raish when we get to it, but, uh, finality and, uh, the, it is also the first letter of the word that means to cry out, Kara, Q A R A to cry out. And we're going to find that, that this is a prominent theme in the first three verses here.

As you watch for it, let's read it together. Now, beginning at Psalm 119 verse one 45, the Kof section, I cry out with my whole heart. Hear me.

Oh Lord, I will keep your statutes. I cry out to you, save me. And I will keep your testimonies.

I rise before the dawning of the morning and cry for help. I hope in your word, my eyes are

awake through the night watches that I may meditate on your word. Hear my voice.

According to your loving kindness. Oh Lord, revive me. According to your justice, they draw near who follow after wickedness.

They are far from your law. You are near. Oh Lord.

And all your commandments are truth concerning your testimonies. I have known of old that you have founded them forever. Well, we see, uh, as salient features of this section, that there is an overt appeal to God three times in the three verses that begin this section.

He says, I'm crying out to you. And, uh, not only is there a voice that is being raised, but there is watching. So in verse one 48, my eyes are awake through the night watches in the service of this meditation.

Then in verse one 49, once again, hear my voice. I'm crying out, hear my voice and revive me according to your justice. And why is this urgent matter coming to the fore? Because people who follow after wickedness are drawing near.

This is persecution. This is people testing. This is opposition and harassment.

And, uh, the wicked creating friction and opposition. They are far from your law. You think about the Psalmist dwelling in Israel.

He's unlikely to be talking about it's from outside the land. This opposition are people who ought to be close to the law, but they are far away. This is, this is within Israel.

These are people who are ostensibly God's people and in covenant relationship with God, but they are far from his law. They've rejected it. They've neglected it.

They have apathetic and indifferent toward, if not outright hostile. And this is going to be developed even further in the race section that is upcoming. But, uh, right now he just says, I, there are footsteps approaching.

They're, they're getting nearer. And so this is the occasion for wholehearted outcry. Now, if you're crying out to God, what is your expectation? If I call out to Patty in the house and I say, Patty, Patty, I need you.

What, what am I expecting? What would you think? You can answer. If you cry out to somebody, what are you hoping for? You want a response? Yeah. An answer, right? You, you expect something coming back by way of communication in your direction.

So let me ask you this question. The Psalmist here is crying out to God. Where is he expecting the answer? What do these verses say? I cry out with my whole heart.

Hear me. Oh Lord. Are you listening? Hear my cry.

I will keep your statutes. I am going to be obedient. I will, whatever statutes pertain, whatever statutes apply.

So what is, what is understood here? I'm crying out. Hear me. I will keep your statutes.

Which statutes? Whatever the applicable statutes are implicit in this call is show me what I should be doing. And I will do it. Then that makes sense.

I cry out to you. Oh Lord, hear me. I will keep your statutes.

I E illuminate the ones that I should be paying attention to. I will, I will do whatever you tell me. Show me the path of obedience and I will follow it.

Bring to my mind and my heart the statutes. So this is where the answer is, right? Look at the next verse. I cry out to you, deliver me.

I will keep your testimonies. My purpose in crying out to you and in asking for your deliverance is so that I can continue and expand obedience. I will keep your statutes.

I will keep your testimonies. What's the difference in statutes and testimonies? Remember statutes are the, it's just like statutes. These are sort of, uh, uh, I keep wanting to say no mic in the G N O M I C sense of the word, but they are, they are, uh, the givens, they're the, uh, things that you go to when you're doing a geometric proof.

You know, there are, there are things that you can state that are starting places that these are the, the known truths. Those are the statutes. It's like a statute mile.

If you talk about a statute mile, there is a statute that defines what a mile is. So these are definitional truths. Testimonies on the other hand, what are these? This is the record of God's dealing, the record of God speaking his interaction with his people.

At this point in time, it's mostly, uh, the patriarchs and national Israel that is available. He hasn't dealt with the, uh, divided kingdom or the later narratives of the old Testament. Certainly nothing of the new Testament is manifest.

We have far more testimonial to God and to the application of his truth than the psalmist had at this point, he's basically got the Pentateuch and a little bit of, of history down to the Davidic era. But these are the testimonies. So this would be the outworking of statutes in and among God's people.

Examples, Abraham, Joseph, uh, the time of wandering in the wilderness, early entrance into the land under Joshua, the days of the judges, uh, Ruth, the books of Samuel. These, these things would be known in this day that we're still, we're in or shortly after the David and Solomon period here for these Psalms. So anything earlier than say 900 BC would be a part of the testimonies would be known.

Even current dealings. God was still dealing in supernatural ways. There were still prophets.

There were still, uh, Urim and Thummim in use. There was still God's interaction with his people in this day. So those are the testimonies.

So I will adhere to the normative, that's the word I was looking for. Normative truths, norms, standards to which you appeal. When you say this is plum, this is level, this is square.

This is right. This is righteous. Those are the statutes.

And then the testimonies. This is how those have been applied, how they have worked themselves out. I rise before the dawning of the morning and cry for help.

I hope in your word. So there is looking to these revelations of God's word for answers. So what is he not listening for? And this is really my point.

When I asked the question, if you call out and you're looking for a response, where do we look? There are people who are waiting to hear a still small voice. There are people who are looking for signs. You know, if a certain number of doves fly by or, well, if, if somebody calls me in the next eight hours, I'll take that as a sign from the Lord that I should meet with them or do a deal with them or rely on them or use them for help or eschew them and set them aside.

If they call me and they're abusive, I'll never talk to them again. I'll take it as a sign. If something happens circumstantially and that'll be my guidance, I'm waiting for a feeling.

I want, uh, uh, some assurance. Where does the Psalmist directing his attention for God's answer? Go to the statutes, go to the testimonies, go to the word. The word is where he hopes.

I hope in your word. Now in this day, it's possible that the Psalmist could be David. It doesn't say it's a Davidic Psalm.

I doubt that he had time as King and so on to this took a lot of time to compose this Psalm, but this is still the day of prophecy of supernatural revelation of God's word. God's word is still being assimilated and, and accumulated and compiled in this day. The word could have come by a seer or a prophet or a night vision or whatever, but it's still God's word.

It is manifestly a revelation from God and God alone. It's not, I'm going to interpret godly counsel or I'm going to expect something I see or something I hear or something I, uh, arbitrarily assign and sort of put God on the spot. Well, if I'm supposed to do this, have somebody come up and say hopscotch or, you know, some other weird thing.

I look to his word. I cry for help and I expect that help in your word, in your statutes, in your testimonies. My eyes are awake through the night watches.

Now this one 47 and one 48 is really tricky Hebrew. Uh, what is, translated as a verb here is actually an adverb and it's, it is not easy. Let me, uh, try to give you a one 47 in a sort of a

Hebrew literal.

And I'm doing this for a reason, not just to say, wow, isn't this tricky. But I, uh, the link between verse one 47 and verse one 48 is, uh, in this, in this picture of what's going on at night. What did I tell you about Kof? It's time, right? And, and the letter itself started out as a picture of the sun on the horizon.

It's the sun. The sun is either rising or sinking. It's, it's at the edge.

It's not a circle overhead. It's on the horizon. So this, when he says I rise before the dawning of the morning, uh, all of that is basically translating a, an intensive verb that means to, to go before to it's translated prevent in the old King James.

Uh, but, but it's an archaic use. We don't prevent doesn't mean now what it meant in 1611. Uh, if you prevent something from happening, you kind of get there ahead of time and stop it.

But the idea is I get there ahead of time. I anticipate, I saw it coming. And so I got there and was waiting for it when it happened.

And I, I prevented a fire because I was standing there with a fire extinguisher kind of thing. But the root meaning of prevent in 1611 was, was pretty close to what this word means. Um, and, uh, it's, it's, uh, kadam, which, which is Q D M and, but it's in the peel.

So it's a key Dem and then it's got a suffix. Um, but it means I anticipate, I prevent meant to forestall something. And so he's, he's anticipating the, uh, and it says morning, but this is not the word for morning.

Morning is Boker. Like you say, Boker Tov, even today in, in Israel, this is not Boker. This is, uh, Neshef, N E S H E F. And it means twilight.

That's what the Kof represents. It can either be morning twilight. If you look it up in Strong's, it says evening twilight or morning twilight.

It's between evening and morning. So this is the change from day to dark or from dark today. It's twilight.

It could be, uh, sunrise or sunset. But he says, when he says I rise before the dawning, what he basically says is I am anticipating or I'm forestalling the twilight. So hold that thought because it makes sense when he says I rise before the dawning of the morning.

And it's the easiest way to parse this, but I'm going to suggest something else. So hold on to these thoughts. So right now it says I confront or I forestall or I get in front of, or I, I, uh, go before I anticipate the twilight and cry for help.

And this is pretty straightforward here. This, uh, but this, this, uh, is another PL. So these are intensives.

This is really urgent in Hebrew. I'm really concerned about the twilight. I'm anticipating it.

I'm, I'm trying to, to cut it off or forestall it. It almost literally says, I'm trying to stop the twilight and I am intensively crying. This is a PL verb that means to shout.

This is not from Kara, Q A R A to cry out as you might expect. He, his Q verb here is, is Kadam up at the beginning to, to, to forestall or anticipate this. This is a different word.

And, uh, if, if you look this up in, in a Strong's or in a, in another Hebrew lexicon, uh, this is Shua. And the idea is to cry out for help. Um, and you find it in Job, uh, 19 seven.

Uh, I, I cry aloud. Job says, but there is no judgment. There's no justice.

Uh, he talks in Job 24, 12 about the wounded crying out at Job 29, 12. The poor cry out for help. And the, the orphan and the fatherless and so on.

Uh, Job 30 and verse 20, I cry out to you for help, but you do not answer. This is a very intensive. I mean, just look at the uses in Job and it's used innumerable times in Job.

So Shua or Shava, depending on if you want to use the German, you have to turn W's into V's because it can't say W. Um, but it's a PL. PL is the intensive stem in Hebrew. So I am looking at the twilight, getting there ahead of the twilight.

And I am crying out for help. And then he says in your word, I hope that's what it says in your, uh, in your new King James verse one 47. Uh, it says, I hope in your word.

But you remember when we covered Lamed and Lamed ahead of a verb ahead of a noun means two or four, it's a preposition and it means two or four. He says, I hope for your word. And the word order in Hebrew is for your word.

I hope so. Le Devar Ka for your word Devar is the verb. And it's also the noun that means your, your, your answer, what you're going to say, what you're going to do, your, your response, your verbal response here.

Devar can also mean issue. Uh, I have a matter to discuss. It's a matter of discussion.

It's a word. Let me have a, can we have a word? You know, can we talk about something? And then the last word in the verse is, uh, to wait for in the sense of expect. This is, you know, you almost think, well, I'm, I'm expecting the morning or something in the middle, but that's a different word.

What he's expecting. And this is another PAO. This whole verse is intensive.

I'm looking at the twilight with a lot of concern. I am crying out with a lot of concern and I have an expectation for your word intensively three PAOs all in the same verse. This is a big deal.

And that's verse one 47. Then you come to verse one 48. We're going to look at this and then

we'll take our break.

But in verse one 48, he says, my eyes are awake through the night watches that I may meditate on your word. You notice night is in italics there, but you remember we, we said that the word was cut down in verse one 47 meaning to confront, anticipate for stall. Very same word starts this first.

So I, my eyes watch for, this is actually watch for the night. My eyes. Uh, then you have the, what they translate here as the night watch, but night is sort of understood or implied.

It doesn't say night. This is just through the watches. It's just the periods of time, designated periods of time.

And then you had, and that's another PAO that starts this. I am, I am watching for, for stalling. My eyes are watching the watches, watching the periods of time.

And then you have, uh, to speak or complain or ponder or, uh, meditate upon to study even to sing about or speak about you, you make an issue out of something. And now you have in or on your word. And this is the other word.

Devar is, is words in the sense of addressing issues. This is Amar. This is what you speak or say.

Amar is verbalizing, uh, countless times in the old Testament. It's used, uh, answered and said, and you have this, this Amar that is used. So it's the same intensive verb in verse 147 and in verse 148.

So if you're going to translate it, I rise in verse 147. You'd have to say my eyes rise in 148 and that's not really the idea. This is intensive anticipation and concern.

He's concerned about the twilight and he's concerned about the periods of time that will follow the sun going down. It's dark and getting darker. I see it.

This is storm clouds on the horizon. This is the sun setting and, and darkness is going to prevail. So I'm, I'm here before the sun has even gone down.

I see that things are bad and are going to get worse. This is really the idea. It doesn't mean I'm losing sleep over this.

This is metaphorical for the opposition and the danger from people, the hostility and the, uh, harassment and the, the opposition. This is the darkness that is coming and he's metaphorical izing this. If I can coin a word and saying, Lord, I'm calling out to you intensively.

I see what's coming. There's already been a darkening and we're at twilight. This is the cove and the night watch is coming when there won't be any light at all.

I am looking at your statutes and your testimonies and hoping in your word, what are you

going to tell me? I am, I am ready to follow whatever the guidance is. I'm going to need that light and I'm going to need that strength in what's coming. That's the idea.

Now, uh, keep in mind and you can, if you have a few minutes during the break, remember our chiastic structure in each of these sections. So you've got three verses, which is a, B, C, and then the center, the fourth verse here, which is verse one 48. I want to meditate on study, ponder what you say.

I'm, I'm going to take this as the absolute most important thing that's at the center of this letter. Cove the answer to impending darkness. The answer to the, the doom and gloom that are about to descend and the warning music you begin to hear playing in the background.

The answer is your statutes, your testimonies, your word and notice one 47 and one 48 start with the same anticipation. The same. I want to get there and get it as soon as it's available.

This is like overnight shipping and I'm standing by the mailbox for the matter you are going to communicate and what you are going to say. Both translated word here. This is the answer.

Look to the Lord when darkness is settling in. Well, let's pause here and take our break. When we come back, we'll cover the last half of this section and then we're going to see how the race section is so complimentary and intertwined with this addressing many of the same things.

But if you've ever faced or are facing or think you will face opposition from people unwarranted hostility and unkindness and just friction and and pushback, this is your section. This is absolutely what to do and what God is going to do when we look to him. Let's pause here and take our break.