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

The Character of Scripture, Part 2
Scripture: Psalm 19:9-14
Code: 80-251

In the process of writing a book, I said I was going to stop writing books because there are too many books and there continues to be a need and requests for writing a book, and so I put together a book which is going to be called Why One Way?. It's about an exclusive gospel in an inclusive time. It's about a narrow gospel in a tolerant day, that kind of thing. And it was just interesting, Phil Johnson was a bit upset the other day and he said to me, he got a message from the lady who was editing it for the publisher and she called to say that it's really not good to use anything more than a two-syllable word in a book if you expect it to reach the people. And Phil reminded her that syllable is more than a two-syllable word. She said, "Confusing words like evangelical..."

You know, we chuckle at something like that and there's a certain amount of humor in it but on the other hand, the severe dumbing down of evangelicalism is a great tragedy. I can't write books with only two-syllable words. I don't want to condescend to people as if they're incapable of grasping great truth. God didn't write a book with two-syllable words. The Bible is profound and the objective that I have is not to dumb down the truth of God, but to lift up the people of God to an understanding of its glorious truths. So we are not interested in books that are written to keep people at a low level of comprehension, or to keep things insufficiently simple. I say insufficiently in that they are insufficient to help them to understand great truth.

The Word of God is not a book with just two-syllable words, it is not a simple book. It is a not a dumbed-down version of the mind of God. It is high and deep and broad and wide, it is profound, more profound than any book ever written. It is comprehensive. It is sweeping. It takes us deep into the heart of man, it takes us high into the heavens of God and everything in between.

And, of course, we love the Word of God and I'm so grateful for our church because you have such an understanding of the Word of God that it is not necessary for me to dumb it down for you. I hope that I can make it clear and simple, but at the same time profound.

When somebody confesses that evangelicalism has to be dealt with in no more than two-syllable words, that is a confession to me that people do not understand the deep things of God. It isn't that the deep things of God can't be related in two-syllable words, but it's simply a statement that indicates people aren't interested in anything that is complex, or complicated, or profound, or mentally challenging. And that tells me that people are biblically illiterate. That's exactly what Paul was saying in 1 Corinthians 3, "I can't write unto you as unto mature, I can only write unto you as unto babes."

I'm so grateful that we're not like that here, that you have a desire to understand the great truths of Scripture, no matter how many syllables they come in.

To be biblically illiterate is the greatest lack of all because Scripture is God's only book and provides for us everything we need for spiritual sufficiency. And it's tragic to hear from even a Christian publisher the admission that the evangelical world can't handle anything of any substance. And I understand that that's true, that's why they buy ten million Prayer of Jabezbooks which essentially says absolutely nothing about anything, least of all about prayer.

We have in the Word of God everything we need and therefore we ought to do all we can to plunge the depths of everything that's there. Second Corinthians 3:5 says, "Our sufficiency is from God," that's a basic truth. All of our sufficiency is from God. Everything pertaining to life and godliness comes from Him. He is the one who provides the grace, 2 Corinthians 9 says, so that we have all sufficiency in all things, so that we are enriched in everything to all bountifulness. Everything comes from God. In the words of James, "Every good and perfect gift comes down from Him who is the Father of lights in whom there is no variation or shadow of turning." Everything comes from God and the understanding of everything that God gives is in the Scripture. That's why Micah the prophet said, "Do not My words do good to him that walks uprightly?" All God's goodness and all God's truth, all the explanation of God's power and blessing and intention for us, all that relates to the gospel, all that relates to redemptive history, all that relates to justification, sanctification and glorification, all that relates to everything that God has for us comes to us through Scripture. And then its truth is energized in us by the Holy Spirit and worked out by our obedience. But the Word of God, then, is the source of sufficiency.

Paul again said to the Corinthians that the Spirit of God reveals to us the truth not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches, 1 Corinthians 2:13. "And by that we can judge and appraise and evaluate all things." That is a great statement, 1 Corinthians 2:15. It is by the teaching of the Spirit of God in Scripture that we're able to judge, appraise and evaluate all things because...as the next verse says, 1 Corinthians 2:16, "We have in the Scripture the mind of Christ."

Everything you need to know about how God thinks, what God expects, what God desires, what God wills, what God will do, everything God desires you to know about that is revealed in Scripture. And when you know the Scripture, you have the mind of Christ and therefore you are able to evaluate everything, to appraise everything, to judge everything. It is impossible to be more sufficient than to think the way God thinks, the way Christ thinks. It is impossible to be more sufficient than to have the mind of Christ brought by the Word of God. In Mark 12:24 Jesus affirmed that to know the Scriptures was to experience the power of God...to know the Scripture is to experience the power of God. The power of God to deal with every issue in life comes from the Word energized by the Spirit. It is the Word that is alive and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword. And by the Word, Hebrews 4:13 says, "All things are laid open, laid bare." The Word of God alone then gives us the mind of

Christ, gives us the truth we need to judge, appraise, assess, evaluate everything. It is, as James called it, the perfect law and he said, "Whoever follows it shall be blessed."

So, you know, it is a sad thing when people within the framework of Christianity are cheated from the glorious realities of the Word of God. Paul said, "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly." I think he had in mind more than just two-syllable words. "Let it dwell in you profoundly, deeply, in a penetrating way." "Like a newborn baby," Peter says, "desires milk, you should desire the Word because by it you will grow." Peter in his second epistle says, "According as God's divine power has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him." Everything pertaining to life and godliness comes through your mind, it comes by way of knowledge and the source of that knowledge is a single book, the Bible. All the knowledge of the Lord that you need to be sufficient comes to you through the Word of God. That's why Paul in Acts 20 and verse 32 said, "I commend you to God and to the Word of His grace which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all who are sanctified." All you need is the Word, I commend you to that one book and it is able to build you up and it will show you what your eternal inheritance is. And it will even gain that inheritance for you because it sanctifies you and by your sanctifying life you are therefore gaining a greater eternal glory. So we need to be what the apostle Paul called in Colossians, "rooted and built up and established in the faith as we have been taught."

The Word of God taught to us, energized in us by the Spirit of God gives us then the mind of Christ, the ability to evaluate everything and anything. It gains for us sanctification which increases our eternal reward. So Paul says to the Colossians, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and empty deceit after the tradition of men, the rudiments of the world and not after Christ because you are complete in Him." You don't need any worldly philosophy or psychology or anything else. You don't need any traditions. You don't need the ABC's of human thought and ideologies. All you need is the truth of Christ and in Him you are complete.

I love 1 Thessalonians 2:13. It says, "When you received the Word of God which you heard from us, you received it not as the word of men but as it is in truth, the Word of God which also performs its work in you who believe." This is the work of the Word...the work of the Word.

And that's why we do what we do. We've been doing a little bit of a series here on why we preach the Bible, why we systematically, expositorially, exegetically go through passage after passage after passage. And I'm in these few weeks together showing you that this is the only source of divine truth. I've told you and I say it again, God only wrote one book with 66 parts, then He said in that one book all that He wanted us to know and all that is necessary for our spiritual sufficiency.

Now that's a general look at the subject. Turn with me to Psalm 19. We are kind of working our way through Psalm 19. We'll finish it up a little tonight. And in Psalm 19 we are noticing in particular verses 7 to 9 where you have six statements about the Scripture. This is the Bible's own testimony to

its sufficiency.

And there are six statements; two of them in verse 7, two in verse 8, and two in verse 9. And you'll notice that they're parallel statements, six titles for Scripture, six characteristics of Scripture, six benefits of Scripture. Each of the sentences is structured the same way.

First of all, just look at the titles for Scripture. It is called the law of the Lord, the testimony of the Lord, the precepts of the Lord, the commandment of the Lord, the fear of the Lord and the judgments of the Lord. Six titles, Scripture is law, it is testimony, it is precepts, or statutes, it is commandment and it is fear...and I'll explain that in a moment...and it is judgments. That's looking at the Scripture from its different facets.

Then there are six characteristics of Scripture, again emphasizing its sufficiency. It is perfect, it is sure, it is right, it is pure or clear, it is clean and it is true. Perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, true.

Then there are six benefits of Scripture. It restores the soul. It makes wise the simple. It rejoices the heart. It enlightens the eyes. It endures forever. And it says it produces comprehensive righteousness, it is righteous all together, the end of verse 9.

So here you have six statements that sweep up the whole issue of the sufficiency of Scripture, the magnitude of Scripture sufficiency reduced to six statements. By the way, each time you have the phrase "of the Lord...of the Lord...of the Lord...of the Lord...of the Lord...of the Lord," just so there's no question about who wrote the Bible. It is from the Lord.

Now we remember, don't we, that the law of the Lord, the first statement we looked at, the law of the Lord used Scripture as God's law for man's life, divine instruction, divine teaching. And that is true of the Scripture. It is God's law for man's life. It is perfect, that means it is complete, not only is it perfect as opposed to imperfect but it is perfect, more importantly, as opposed to incomplete. It is perfect therefore it can restore the soul. I told you the soul is the inner person. Restore means to transform. So the statement means the Scripture is so comprehensive and perfect as to be able to totally transform the whole inner person. That is to say it can justify, it can bring about the new birth. As Peter puts it, "We are born again by the Word of God, incorruptible seed."

The second statement that we looked at is also in verse 7, the testimony of the Lord and that views the Scripture not as divine instruction or divine law for man's conduct, that views the Scripture as God's own self-disclosure. It is God's personal testimony. It is God testifying of Himself, of His glory, of His plan, of His purpose, of His will. It is that, too, as well as instruction for man.

And it is sure, that is to say it is trustworthy, unwavering, unmistakable, reliable. In a world of unreliable things it is absolutely sure and trustworthy, unwavering in its reliability. And it also, by

virtue of that, takes simple people, simple means, undiscerning, undiscriminating, ignorant, naive, and makes that person wise, chakamin Hebrew, skilled in all aspects of holy living.

So the Word of God is the source of truth that can totally transform the whole inner person. That's regeneration, that's salvation. The Word of God also is reliable so that it can take a simple person, undeserving, naive, without knowledge, without wisdom, without understanding and make that person skilled in all matters of holy living. Therein lies its sanctifying power. It has the power then to regenerate. It has also the power to sanctify, to bring a person to full, mature sanctification in the understanding and application of divine wisdom.

Then in verse 8 we saw the third statement, the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. Precepts are statutes or doctrines, or guidelines, or principles, truths. And it is truths that are right, and the idea of the word "right," as we saw, is not so much right as opposed to wrong, but they lay a right path. They establish a right direction. And when you walk in the path that the Scripture establishes, the result is rejoicing the heart. True joy, we saw, comes from obeying the Word. True joy, true happiness, true satisfaction comes from walking in obedience to the Word of God.

And the fourth statement, this is where we ended last time, is that the Word of God is also commandment, the commandment of the Lord, divine decrees that are authoritative, binding, not optional and demand obedience. The Scripture then, called here commandment, is clear. The word rather than "pure" is the word "clear," lucid, makes things easy to see. It enlightens the eyes, contrast to the muddled, muddy unclear dark musings of men who are blind in their sin, the Word of God allows us to see the truth, the dark things, the things the world can never understand. It brings to our hearts light, makes everything clear. Proverbs 6:23, "The commandment is a lamp and the teaching of Scripture is light."

So we looked then at those four statements. Two more remain for us in verse 9. When we talk about the sufficiency of Scripture we say then that it is sufficient for salvation. It is sufficient for sanctification. It is sufficient to produce lasting joy. And it is sufficient to bring a clear understanding of things not otherwise understood. That is one of the tasks of the preacher when something happens, whether...you know this through the years, generally I teach through books and teach through books and then we have an earthquake so I do a series on what's a biblical view of the earthquake, or we have a war in the gulf, a few years ago, and I did a three-part series on understanding the war in the gulf. When the terrorist attacks hit, I did a message on Terrorism, Jihad and the Bible, giving a perspective on that. And that's right back to 1 Corinthians 2:15, because when you know the Scripture you can judge and evaluate and appraise all things in the light of it, things that are otherwise not easily understood.

I was meeting with a force of sales people who are going to distribute that book, and I mentioned this to some of you, that I was explaining to them the intent of the book and these are Christian people

who love the Lord and serve Him, and they were quick to say, "We had no idea of any of this, we didn't understand it." Well the reason is no one had brought the light of the Word of God into the darkness of those issues.

All right, let's go to number nine in this passage, verse number 9. There are two other statements I want to address. Verse 9, the fear of the Lord. Now what is that about? That doesn't seem to be a very consistent title with the others. The Bible is law, testimony, precepts, commandment, but what is this fear? Well, what that simply means is the Bible a manual on worship. The Bible is the source of all the information we need on worshiping God. The word "fear" can mean awe, reverence, wonder, respect, honor, but it sums up in divine worship. T he Bible is the manual on worship. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, Proverbs 9:10, all of our obedience, all of our honor to the Lord, all of that is part of fearing Him, holding Him in awe. Scripture then instructs us on how to worship, it tells us how to worship God, it tells us about God, the God we worship. It tells us how He wants to be worshiped. So when you need to know how to worship, you go to God. Even in a church when you want instruction on how to worship, you go to the Word of God. The Word tells us who God is. It tells us how He wants us to worship Him.

So, we have not only divine instruction for man's life, that is in the Bible, we have God's self-disclosure and revelation, His own testimony, we have doctrines and principles that lay out the path of life, we have commandments of the Lord, very clear statements of God that make everything clear to us that otherwise is dark. But we also have a manual on worship. He says, verse 9, "That is clean, that is clean."

What does that mean? Without error, without corruption, without evil. The root tahorof this word "clean" has the idea of the absence of impurity, the absence of anything that defiles, the absence of any imperfection, the absence of any filthiness. It is to say that it is unsullied, unstained, pristine. Psalm 12:6 puts it this way, "The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver tested in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times." it is hallowed, holy, separate. So that when you turn to the Word of God, you're turning to something that is flawless and consequently you notice at the end of the first line of verse 9, it endures forever...it endures forever. It cannot die for it is pure. First Peter 1:23, "It is the living and abiding Word of God," Peter says, "that is imperishable." It is imperishable. It is the lasting thing. It never needs to be edited, it never needs to be updated, it never needs to be refined. It is not inadequate, it doesn't have errors, it doesn't have short-comings that somehow need to be corrected. The Bible doesn't need to be bolstered. It is an eternal Word and it will dwell eternally in the glory of the eternal state, unchanged. God's living Word will never pass away. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but...what?...My Word will never pass away."

So what you have in the Bible then is a source of divine truth that for every culture, in every age is relevant...relevant. Certainly you've lived long enough and been exposed to enough history, the history of redemption, the history of God's work in God's people to know that throughout the centuries

people have been reading and been being saved and sanctified, instructed, brought joy, been enlightened by the same Word that you and I read. That's one of the amazing things. I've been a lot of places in the world and I can hear still in my memory the singing of, "What a friend we have in Jesus," in a little town called Colta. Colta is way high in the Andes. It was being...the tune was being sung, the words were the words of a tribe of Indian people living at the tips of the Andes. Patricia and I were down there visiting and I remember it was a strange society of primitive people and yet there they gathered in a little building and sang, "What a friend we have in Jesus." And they were taught and brought to salvation and to sanctification by the very same truth that God used in my life. I've seen it all over the world. I've seen it in the most remote parts of the world and the most varied cultures of the world that is so through all of human history, the Word of God endures.

I remember one time, and I don't normally like to get into debates, but I was invited to debate Troy Perry(?) who is the head of the Metropolitan Community Church, the homosexual church. He calls himself a Christian. And so I was asked if I would come down under the auspices of Decision Magazine, the Billy Graham organization, and debate him face to face. Now there was another young man there who was a homosexual graduate of Fuller Seminary who also took that side and they wanted to debate me on the fact that a homosexual can be a practicing homosexual and also a true believer in Jesus Christ.

And so, I thought that was an interesting debate. I was a little concerned about hostility that might be generated, so I took one of the...at that time...Los Angeles Rams lineman with me whom I knew, who was about six foot three and weighed about 280 pounds, just in case because there's a tremendous amount of volatility in that community we don't need to go into.

But anyway, we sat down to talk about this and this was the basic argument that they threw out, they said, "The Bible is a good book, we like it. But it is psychologically and sociologically unsophisticated and antiquated. The Bible is a primitive book, it was written in a primitive time and it reflects the low level of social understanding and the lack of sophistication in the matters of tolerance and so it reflects all the prejudices of its era. And humanity has come so far from that that we now have to recognize the lack of sophistication in the Scripture, we have to understand its primitive biases because it did not have the benefit of modern understanding."

That was their argument. And, you know, I really didn't want to argue too much about that, but I said, "You then are sitting in judgment on the Word of God? You're going to stand in the face of God and tell Him His book is unsophisticated and antiquated and out-dated? The living and abiding Word of God that shall never perish?"

I never will forget that. The Bible is just unsophisticated and antiquated and out of date. You mean, the Bible that is the Bible that God wrote which is clean and endures how long? Forever? Are we to believe that this Word of God which is eternally pure and powerful is all of a sudden in our day bound

to have inadequacies, errors and short-comings that needs the corrections and additions of men? Are we to believe that it needs the bolstering of those who point out those inadequacies and speak to some new understanding of man that God never had? Are we to believe that it doesn't rightly assess man? Are we to believe that it cannot do its pure work?

We're not to believe that. And the echo of this great statement in Psalm 19 again is found in Psalm 119. Now each time I've taken you over to Psalm 119 because I want you to know that these things are all over here repeated numbers of times. Psalm 119:2, "How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, who seek Him with all their heart. They also do no unrighteousness, they walk in His ways." That's just universal. Anybody who follows this path walks in righteousness.

Verse 9, "How can a young man keep his way pure? Be keeping it according to Thy Word." That's always the standard. It doesn't matter when you live. "With all my heart," verse 10, "I have sought Thee, do not let me wander from Thy commandments? Thy Word have I treasured in my heart that I may not sin against Thee." It doesn't matter who you are or where you are, this is the truth, nothing less than the truth, it sanctifies.

"Establish Thy Word to Thy servant," verse 38 says. Verse 67, "Before I was afflicted I went astray, now I keep Thy Word." Verse 101, "I have restrained my feet from every way that I may keep Thy Word." Psalm 170--verse 172, "Let my tongue sing of Thy Word, for all Thy commandments are righteousness." There is nothing in error in the Bible, there's no statement of God, no commandment of God, no rule of God, no doctrine, no principle, no historical account, no nothing that is anything other than true and therefore powerful and therefore purifying so that Scripture is permanently and forever relevant. And anyone at any time who walks according to Scripture walks in a righteous way. The morality of the Bible has not been overturned by contemporary understanding.

Well a final statement, and then we'll look a little at the rest of the chapter. The final statement in verse 9, "Judgments of the Lord are true, they are righteous all together." Judgments--some of you may have ordinances, it has to do with judicial terminology. It's a divine verdict. The judge of all the earth has rendered His verdict and put it in the Bible.

So you can look at the Bible in all these ways. It is law, testimony, principles, or precepts. It is commandments. It is a manual on worship and it is the judication of the judge of all the earth. It is the verdicts of the heavenly bench, the one final supreme justice. This wonderful book that comes from the judge of all the earth, I love this, is true.

That says it all, folks, it's absolutely true. Let God be true and every man a...what?...a liar. If you stand against God, you are the liar. God speaks only the truth. Do you understand how important that is? I saw a person with a T-shirt one time, it said, "Personally, I have abandoned my search for the truth." That's probably 25 years ago, this was a pre-post-modern-post-modern. That was

somebody who was ahead of his time.

I remember walking through the woods up in northern California. I was at a camp at a conference and I was walking through...it was during the seventy's hippie deal. I came across a guy living in an overturned refrigerator crate in the woods in the rain, misty rain. And so I sort of stuck my head in his refrigerator crate and started up a conversation. And he told me that he had graduated from Berkeley University of California and he was now living in the woods in this crate. And I said to him, we talked a little bit, I remember saying to him, "Have you found the answers you've looked for?"

He said, "No, but at least I don't ask the questions anymore." That's post-modernism, they don't even ask the questions anymore. Some people can be so jaded, our culture has become so jaded that they've just decided in their quest for the truth they couldn't find it because they wouldn't look where it really was. They've now decided there is no truth and their happy not even to ask the questions...just like fast, do what you want, don't ask questions. But in the midst of this world the Bible is true, it is absolutely true.

It's hard for people to understand that. It was not many years ago, well I guess it's been some now, I was invited to speak at Cal State Northridge in the philosophy class, which is great, I enjoy that. Now you have to understand in a philosophy class, they're all looking for the truth. You can't find it, of course, because then class would be over. But you can get credit for looking. You have to look the whole time, you can't ever find it.

The professor had invited me to come to speak...he said...on the Christian standard of morality, to help these philosophy...advanced philosophy students at Northridge...to understand sort of Christian ethics.

So, I remember going in, I can't remember exactly the way I said it, but I remember pretty well, I said to them, "I am here to tell you the truth about everything, absolutely everything, everything you could ever need or want to know. I can tell you the truth about how the universe came into existence, and why it's here and we'll go out of existence." And I said, "I could tell you the truth about life and death. I can tell you the truth about time and eternity. I can tell you the truth about the character and nature of man. I can tell you the truth about morality. I can tell you the truth about marriage. I can tell you the truth about friendship. I can tell you the truth about everything."

And, you know, by then they think that you just got out of a mental institution, or that you're the ultimate ego-maniac. It's just inconceivable that anybody would stand there and say that. But I said, "I can tell you the truth, I can," and so could you.

And then, of course, you've got to turn the tables a little bit. So I said, "But, when I tell you this truth you won't buy it, you won't accept it as truth, you won't even know it's the truth."

And somebody just said, "Well, why?"

And I said, "Well, because there's a prerequisite. Apart from the prerequisite you couldn't discern the truth if it was told to you."

And this guy said, "Well, what's the prerequisite?"

I said, "You have to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ so that you are made alive from the dead and can understand the things of God."

And he said, "Well, how does that happen?"

So it kind of turned the tables on them, now they want to know how to qualify to know the truth. So I went on to explain the gospel.

We live in a world where people are abandoning their search for the truth and that's so sad because the Word of God is true. What else can you say? It's true...it's true. Everything it says is true. Everything it says about God, everything it says about man, everything it says about angels, everything it says about history, everything it says about the past, the present, the future, everything it says is true...absolutely true.

And as a result of that, look at verse 9, "They are righteous altogether." What that phrase means is it produces comprehensive righteousness. If the Bible is true and you bring the Bible into life at any point, then it's right. The Bible will give you a right understanding of everything. It's comprehensively right because it's true. That's why, you know, after all these years here, year after year after year, Sunday after Sunday, thousands of times of opening the Bible and opening the Bible and when the Bible is explained, that is the right view of everything, isn't it? It's right. I'm not right, the Bible is right. It provides the source of truth and everything is right.

Psalm 119:89, "Forever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in heaven." God doesn't have to change His Word, He doesn't have to adjust to the times. It's right about everything. It is settled forever. It is the right assessment of everything. It is the right understanding of everything. Psalm 119:128, "Therefore I esteem right all Thy precepts concerning everything." Boy, you ought to underline that, verse 128. I esteem right all Thy precepts about everything. If God said it about anything, it's right.

I mean, do you understand how valuable that is, folks? Do you understand how valuable that is? Do you know how many people go down a library at UCLA or wherever and fumble all over the place in that library year after year after year trying to figure out what's right? You've got it all in one book.

Verse 137, "Righteous are You, O Lord, You're right and upright are Your judgments. You have commanded Your testimonies in righteousness." That's just a way of saying it's right. "And Your righteousness...verse 142...is an everlasting righteousness," then this, "and Your law is truth." It's truth and it's right.

Verse 151, "You are near, O Lord, and all Your commandments are truth." Verse 160, "The sum of Your Word is truth and every one of Your righteous ordinances are everlasting." It is true, it is true about everything, therefore it is right and it is right forever. Wow. You talk about that and then the obvious response is, "It produces comprehensive righteousness."

What do you need then to be all that you should be? You need an understanding of the truth. It produces comprehensive righteousness.

What do you have then here? You have everything a person could want. You want to be totally transformed? The Word of God can do that. Do you want to be skilled in all aspects of living? The Word of God does that, and the Word of God alone. You want to have permanent lasting joy, peace, satisfaction? The Word of God produces that. You want to have all the dark things of life made crystal clear? The Word of God does that. You want to have a source that is pure and without flaw and without error and it never changes and never can be edited, added to, or taken away from, but forever will endure in the same way? You can always go there and you can always trust it, the Word of God. And you want a book that can produce a right life comprehensively? You turn to the Bible because it's true about everything. This is the sufficiency of Scripture.

Now how valuable is that? How valuable is that? Is that the most valuable thing you've ever heard of? Sure. And the psalmist responds in verse 10 by saying, "They...that is the law, testimony, precepts, commandment, fear and judgments of the Lord, the Scripture, they are more desirable than...what?...gold, yes than much fine gold." Having a Bible that you understand is better than having a fortune, it has no equal in value. It is better than gold, that was the supreme earthly possession, gold, in ancient days. The Bible was better than the best the material world had to offer, yes than much fine gold. The Scripture is the greatest possession.

And then he goes on in verse 10 to add something. "Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb." The delicacy of delicacies in that world at that time was honey. And what the psalmist is saying is there is no possession in life that is its equal, and there is no pleasure in life that is its equal.

The Word is more desirable than any possession, and more desirable than any pleasure. It is supreme in its value. It is supreme in its sweetness. And I wish we had time, but Psalm 119 repeats this about twenty times. Look at verse 20, Psalm 119:20, "My soul is crushed with longing after Your ordinances at all times." Isn't that interesting? Here is a guy who says I am literally broken on the

inside with the desire and a longing for Your Word all the time. Wow!

Verse 24, "Your testimonies are my delight." Verse 40, "I long for Your precepts." Verse 47, "I delight in Your commandments which I love." Verse 48, "I shall lift up my hands to Your commandments which I love and I will meditate on Your statutes." Verse 70 even, "I delight in Your law." Verse 72, "The law of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces." Verse 77, again, "Your law is my delight." And then familiar verse 97, "O how I love Thy law, it is my meditation all the day." And verse 103, "How sweet are Thy words to my taste, yes sweeter than honey to my mouth." Verse 113, "I hate those who are double-minded, but I love Thy law." Verse 127, "Therefore I love Thy commandments above gold, yes above fine gold." Verse 131, "I longed for Your commandments, I even opened my mouth wide and panted." Have you been panting lately for the Bible? Amazing. Verse 159, "Consider how I love Thy precepts." One-sixty-three, "I love Thy law; 167, "I love them exceedingly." Wow!

So, the response then of the psalmist is that the Word of God is our greatest possession and it is our greatest pleasure. Thirdly, it is our greatest protector. Verse 11, "Moreover by them," that is the words that come from God, "Thy servant is warned." The Word of God is full of warnings. And one who knows the Word of God is duly warned. And we know that one of the characteristics of Scripture, of course, is filled with warning. Back to Psalm 119:9, "How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Thy Word, so with all my heart I have sought Thee. Do not let me wander from Thy commandment. Thy Word have I treasured in my heart that I may not sin against Thee." And that's repeated another twelve times or so throughout Psalm 119. It is the greatest possession, the greatest pleasure and the greatest protector.

Well also, fourthly, it is the greatest provider. Look at the second part of verse 11, "In keeping them," that is in obeying the words of God, "there is great reward."

The Hebrew here is very interesting. The Hebrew literally reads this way, "In keeping them there is the end...the end." And it's rightly translated, "reward," because that's what it means. When you obey the Word of God there is the glorious end. And what is that end? Eternal blessing. So we live for that obedience to the Word of God that brings us that eternal inheritance. It's not about health, wealth, prosperity and success NOW, it's about the end...it's about obeying the Word of God that it may provide for us that glorious eternal reward.

Listen to how Psalm 119 begins. "How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord. How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, who seek Him with all their heart." If you walk according to the Word of God, the psalmist says you will be blessed...you will be blessed. And that is repeated throughout Psalm 119 all the way through to verse 165, "Those who love Thy law have great peace." Blessing comes now and in the great reward to one who obeys God's Word.

So, the Word of God is our greatest possession, our greatest pleasure, our greatest protector, our greatest provider. And then one other, it is our greatest purifier. Look at verse 12, "Who can discern his errors, acquit me of hidden faults? Also keep back Thy servant from presumptuous sins, let them not rule over me. Then I shall be blameless and I shall be acquitted of great transgression."

What's he talking about? Well he's saying, "Lord, on my own I can't discern my sins, my wanderings literally in the Hebrew, my secret faults, my hidden faults. I can't...I can't be discerning enough to on my own know my own wicked heart. Please then...verse 13...You keep me back from presumptuous sins, from those presumptions that would rule over me. You keep me from those kinds of things that would literally bring me to the great transgression, apostasy, rebellion." The verb in the Hebrew means to break pass the boundary, to free oneself. Don't ever let me go to the place where I turn from you. Lord, I don't know my own errors, I can't even see my secret sins, I commit presumptuous sins all the time, I don't want them to rule over me. I want to be blameless, I never want to be ultimately rebellious and apostatized and apart from You.

He's crying out to God and saying I don't want this to happen. So do I prevent it? Verse 14, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation in my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer." He's saying...if I'm going to know my own sinfulness, if I'm going to understand my own errors, if I'm going to be able to see the hidden sins, if I'm going to avoid the presumptuous sins that would dominate me, if I'm going to be blameless and not apostatize apart from the truth then it's going to have to start in the way I think and the way I speak. So let my words that come out of the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

What kind of words would these be? What kind of thoughts would these be? Well the answer is in Joshua, that's where, I think, the psalmist borrowed this, Joshua 1:8, and we'll just wrap it up at that point. Joshua 1:8, when the children of Israel were coming into the land of promise, Moses had died, Joshua had become their leader to lead them into their land, and so the Lord speaks to Joshua and this is what He says, verse 8, "This book of the law...Scripture...shall not depart from your mouth but you shall meditate on it day and night so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it, then you will make your way spiritually prosperous and then you will have spiritual success."

So what is to be on our mouth? This book of the law shouldn't depart from your mouth. It ought to be the subject of your constant conversation. It should be meditated on day and night so that it is the subject of your constant thought, so your words are scriptural, your thoughts are scriptural and that issues in obedience that brings prosperity and success.

Now go back to Psalm 19 and see how that fits with verse 14. "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer." You tell me what kind of words and what kind of meditation is acceptable to Him...the kind that were described in

Joshua 1:8. Your words should be about the book of the law of God, your meditation should be about the book of the law of God. And when your thoughts and your words are acceptable in the sight of your rock and your redeemer, then you will be kept back from the great transgression so that the Bible, the Word of God, the precious Word of God, is all these things to us. And in the end, our greatest possession, our greatest pleasure, our greatest protector, our greatest provider and our greatest purifier, this glorious Word of God.

Jeremiah the prophet said, "They have rejected the Word of the Lord so what kind of wisdom do they have?" On the other hand, Jesus said, "He who is of God hears God's words." No wonder Paul said, "I joyfully concur with the law of God in my inner man." No wonder Job said, "I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food." No matter the psalmist said in Psalm 1 that, "The man of God delights in the law of the Lord and in His law he meditates day and night." No wonder David said, "The Word of God is more precious than gold, and more sweet than honey." He also said in Psalm 40 verse 8, "I delight to do Your will, O God, Your law is within my heart."

This then is why we do what we do...is why we teach you the Word...is why we call you to study it, to learn it, to love it and to obey it. I don't know what else to add to this glorious Psalm except to say we don't worship the Bible.

Some of you know that I have a Bible that was given to me, I've showed it to some of you, it was given to me, it was the first Bible ever printed in Scotland in 1576. It's a magnificent Bible. It is a study Bible, by the way, with notes all down the side and across the bottom and in the front and in the back to help people to rightly understand the truth...1576...boy, that's long ago. It was the first Bible ever printed in Scotland and it launched the Scottish Reformation under the great leadership of John Knox. In fact, it was John Knox who brought that Bible to Scotland from Geneva where it was translated under the protection of John Calvin when the Catholics were killing Protestants in England and Scotland.

That Bible is a treasure to me because it's over 400 years old. I can open it and read exactly what Scottish reformers read when the gospel burst into Scotland, the light of the glorious gospel, the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ shone on that land...it's the same Bible. People have died for it and its truths throughout all history. Many have been martyred for their faith in that book. That is a treasure to me because it reminds me of the great cost that was translated in the midst of terrible persecution and bloodshed. They had to flee to Geneva to do it and they brought it back. When they got back to Scotland, John Knox may have had this one in his hand, he brought the translation back and I think he was actually given the first couple that were printed. But he gave the first one that was printed to the prince of Scotland whose name was Prince James VI, and when you open the Bible the first four or five pages are a letter to Prince James..."Dear High and Mighty Prince James, with all due respect, get your spiritual act together for the wheel of the kirk, in old Scottish, for the good of the church." And it goes on to call him to accountability.

Well, young Prince James VI must have gotten the message because later on he became King James I and he authorized the King James. There's a great heritage in the Word of God not to be tampered with but to be accepted in all of its glory. I just pray that it will have full life in you to do its mighty work.

Father, again Your Word is precious to us. We don't worship it, we worship You but we love it because it tells us about You and Your glory and Your grace and Your salvation. Thank You for opening our hearts to the truth, may we like the psalmist consider it more precious than any possession, sweeter than any pleasure, the source of our eternal inheritance, the great reward, the protector from sin, the purifier and so may it be on our lips and in the meditations of our heart so that they may be acceptable in Your sight, our Rock, and our Redeemer. In Your Son's name we ask, and everyone said...AMEN

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