

## **Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time***

### **The Character of Scripture, Part 1**

Scripture: Psalm 19:7-9

Code: 80-250

In our time in the Word of God tonight, we are returning to the nineteenth Psalm and talking about the sufficiency and the authority of Scripture. Through the years we have taught the Bible as our little slogan at Grace To You goes, "Unleashing God's truth one verse at a time." We have gone through book after book after book. In fact, there is really only one book left in our study of the New Testament. I've basically taught verse by verse through the entire New Testament with the exception of the rest of Luke and the gospel of Mark. We have gone through verses in the Old Testament. We've gone through chapters in the Old Testament. We've gone through some books of the Old Testament. In fact, when I first came to Grace Church on Wednesday night we started through the Old Testament and I made it all the way to Psalm 73 before scheduling things changed on Wednesday night and we stopped at that point.

Why? Why do we do that? Why do we pay such close and intense attention to the Word of God? Why do we concern ourselves with the details, with the words, with the syntax, the meaning, the context? Why is it that we are so obsessed with the interpretation of Scripture?

Well the answer, of course, is it is the Word of God. It is the living Word of God. And by it God is known to us and the truth about God is known to us. And in the Word of God we find divine truth, absolutes. In the scientific world there are absolutes. There are fixed points. There are unchanging laws to which all things relate. Science is like biology or botany or physiology, or astronomy, even mathematics, principles of engineering. They all function on the premise that there are unalterable fixed dependable truths and realities.

And though we see that in the scientific world and we base our scientific lives on that, when we turn to the moral world we think we can live without any absolutes. We have decided that we live in a split universe where there is order, there is fixed principle in the physical realm, but absolute independence and self-direction in the spiritual world. What a terrible mistake that is. We think we can choose any ethical system, we can choose any moral system and somehow still remain at harmony with the rest of life. Of course that's wrong. Just as clearly as the Bible reveals that there is scientific or physical order in the world, so it reveals that there is moral order in the world built in by God that is fixed and when violated brings about tragic effects.

We know the principle of sowing and reaping in the material world, and it also operates in the spiritual world. People always ask me if AIDS is the judgment of God...of course it is in the same sense that

sclerosis of the liver is judgment because of consumption of alcohol or emphysema is a judgment because of a life of inhaling carcinogens. It's the law of sowing and reaping because there are fixed principles. If they are violated in the physical realm then consequences occur. God made a law called gravity. You may not believe in it, you may not like it, you may even be an atheist, but try jumping off a building and see which way you go. The law of gravity will go into effect no matter what you believe.

And that is true in the moral and spiritual realm as well. It doesn't matter what your moral beliefs are, what your value system is, what your ethical system is. It doesn't matter what you think. It doesn't matter what your view is. There is the truth in the moral world and it is the truth that God has authored and when you violate the moral laws, you catapult yourself into disaster, just as when you violate physical laws.

Why is it so shocking to us that there are absolute laws in the moral realm, the spiritual realm when we are basically building our lives all the time on their stability in the physical and material realm? God has established these moral laws, God has established these spiritual principles and He has revealed them in the Bible. It is the most incredible book, it is a supernatural book written by God through human authors who wrote down exactly what God wanted said. It is amazing in every way, but it's not just amazing and fascinating, its purpose is that we might know the laws of God, that we might know divine principles.

And the Bible attests to its own validity in a myriad of ways. People ask the question, "How do we know the Bible is really true?" Well the testimony of the Bible itself is very convincing. First of all, there is the Bible's testimony from experience. What is that? Well that is to say if you believe as the Bible tells you to believe, if you obey as the Bible tells you to obey, if you live as the Bible tells you to live you will experience the power of God. You will experience forgiveness, you will experience peace and joy, hope...everything Scripture indicates. You will experience answered prayer, assurance. Your own experience is an indicator that the Bible speaks truly. It is a valid indicator, but perhaps it has some weaknesses because other people have experiences in various other ways. But at least it is one way in which you can verify the Bible...by giving testimony to its truth as it works by the Holy Spirit in your life.

But secondly, we've been talking about science...even science is an indicator that the Bible is true because when the Bible speaks scientifically, it speaks truly. In the opening chapter of Genesis, as we know, the Bible gives the only really viable explanation of the existence of the universe and the Earth and all of creation. The Bible gives us the only reasonable understanding of the world the way it is through creation and catastrophe, the six-day creation and the world-wide flood described later in Genesis. The Bible affirms what science has discovered called "The First Law of Thermodynamics," which is the law of the conservation of mass and energy. Science knows that mass and energy is fixed, no more mass and no more energy can come into existence, nor can it go out of existence. And this is to say that everything was created at one time and remains the same. Science understands

that but the Bible also says that. Isaiah 40:26, "Behold who has created these things? He calls them all by name by the greatness of His might for He is strong in power, not one of them fails." That is the conservation of mass and energy, nothing in the end is diminished. It is all fixed. Nehemiah 9:6, "Thou hast made heaven and the earth and all things therein, the seas and all things therein, and Thou preservest them all." They are sustained. Ecclesiastes 1:10, Solomon said, "Is there anything of which it may be said, 'See, this is new?' It has already been from of old." Nothing is coming into existence, nothing is going out of existence. That is the first law of thermodynamics and that's exactly what the Bible says.

The Bible also affirms what science calls "The Second Law of Thermodynamics," the law of increasing disorder. Nothing comes into existence, nothing goes out of existence but everything continues in a continuum downward toward continuous disorder, disintegration. There's never a loss of mass, there's never a loss of energy, but its ability to produce or to function at the highest level breaks down and order moves toward disorder and all processes will ultimately cease and the universe will ultimately die.

Well the Bible says this. The Bible says this in Romans 8, it says the whole creation groans, the whole creation feels the impact of its fallenness. The whole creation is personified in Romans 8 as experiencing its own disintegration. The whole creation groans, the whole creation is subject to corruption. It suffers pain, etc.

The Bible talks about the science of hydrology, the science of water and its cycle. Water in the seas, drawn up into the clouds through the evaporation that the sun produces, the water evaporates, goes into the clouds, the clouds move across the land, out of the clouds comes the rain redepositing the water on the earth as rain and snow and hail and as the water comes down it moves into streams, the streams flow into rivers, the rivers go back into the sea. And that's the cycle, back into the sea, back into the evaporation, back across the land and so it goes. All of that is described in the Bible. That puzzled men until the seventeenth century, by the way. People believed in some kind of subterranean reservoirs from where the water was coming. Now we know it's evaporation, transportation, and precipitation. This is what's in Isaiah 55:10, this is what is in John 36:27 and 28, this is clearly described in Scripture.

You can look at the Bible from the standpoint of astronomy. The old ideas of the earth and the solar system were very strange. A flat earth, obviously, was the original idea. An earth just suspended in space without motion. Copernicus came along, 1473 to 1543, presented the idea that the earth was in motion. People were astounded. It was the seventeenth century when modern astronomy kind of began to grow and we began to realize that we were in an infinite universe. Isaiah 55:9 referred to the height of the heavens. Job 22:12 refers to the height of the stars. Jeremiah 31:37 says that they are limitless. There is old Jeremiah, the prophet of God, millennia before science ever concluded the vastness of the stars and even Jeremiah understood the reality because of the revelation of God.

Listen to what he wrote, from the Lord, "Thus says the Lord, if the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth searched out below, then I will also cast off all the offspring of Israel." Nobody can go into the depths of the earth and nobody could ever go to the end of the heavens...the vastness of the solar system cannot be measured.

The telescope was invented in the seventeenth century. That's when they began to understand that. Hippocrates...(maybe meant Hipparchus) before that said there were one thousand and twenty-two stars. Ptolemy said that's wrong, there's one thousand and fifty-six. Kepler said no, there's one thousand and fifty-five. Well Jeremiah knew two thousand years before those guys. Jeremiah understood the vastness of the universe because it was revealed to him by God. Jeremiah 33:22, "The host of heaven can't be counted. The stars are like the sand of the sea." Well there's a hundred billion we now know in our galaxy.

Job says, "The Lord hangs the earth on nothing." Job says, "The earth is turned like the clay to the seal." There was a...if you wanted to sign your signature, there was a piece of soft clay and they used to use a stylus to write in clay and you had a...like a cylinder, like a rolling pin, with raised letters for your signature and you rolled it across the soft clay like that to imprint your signature in it. And the Bible says the earth is turned like the clay to the seal, that is it rolls on an axis, hanging on nothing, Job 26:17. (Job 26:7) It is also called the circle of the earth. The word is klug(?), it means a sphere. Job, the oldest book in the Bible, speaks of the earth as a sphere.

The Bible also says God imparted weight to the wind. Nobody knew that before Galileo. When you look at the comments the Bible makes about science, they're pretty staggering. There is another science called isostasy, some of you have been in engineering know about isostasy. Isostasy is the study of the balance of the earth. It is a study of equilibrium, the depths of the sea, the height of the mountains, all of that weight of the earth is important so that the earth moves in an orderly and smooth fashion. If it rolled on its axis like a ball out of balance, we'd all be lurching every so often. But there's perfect balance. Isaiah 40 verse 12, "Who has measured the waters in the hallow of His hand, measure the heaven with the span and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? God alone," Isaiah 40. Fifteen hundred years before Christ Isaiah under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit talked about the balance of the earth, the science of isostasy.

Remember when people used to get sick they'd bleed them because they thought that helped? If they had only read Leviticus 17:11, "The life of the flesh is in the blood." Now we know if people get sick you give them blood...losing it is dangerous. They took it then, now we give.

Well, you could look at the Bible's prophecies as well as its scientific comments and you would find that a hundred and fifty years before He was born the Bible predicted there would be a man named Cyrus who would let the Jews be released from captivity to return and build Jerusalem again. And

that is in Isaiah 44:28. His name was given a hundred and fifty years before he was ever born. Ezekiel 26:27 and 28 the Bible predicts the destruction of the city of Tyre which took place to the very letter as it was described in that section of Scripture in great detail.

The Bible predicts also, Nahum chapter 1, the destruction of the city of Ninevah which was a massive fortified city, a huge, huge hundred-foot inner wall fifty feet thick, towers two hundred and some odd feet high, fifteen gates, seven miles in circumference, 150 foot moat, a double wall two thousand feet from the inner wall. I mean, it was an incredible fortification and yet the prophet said it would be destroyed, and it was. And I could go on and on about these things.

When you get in to the Bible there are some very remarkable things. You will find that the Bible is always accurate. Everything it says is accurate, absolutely accurate. Then you could also consider the miracles of the Bible. How do you explain them? How do you explain all the eye witnesses to the miracles?

And then, in my mind, the top indicator of the truthfulness of Scripture is Christ because no humans could ever invent Christ. You can look at all the holy books you want, you can look at all the religious literature you want in the world and you will never find any personhood, any personality, any leader, any guru, any ahmam(?), any anything or anyone who can even come close to Jesus Christ. He could never be the invention of men.

No matter how you look at the Bible, whatever you come across in reading of the Bible, all of the indications are there that this is a book written by God. Its power released in your life produces the experiences that it promises. Scientifically whenever it speaks it is absolutely accurate, long before science discovered those things the Bible revealed them. You can look at its prophecies, predicting things and they came to pass to the letter. You can look at its miracles, they're inexplicable apart from God. But most noticeably the Bible is about Jesus Christ. He's the theme of every book. He's the subject of Scripture. The Old Testament prepares for His coming, the New Testament records His coming and promises His return. And Christ is not possible as a human invention.

And so what we have in our hands is an amazing book. But let's go to where we need to go. I'm not here to prove the Bible is true, I can't do that. That's a work of the Holy Spirit through the Word. But I want to show you that whenever the Bible does speak prophetically, whenever it speaks scientifically, whenever it speaks experientially, whenever it speaks miraculously, when it speaks concerning Christ it speaks the truth and therefore that truth stands up to all true and honest examination.

What is most important for us is to see the power of the Word of God in our lives. We go back to where we started with that experience thing. While that may not be the singular best defense of Scripture, it is for us the most important thing. I'm glad to know that the Bible talks about the balance of the earth, I'm glad to know the Bible presents miracles, I'm glad to know the Bible has prophecies,

I'm glad to know the Bible presents Christ, but what I really want to know is what is the able to do in my life? That's what compels me. I want the Bible to be something more than I admire. As written by I want it to be what God intended it to be, the Word of life for me. And so for that we go back to Psalm 19, back to Psalm 19, so let's look at it.

This amazing chapter I have preached on many times around the world many, many places. Always this section of Scripture produces profound blessing. And I want you just to look particularly at verses 7 to 9 of Psalm 19. And as we saw last time in Psalm 19:7 to 9 we have six statements about the Bible, six statements about Scripture. "The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. The commandment of the Lord is pure, or clear, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever. The judgments of the Lord are true, they are righteous all together." Six statements about the Bible, but these six sum up the sufficiency of Scripture.

Everything we need to know is here. It's all here. Everything that the human heart longs for, you long for transformation, you long to be different than you are, the Word of God can totally transform your soul. You long for wisdom, you long for discernment, you long to be able to sort out the issues of life, the Bible is able to make you wise. You long for joy, for a settled happiness, for deep peace, the Bible rejoices the heart. You long to see in the dark and understand the dark issues of life, the Bible enlightens your eyes. You long for something that is enduring, something that is permanent, something that is trustworthy, the Bible endures forever. You long for something that is consummately right and righteous, that is the Word of God. All that you could ever want in life the Bible provides.

Now you notice in those six statements there are six titles for Scripture, as I told you last time, it's called the law, the testimony, the precepts, the commandment, the fear, the judgment. So the Lord...of the Lord...is used six times because He is the author, six titles. Then six characteristics...perfect, sure, right, clear, clean, true. Then six benefits...restores the soul, makes wise the simple, rejoices the heart, enlightens the eyes, endures forever, and produces or provides full comprehensive righteousness. This is a magnificent statement about the Scripture.

Now last time we looked at the first line, let's go back to verse 7, "The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul." And we went through that, I'll just mention it. The law of the Lord looks at the Bible as God's manual for human life. God who built man gave the manual for his maximum operation. It is the law by which man is to live. It is the moral law, the ethical law, the spiritual law by which man is to conduct himself. It is perfect, and I told you that word "perfect" means complete. It has the idea, of course, of perfect as opposed to imperfect, but more the idea of complete as opposed to incomplete. That is the Bible is complete, it is perfect in terms of providing everything that is necessary to know the law of God which produces the benefit of totally transforming the soul, nephesh, the inner person. This is an incredible statement in and of itself.

The Bible is so perfect, so comprehensive, so error free and complete as to totally transform the entire inner person. It is all you need for total transformation, conversion, regeneration, restoration, spiritual birth, sanctification, everything a person needs. The Word of God provides it all. It does the mighty work of total transformation. It is the Word of God that brings about regeneration. Remember we read 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 23, "We're born again through the Word." It is the Word of God that brings about sanctification. "Sanctify them through Thy truth," Jesus said, "Thy Word is truth." The Word is the agent of total transformation. It is the power of God to change people.

So if you want change in your life, the place you go is the Word of God. We compared that with Psalm 119 because Psalm 119 expands on Psalm 19 and it expands all of that and we read a number of verses in Psalm 119 last time that emphasize the power of Scripture to totally transform the whole person. That's why we preach the Word because it has the power to totally transform.

Let's look at the second one then. The second statement is in verse 7, one of my favorites. "The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." Testimony...what is that? Well, law looks at the Bible as divine instruction. Testimony looks at the Bible as divine witness. The Bible is God's own self-revelation. It is God's own testimony to who He is and what He requires in creed and conduct. It is God's own personal testimony to the truth. Consequently it is trustworthy, it is sure. When you open the Bible, God is speaking. It is God's testimony. I love that. It is the testimony of the Lord, and as such, He says, it is sure.

In a world of things you can't trust, here is one you can. The Bible's own claim is that it is unwaveringly and unmistakably trustworthy. It is reliable. Peter said in 2 Peter 1:19, he said, "I was on the mountain at the transfiguration and I saw Jesus Christ transfigured and I saw the majestic glory of Christ." And he immediately says, "But we have a more sure word." Experience is fine, Peter says, and I had the ultimate experience, I was there with James and John to see the transfiguration. I was there to see Moses and Elijah show up. It was an unimaginable experience to see the glory of God in Jesus Christ manifest so much so that they were knocked immediately into a coma. Some people would think that that's a greater experience than the Word...Peter says no, just the reverse is true, we have a more sure Word. A more sure Word than my testimony would be God's testimony, right? I might misunderstand my experience, I might misinterpret my experience. I might misinterpret a wonder and a miracle. The fact of the matter is I was asleep for most of it.

It reminds me of the apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians chapter 12, he says, "I know a man who was caught up to the third heaven," remember that? Well who was that? It was Paul. "I went to the third heaven." You say..."Wow, that...you went to the third heaven, you mean you went up to the heaven where God is?" The first heaven being the heaven of air we breathe, the second heaven being the celestial heaven. The third heaven being where God lives. Paul says, "Yeah, I went up there. I went up there." But he said, "I don't want to boast about it because it's not profitable...it's not profitable." I

mean, it doesn't have any profit. Why? Because it's only my experience and I don't know that I can even interpret it, in fact...he said...I can't even talk about it because I...I can't even tell you about it. Furthermore, it's not repeatable and you can't experience, so what value does it have to you? I'm not going to make an issue out of it, he said, I'm not going to boast about it.

Well Peter is saying essentially the same thing. Paul could have boasted. I mean, how many people do you know that have gone to the third heaven? That's enough to put you on TBN for a long time. (Laughter) Peter says, "Look, I was at the transfiguration, I saw the veil of Jesus' flesh pulled back and the glory of God manifest through Him, but I want to tell you, we have a more sure Word. And he goes on to say that the more sure Word is the Word of Scripture, that's the more sure Word...Scripture.

So here we find this second statement then, the testimony of the Lord is sure. My testimony is not. I may have had some spiritual experiences, you may have had some spiritual experiences, they're not trustworthy. I'm not sure I can even define them. I'm not sure I can even tell you what actually happened. I can only tell you what I felt or what I experienced but that's not a sure word. Paul says it's not helpful, and Peter says there's something far more sure than even a legitimate experience and that is the testimony of the Lord. So don't listen to my experience, listen to His Word.

And this sure Word...I love this, he says, "Makes the wise...makes the simple wise." To understand this you need only to know in the Hebrew language words which in Greek would be somewhat abstract, in Hebrew tend to be very concrete and the word for "simple," you know, in an abstract sense, the word for "simple" means somebody who lacks discretion, discernment, maturity, wisdom. Somebody...simple would be a synonym and it is often a synonym in the Proverbs for a "fool," somebody who is stupid, ignorant, uneducated, lacking in discernment, discrimination, wisdom. But the actual concrete root of that word is an open door. To them a simple-minded person had the door of their brain opened and everything came in and everything went out. That was the problem. They lacked discretion. They couldn't keep bad things out and they couldn't keep good things in.

You know, people say, "I'm open-minded." Well, a Jew would say, "Shut it. Bad stuff is coming in and good stuff is going out." You have a door on your house to discriminate, don't you? You have a door on your house to discriminate. That's the point of discrimination. And you even have a peep hole so you can discriminate. And you look through there and you decide who you want in and who you don't. That's the imagery.

A simple person couldn't make that value judgment. Naive, unexperienced, undiscerning, uninformed about the matters of life and the Bible, the revelation of God, can take the simple person who can't discriminate and can't discern and make that person wise. What a statement...chakam, it's a rich Hebrew word, means "skilled in the practical aspects of holy living." It's a big word. Wise again is not cognition, like in the Greek word for wisdom, sophia, it's not just a concept, it's not just mental,



it's...it's skill in aspects of holy living. The Hebrew has never separated behavior from thought. In fact the biggest fool of all was somebody who knew it and didn't live it. Wisdom in the Hebrew, the word *chakam*, means to master the art of living, to live in perfect accord with the knowledge of God. And God in the Scripture is always the source of *chakam*. It is the ability to make a right choice at the right moment in life and to conduct yourself with heavenly wisdom. It is the practical matter of living life in a godly way. It is practically putting the truths of the revealed Word of God into action. You want to have the ultimate wisdom? You're not going to find it in psychology, or philosophy, or sociology or any form of human wisdom because, as we remember in 1 Corinthians, Paul says, "By wisdom man knew not God and the wisdom of man with God is...what?...foolishness." Why do preachers go outside the Bible as if there was some spiritual wisdom somewhere else?

This is supported wonderfully, turn to Psalm 119, I just have to point these verses out that support this because they're repeated so often, it just reinforces it. In verse 27, David prays, "Make me understand the way of Thy precepts so I will meditate on my wonders." I want to understand, I want to be wise, I want to understand the way of Your precepts, I want to understand the path that Your principles direct me into. Verse 34, "Give me understanding in order that I may observe Thy law and keep it with all my heart." Always it is the knowledge of something with a view to conduct.

In verse 66, "Teach me good discernment and knowledge." In verse 98, "Thy commandments make me wiser than my enemies." Verse 99, "I have more insight than all my teachers, for Thy testimonies are my meditation." Verse 100, "I understand more than the aged because I have observed Thy precepts." He is saying basically...I am wiser than all my enemies, I have more insight than all my teachers, I understand more than the aged because I know the Word. Psalm 104, "From Thy precepts I get understanding," Psalm 119:104. Psalm 119:125, "I am Thy servant, give me understanding that I may know Thy testimonies."

Over to verse 1...I think it's 169, "Let my cry come before Thee, O Lord, give me understanding." And where am I going to find it? "According to Thy Word." And then 171, "Thou dost teach me Thy statutes."

That's all he wanted. He didn't say, "Help me to learn philosophy, help me to learn psychology, help me to draw wisdom all around." He just said, "Give me the Word, give me the Word, give me the Word." The Word of God is all you need to totally transform your whole inner person, that's the first principle.

The second principle is the Word of God is all you need to become skilled in all aspects of holy living. This is a sufficient Word, sufficient for all situations.

There's a third expression here in verse 8 that builds this tremendous strength of Scripture sufficiency into our minds, verse 8, "The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart." The precepts of the

Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.

Now this looks at Scripture as precepts. That's a word we hear today. The New King James, the old King James, I think, used the word "statutes." Basically it means doctrines, principles. The Bible is instruction for man's life. The Bible is God's own testimony. But the Bible is also principles, doctrines, truths, guidelines. And you can look at it in all those ways, it's a multi-faceted diamond, as we have said. And so you look at Scripture and what you're seeing is the doctrines that the Lord has given us and He says they are right...right means not so much right as opposed to wrong, but the Hebrew means they set out a right path because you're always not thinking about concepts but behavior. And so the word "right" used here isn't so much right as abstractly opposed to wrong, but a right path. The idea here is that we have doctrines, principles, truths in the Scriptures that lay out the path that we're to walk on. It shows us the true path. We're not left without a guide, without knowing how to live our lives. We don't wander around in a fog of human opinion. We have a true word from God and when we walk in that path that that word lays out, you notice what the benefit is, it rejoices the heart.

The Word is not only a lamp unto our feet that lights the path, the Word is the path. And when you walk in that path, it rejoices your heart. Well what is that saying? Well, you remember what John said, "These things I write unto you, little children, that your joy may be full." What he was saying is...I'm writing you this theology, I'm telling you these spiritual truths because if you know them and you live them, you will experience joy. Jesus said, "Happy is the man who hears My Word and does it."

You want real joy, you want real happiness? Do the Word of God. Jeremiah preached and nobody listened, but in Jeremiah 15:16 he said, "Thy words were found and I did eat them and Thy Word was in me, the joy and rejoicing of my heart." It was almost a soliloquy, it was almost a pensive solo. Nobody listened to Jeremiah, absolutely nobody. Eventually they were so sick of hearing him they threw him in a pit. But he said this, "I heard, Thy words were found and I did take them in and they were in my heart the joy and rejoicing of my own heart."

Where are you going to find joy? Where are you going to find deep peace, satisfaction? By walking in the path that the Scripture lays out. That is a basic principle. You don't need the voices of angels, you don't need to listen for God to talk to you some way, you don't need some supernatural experience, you don't need a vision, you don't need a miracle to find joy, you don't need some mystical science of the mind by...in order to be led by God in to some fullness of life. If you are depressed, if you are anxious, if you are fearful, if you are doubting, if you are joyless, if you are unhappy, if you are miserable, then the answer to your problem is to get back in the path and walk in obedience to the revealed Word of God and the benefit is your heart will rejoice. All your true pleasure and all your true delight and all your true joy comes from following the Word of God.

I hope this is accumulating in your mind. If you ever ask the question...why am I always teaching the Word of God? Because it is the Word of God alone that can totally transform the whole person. It is

the Word of God alone that can make you skilled in all aspects of holy living. It is the Word of God alone that can bring true and lasting joy to your heart. So why would I do anything else?

And again, going to Psalm 119 is an exercise we have to engage in because there in that long Psalm which I will never go through verse by verse, so we'll just borrow bits and pieces as we go, but in that long Psalm, verse 14, we find the same affirmation. "I have rejoiced in the way of Thy testimonies." David says...I find all my joy in Your testimony...I find joy in Your testimonies as much as all riches. If I had everything the world had to offer, it would not exceed the joy I have in Your truth, Your Word.

Over in verse 54 of Psalm 119, and every verse, by the way, all 176 with the exception of the last one, all 175 of these verses extol the virtue of Scripture...either called statutes, commandments, precepts, word, whatever. But it's every verse is about Scripture and in verse 54, "Thy statutes, the Scripture, are my songs in the house of my pilgrimage." I just go through life singing the Word of God. Why? Because it's my joy.

In verse 76, "O may Thy loving-kindness comfort me according to Thy Word to Thy servant." When I need comfort, I go to the Word and I find in the Word that You are a God of loving-kindness, a God of compassion, that sums up compassion, grace, mercy, tenderness, kindness. I know You to be such a God. I find it in the Word and I'm comforted by that.

Verse 111, "I have inherited Thy testimonies forever for they are the joy of my heart." Verse 114, "You are my hiding place and my shield. I wait for Your Word. When I feel like I'm being assaulted and attacked, I reach out for Your Word." There is the source of true joy.

What does the Bible provide? Total transformation of the whole person in regeneration and sanctification. What does it provide? It provides wisdom, so that one can become skilled in all aspects of holy living. What does the Bible provide? Joy, all joy, consummate joy, complete joy and lasting joy.

Number four, the fourth of these statements is the second one in verse 8, "The commandment of the Lord is clear, or pure, enlightening the eyes." We saw that Scripture can be viewed as divine instruction. Scripture can be viewed as God's own testimony and it is. Scripture can be viewed as doctrines, principles, truths which lay out the guidelines for life. And Scripture can also be viewed as commandments, divine decrees. That is, Scripture comes not to make suggestions to us, but it comes as a mandate, it comes authoritative, it comes binding, it comes non-optional. These are divine decrees from God. This is not just God saying this is a good way to go, this is God saying...you better go this way or you'll be damned forever. Disobedient means judgment and obedience means reward.

And so, when you're looking at the Bible you're looking at commandments...absolute, authoritative commandments in the Bible. And it says here, looking at the characteristics, it is pure. Actually a

better translation of this word is clear, lucid. You find it translated that way other places, for example I think it's Song of Solomon chapter 6 verse 10 or so, it's translated clear. It means easy to see. The idea here is that Scripture that takes the things that are hard to understand and makes them easy to understand. It enlightens all the darkness. It makes the things that you can't understand understandable. And that has to do with the mysteries of life. There are so many people who have no clue where we came from. Can you imagine just believing that we were protoplasm waiting to become manure that came about as a result of a cosmic accident? There's no rhyme or reason for anything. Or can you just imagine not knowing where we came from, why we're here or where we're going? Can you imagine transporting that kind of concept into the struggles of life, you could be an angry person a lot.

I remember being in my office many years ago here and somebody came banging on my door, a young person banging on the door. "Come, come quickly, come quickly." And I ran down the street right here on Roscoe Boulevard and into a house and a mother had in her arms a little baby a couple of months old, blue and dead and wanted me to try to do something to get life back into the baby. And here was a mother with no clue what was going on, no understanding whatsoever. And God, if there was a God, looked to her like the worst person imaginable...what in the world was God like who would put this precious little life in my arms and then rip it away from me? What kind of God does that? I've seen that a lot. I've seen mothers go into the casket and take a dead baby up out as if they could somehow put life back in. I've seen...done funerals, I remember some in the rain one time with kids, teen-aged kids who had been killed because of gun shot in a drug activities, mothers weeping...what's going on, how am I to understand this?

And life is full of those dark realities. That's why people have so much fear because they can't sort out why things happen and they live in fear. It's just very dark. And then they try to fill it with all kinds of experience and happy things and you take some drugs, if you need to, some tranquilizers, or drink a lot if you get too much fear. And we live in a pretty comfortable life where you can sort of absorb yourself in materialism. You know, I read that people actually overeat because they're afraid. It somehow calms their anxieties, or people shop to sort of...sort of crush or quash their anxieties. And then, of course, when they get the bill for overdoing it on their credit card, they have different kinds of anxiety so solve those they go shop more. I think when you look at death, that's the real dark, dark reality. Where did we come from? Why are we here? And why is life so painful? How do these little ones come into our lives and either they're snatched away or they're killed in a car accident or they grow up to be rebellious teen-agers, drug addicts, criminals, my husband leaves me and I can't support my family, etc., etc., etc.? I mean life is just full of so much pain and people cannot sort it out.

But the Bible is clear. I understand why there's trouble in the world, don't you? I understand that. I understand why there's death in the world. I understand what happens when a little baby dies. I understand the force of sin in the world. I also understand the mercy and grace of God that takes the little one to heaven. I see those things.

I often tell the story when I'm teaching this chapter about John and Nora Romanowski who were missionaries that our church supported some years back and they were missionaries in Brigham City, Utah. It's a tough place to be a missionary and trying to reach Mormons. John was pastor of Brigham City Bible Church and that's an interesting name for a Bible church, isn't it? Brigham City Bible Church. Anyway, they had two daughters and a son, a son named Kevin and two beautiful daughters who were in their late teen-aged years and they came down here one summer for their family vacation. They had wanted to bring their daughters down, one daughter they were enrolling in the Master's College who was going to start school a month or so after their family vacation, after hard, hard duty up in Utah. They welcomed the opportunity to drive down here and bring their family. But they were inveterate missionaries so they managed to bring two unconverted foreign exchange students with them to evangelize them on their vacation. So there were two boys from Italy with them.

They went out to the college, they registered their beautiful oldest daughter in school on Saturday. They left the college and on that same Saturday they drove along the road there, they came to Sierra Highway and for reasons that I don't understand, John pulled his car out into the intersection at Sierra and Placerita Canyon without looking and a truck was coming down the hill going about 60 miles an hour full force, hit the car. The two daughters were in the back of...like a van, catapulted out the rear, dead instantly. The car was hit behind their seat so that they were not severely injured, John and Nora weren't but everything was just devastated and the three boys were so severely injured that they were all three in Intensive Care. The shoes flew off John and Nora, their glasses were shattered, they were battered and bruised and there they are at the height of a wonderful time of vacation. They had come to go to Grace Church to be refreshed. And sitting in the middle of an intersection with a holocaust, kids all over the street.

You could ask the question...this is a missionary, this is somebody who gave his life to serve the Mormons...you know, God how are You going to let this happen? They came down here for some rest after faithful service, how can this be? I mean, my son Mark happened to be coming along and he saw this and he called me, and as soon as I could I got to John and I'll never forget the conversation. I said to him, "I don't know what to say to you, John, I can't even...I can't even fathom what this is like." And for some reason I just said something like, "What were you thinking?" I'll never forget his answer, he said, well he said, "My first thought is maybe this is a dream but I know that's not true." And he said, "John, my second thought is this, isn't God gracious?" He said, "Isn't God gracious that He took my two daughters to heaven that loved Christ and spared those two unconverted boys?" I'll tell you, that's seeing very clearly at a very dark time. He understood the realities of eternity. And then he said, "You know, I wanted my girls to have a big church experience, I just didn't think it would be the church triumphant in heaven." And then he said, "I wanted them to hear a big choir, I just didn't think it would be the angels." Boy, what clarity, huh?

He stood in this pulpit along with his wife cause they were here for weeks while the boys recovered and gave his testimony here. And it was a testimony of the grace of God. You know, the Old Testament, and particularly in the Proverbs and the Psalms says, "I have hope in Thy Word." How is it that he understood what was going on? How is it that he understood that the death of his daughters catapulted them into the presence of Jesus Christ? He understood that because of the Scripture, didn't he? And so you see what the verse says, the commandment of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eyes.

In contrast to the muddled, muddled musings of men who are absolutely blind, we see the truth of life and death and time and eternity. This is what Romans 15:4 calls the comfort of the Scriptures.

We had a funeral service here yesterday for little Cindy Lee. You all, most all of you, saw little Cindy, she is a little tiny Chinese girl who signed in the deaf choir when we had them up here...little Cindy. Well, she was quite a remarkable little lady. She was 38 when she died, isn't that right, Patricia, 38, I think. Her life began when she was placed on the doorstep of a nun in China and she was wrapped in newspaper. Somebody didn't want her, so they just dumped this little one on the doorstep of a nun. Well through God's providence, a Chinese family in San Francisco adopted her, she came here. Because she was completely deaf, she decided to come to Cal State Northridge for the deaf program and there the Lord reached down and took her life and made her His own and she was saved. She was part of our church. Right up to the very end her testimony was absolutely glorious. She wanted to see Patricia and I, she was dying of cancer, and we went over to see her and she sat down...it was kind of fun when you sit down with somebody who has to go through an interpreter, you've got to get all the right angles, and she had a whole bunch of questions and they were all about heaven. She sort of thought I maybe had been there, I have really limited information about heaven. But she went through all this listing of questions about heaven. You know, she was going on the vacation of her life and she wanted me to sort of develop a brochure, you know, of what, you know, pictures of your mansion, the bedroom, you know, the scenery. And I did the best I could but, you know, the Bible says, "Eye hasn't seen nor has ear heard, nor has it entered into the hearts of man the things that God has prepared for them that love Him," right? So I'm limited to the Scriptures so I just tried to tell her what the Scripture was like.

She was really anxious to go. She prepared not only her own heart but everybody around her to enter into the joy of her Lord. How different is that from the way people who don't know the Scriptures and don't know Christ face death? That's why Proverbs 6:23 says that the Scripture is a lamp and its teaching is light. It just turns the light on in the darkest places.

I don't want to have to turn to worldly wisdom to understand the dark things. There isn't anybody who has the knowledge of things never seen, except the unseen God. And He's the one who reveals everything. In Psalm 119 again and we're going to do this at every one of these points and we'll just stop with this one, Psalm 119 again the same testimony is given over and over that there is light in

the darkness through the Scripture. Look at verse 52, "I have remembered Thy ordinances from of old, O Lord, and comfort myself." Whenever he went through a dark place, the psalmist turned to the truth. Verse 59 he says, "I considered my ways, I looked at the direction I was going and I turned my feet to Thy testimonies." Verse 81, "My soul languishes for Thy salvation. I wait for Thy Word." He says, "My eyes fail with the longing for Thy Word, while I say, 'When will Thou comfort me?'" Whenever he got in a situation that was dark, he longed for the truth that would comfort him. He became like a wineskin in the smoke. Verse 83, "And again he turned to the Scripture, to the statutes of God."

"The arrogant...verse 85...have dug pits for me, men who are not in accord with Your Word and all Your commandments are faithful. They have persecuted me with a lie, help me. They have almost destroyed me on earth, but as for me, I didn't forsake your precepts." Whenever he got into the deepest, darkest places, he turned to the truth of God. Verse 92, "If Thy law had not been my light, I would have perished in my affliction." I never could have endured the dark things of life if I hadn't had Your truth. Verse 105, "Your Word is a lamp to my feet. Your Word is a light to my path." Verse 130, "The unfolding of Your words gives light." One forty, "Your Word is very clear, very pure, therefore Your servant loves it."

I mean, you just...everything is clear from the Word of God, everything...everything. All the light of spiritual life is found in the Word of God. The Word is sufficient for total transformation, it's sufficient to bring about salvation, sanctification, totally transforming you into the very image of Christ. And the Word of God is sufficient for wisdom, skill in all aspects of holy living. The Word of God provides all that you need for complete, consummate, and constant joy. And the Word is the light that makes the darkness disappear.

This is why we teach the Word. It does everything we need done. You want to be totally transformed? You know people, many people, wish their life was different. The Word of God will totally transform your life. You want to be skilled in all aspects of living? The Word of God provides the instruction for that. You want to know true and lasting and abiding and deep and profound and unshakable joy? The Word of God will show you the path and when you walk in it you'll experience that. Do you want to see clearly the unseen things, the mysteries of life, the dark things? You want the light to be shed abroad in the dark places so that everything becomes crystal clear? The Word of God does that.

This is the Scripture's own testimony in this magnificent concise portion. Well, there is more to come in verse 9 and then the rest of the chapter which we'll look at next time. Let's bow in prayer.

We desire to say thank You, Father, for Your Word and that seems so meager. It is everything to us, everything. We have been regenerated by the Word. We are being sanctified by the Word. We are being edified, built up, made wise, skilled in all areas of living by the Word. We are given joy through the Word and everything becomes clear to us. What an amazing book this is. How distinctively does it

commend itself to us as the living and abiding Word of God. There is no other book that can even come close, this alone is Your revelation. And again, we say we know You only wrote one book, the Bible, and in it You said everything you needed to say to us. You provided all we need. We thank You for this complete Word. And now the responsibility is ours to study it and to live it and obey it and honor it and fight for it and proclaim it faithfully, and may that be our true prayer in Your Son's name who is the living Word. Amen.

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