

The Happy Walk in the Holy Way

Psalm 119:1-8

September 11, 2019

Let's begin with a word of prayer. We pray tonight that as we come together over Psalm 119, that you would refresh our hearts. That you would point us to all righteousness and help us to find our full satisfaction and joy in the truth. And in the God of truth. Please help us in our study tonight. May it be joyful and refreshing for us all, encouraging and uplifting, and provoking us to love and good works. In Jesus name, Amen.

Well, we are entering into the actual text of this massive Psalm. And as we do it's a bit like setting out from base camp to climb Mount Everest. If there are 22 stanzas here, following the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, you might say we've got 22 days of hard climbing ahead. One lesson, one day of climb for each stanza. It's going to take us a whole week after we do a stanza, after we do a lesson, take us a whole week to recover

from that lesson and, meditate on the things that we learned and then get ready for the next one. But with every stanza, I think you're going to find, as I am finding, that the views are great. Just a wonderful, new view of God and his Holy Word.

So, if you're not in Psalm 119, you want to turn there in your Bibles, and we'll start just by reading the first eight verses. Which is the first stanza. This is the *Aleph* stanza. Which is the letter 'A' in Hebrew. So that means, each line, even if you can't see it in English, each line in the Hebrew starts with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet which is *Aleph*.

So, Psalm 119 verse 1, "Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek Him with their whole heart. Who also do no wrong but walk in his ways. You've commanded your precepts to be kept diligently. Oh, that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes. That I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all your commandments. I will

praise you with an upright heart when I learn your righteous rules. I will keep your statutes. Do not utterly forsake me."

There's a studied analysis of the Psalm here that finds a cohesive argument throughout Psalm 119 that begins right here in verses, not just verses 1-8, but verses 1-16. With really those two sections, those two stanzas are like a prologue to the entire Psalm. The prologue is what states the problem that the psalmist wishes to solve. And then it also, in the prologue, is identifying the method of solving the problem. So, we're going to study the prologue for this week and next week with this stanza and the next stanza.

The prologue is going to be followed by three sections in Psalm 119. Three major sections of prayer. There's an initial prayer section in verses 17 to 80. It's a large prayer section and that initial prayer section begins with petition and lament. And then it's followed by identifying God's promises and then resolving in personal retrospective and consolation. So, starts out its initial prayer section there's petition, there's lament to God. A, a sorrowing, a longing, and then landing on

remembering God's promises and then once we remember God's promises it resolves with retrospection and consolation in God and his promises. So that's the initial prayer section, verses 17 to 80.

Then there's the central section in verses 81 to 104. Starts with an intense section on lamentation or sorrow. But then it's followed again by consolation in God and another meditation on the profound joy in God's word. So, you say initial prayer section, a central section, and then a second major prayer section, verses 105 to 168. That's a more confident and prayerful forward-looking, optimistic view, firmly fixed on all that's been affirmed and solved in prayer before God.

After that prologue, three sections of prayer, then we come to a conclusion in a final stanza that's 169 to 176. That final stanza, *Taw*, that expresses the longing of every Godly believer and the dependency of every faithful saint. It's a hard attitude that preserves the Godly person that's faithful to the end. So, if you want an understanding of how this all resolves, go to that final stanza. You know it's kind of like reading the last

chapter in a book. Go to that last stanza and you'll see the attitude that the psalmist resolves in at the very end.

I'm only mentioning all of that as a suggested outline because there's a general view of this Psalm, probably by every Christian I've talked to, even some here in our church who are pretty well studied, that this is just, Psalm 119 is like 176 different ways of saying the same thing. I really love the Bible. I love God's word and it's 176 verses saying the exact same thing. Some commentators, old commentators too, have described Psalm 119 as just 176 lengths of a chain all thrown into a bucket. And so, you pull out a length and study and appreciate it and throw it back in, pull out another one. And so, they don't see any cohesion to it or anything else.

There are some commentators, too, who criticize the Psalm for its supposedly slavish adherence to this alphabetic acrostic we talked about last week. So, they see it as kind of contrived, you know, the psalmist is shoving, forcing adherence to this a, b, c, everything kind of starting out, his poetic expression. So, they say it is contrived or forced. And they make the charge

that this is in order to engage on behalf of the psalmist here, engaging in some kind of bibliolatry that is in other words idolizing the bible.

Having just read verse 1-8 here. If you heard someone make that kind of charge against that Psalm, that this is some kind of quaint form of bibliolatry, a contrived idolization of the bible, how would you answer that? Charging those who elevate God's word, who love it, who want to learn it, to charge them with idolatry of the written word, really betrays on their part, in their hearts a very low view of scripture. Biblically, to esteem God's word is to esteem God himself. It's to receive his word as receiving God himself makes his voice our singular longing and our soul joy. So, let's not radically separate God and his word because he doesn't separate himself and his word. He keeps the two together.

And I just want to give this caution, there are those who do claim an interest in God's word, but they really have no interest in obeying it. Now that charge about idolizing the word of God but not loving and worshipping God may be true about some

people. They love to study, they become very fat with facts, they love to become knowledgeable about truth to win arguments for pride's sake, or whatever the case it, but they really have no interest in humbly walking in what has been revealed through reading and studying the word of God.

So, sadly for people like that, coming to God's word with a hard heart, that continual exposure to the light will result in further hardening and condemnation. As they say, The same sun that melts the wax, hardens the clay. So, they're coming with a clay heart not a wax hart; not a moldable, soft heart. But that is not a result of holding God's word in too high of esteem. That's a result of holding the God of the word in too low of esteem, not fearing him, not revering him. There have been some who've said, "The purpose of knowing the word of God is to know the God of the word."

And you could say, conversely, if you want to know the God of the word, then you need to know the word of God. They really do go hand in hand. So, I'm pointing this out at the beginning just to say like all the disciplines of theology, there really

is a unity in all the different disciplines in theology in the doctrines we study. There is a unity of spirit in all of this and a harmony in all the attributes, the one is going to effect and lead to the other and vice versa. They are all connected because they all come from the simplicity of God himself. The essence of God. So, we need to remember that bibliology, the study of God's word, is inextricably joined and linked together, held together, glued fast to theology proper. To the study of God himself because the bible is God speaking about himself. And to know the bible is to know God.

So, last week, we talked about the synonyms in Psalm 119 for God's word. We find the first six in these first eight verses right here. Six of the eight synonyms used for scripture. In verse 1 you've got the law of the Lord and that's the word *Torah, torah*, which refers to his instructions. His instruction manual on life, on living.

You've got the testimonies in verse 2. "Bless those who keep his testimonies." It's the word *edâ* or *ēdût* is the plural. Testimonies, this is what God testifies to, like if he were

standing as a witness in court to what's true. He is telling you his testimonies.

Precepts are found in verse 4. You can see in verse 3 "do no wrong, walk in his ways." Some people will see ways as a synonym for the word of God. It's kind of really not, it's more referring to the way of God. So, I'm not including that as a synonym here, but. Verse 4, "You've commanded your precepts to be kept diligently." So, precepts it's the word *piqqûdîm* and it's what's prescribed.

Verse 5, statutes, *hōq* or *hāqaq*. Statutes is ordinances, it's what's ordained or what's ordered. Verse 6, you have the word commandments. Commandments, *misvâ*, and verse 7 the word judgements, *mišpāt*. Judgements are like case law or lawyers. They look back to see how judges have ruled on certain aspects of the law and you, you use that case law then to come up with your own case and say, "Hey this is how it's been accepted normally in our society on this law. This is how it's been applied and so, based on its application, based on how it's been interpreted in the past, this means this is a valid

interpretation of the law for my client.” And that’s really what’s going on here as we, as we talk about God’s judgements.

In verse 7, it’s translated righteous rules. Rules or judgements it’s the same thing. So, all those words, law, testimonies, precepts, statutes, commandments, judgements, you know where all those are also found? Psalm 19, all found in Psalm 19 as well. But, all those words, they not only reveal different nuances of God’s word, but they also give us insight into God’s nature, his character, so if we’re students of the word of God and understand kind of the nuances of these words, and think about those things, we’re also getting insight into God himself and the way some of the aspects of how he reveals himself to us. So, as we move through these verses, be sure to consider that the word of God reveals God himself and try to think about what it reveals about the God who spoke this word.

I want to come back to what I said earlier that this first stanza, verses 1-8 is the first part in a prologue here of Psalm 119. So, verses 1-8 along with verses 9-16, this is really the entry point into the entire book, making the argument, telling

us what the psalmist is trying to solve. And I said that in these opening verses the psalmist is stating a problem that he intends to solve. "There is no one who does not have sin. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." And that's actually a repetition of an Old Testament concept. That there is no one who is faultless, guiltless before God.

But notice it says right after it says, "Blessed are those whose way is blameless," verse 1. "Who walk in," what, "the law of the Lord." If we take that word law, *Torah*, technically *Torah* is a name for the first five books of the bible, Genesis through Deuteronomy. What do Genesis through Deuteronomy have in it? The Mosaic law and the Mosaic law tell us how to do what when we sin? How to find atonement, how to bring sacrifices, how to bring offerings and sin offerings and burnt offerings. Why? Because it assumes that we have sinned. It goes back to Genesis 3 and as you see the fall. You see everyone born from Adam and Eve is born in sin and so there is going to be sin. And so, the law gives us a pattern for dealing with our sin.

So, the blameless person is not somebody who's sinless, the blameless person is someone who follows the prescription of God's word when we do sin. You'll see David in the Psalms, you'll see Job also protesting his innocence, protesting his blamelessness. You'll see David saying the same thing before God. "I am blameless before you, I am righteous before you." Is he saying, I am perfect? No, he is not saying he is perfect. He is saying that, I have followed what your word says with regard to my sin. So it's the same thing for us. When we have sin, what should we be doing with it? Confessing it, repenting of it, right? Putting off and putting on, mortifying those sins of the heart that lead to the fruit of sin.

So, making a distinction between blamelessness and sinlessness is a very important issue for our own encouragement because if we're not careful and don't have the distinction made in our minds, we'll find reasons for discouragement when we really need to be finding encouragement.

So, this is the psalmist's concern, he longs for steadfastness in keeping God's word. He doesn't find it in

himself, but he longs for it. I believe we could say that he's identifying the way to happiness because the Psalm starts with two blessed, blessed. You know blessed, blessed, there in verses 1 and 2. It's a synonym for happy. So, he's identifying here the way to happiness through holiness, but he finds himself vulnerable to straying from that path. The rest of the Psalm then reveals that it's really through, we're going to find, through affliction and suffering that he is vulnerable to drifting and falling away, to wandering away.

So, he prays continually through the Psalm for God to uphold him. To stay with him, to never let him go, because he longs to pursue holiness. He longs for obedience, why? So, he can boast about his perfection? No. So that he can know the God that he studies, so that he can know the God that he serves, so he can worship him. So, he finds in himself the imperfections, straying and, and especially when affliction comes, especially when trials come.

So, I'm assuming you've experienced this same thing, you long for God's definition of happiness, you long for holiness,

you long to please him, you long to obey him and love him and worship him and all the rest but you find yourself vulnerable to what? Distraction, error, to sin, to falling off, to wandering, to falling in a pit. We, we find ourselves dirty and needing cleansing.

The really good news about experiencing trouble and weaknesses and finding vulnerabilities and distractions in ourselves is that Godly saints have experienced all these same trials and temptations before us. And we have the testimony of one such saint written right here. The record of exalted poetic expression captures our imagination. And really does touch us in our heart of hearts where we all feel this.

We also need to understand that what's written here is not just by a Godly saint, but it's also the Holy Spirit's words. So, this is divinely inspired expression which means it's imminently profitable for "teaching, and reproof and correction and training in righteousness so we can be made complete, perfected and become mature and equipped for every good work."

So, if that's your desire, well you're in the right place, you're in the right book, you're in the right chapter. This psalmist is expressing the same desire here and he's helping us to see this way forward. He's walked that path before us and struggled more deeply than many of us are ever going to know and by God's grace he has done excellently and come through the other side.

So, I see the section here breaking down into three main parts. Verses 1-3, 4-6, and then 7 and 8. 1-3, 4-6, and 7 and 8. The first part, verses 1-3, knowing what happiness means. Second part, verses 4-6, wanting what happiness requires. So, knowing what happiness means, wanting what happiness requires and then finally doing what happiness demands. Doing what happiness demands.

So, let's get into that first part. Knowing what happiness means. Verses 1-3 again. "Blessed are those whose way is blameless. Who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart. Who also do no wrong but walk in his ways." So that word

blessed, the word *'ešer*, if you're familiar with the New Testament word *makarios*, blessed, same idea here. It does mean happy. Happy is a good translation but here in our 21st century world, we can't just say happy and let it go there, we need to unpack that concept of happiness for our 20th and 21st century friends who think happiness has to do with ice cream and Doritos. It's not that. It's not.

Happiness is, the biblical idea of happiness anyway, it's not the world's superficial idea of satisfying an insatiable lust or enslavement to respond to an always complaining fleshly appetite. That is not what happiness is. This happiness is a happiness that goes deep. It's the idea here of an unshakable joy, a profound sense of contentment and rest. It's untouchable spiritual satisfaction.

So, if you think in terms of happiness, you think joy mixed with contentment mixed with sense of wellbeing and rest and total satisfaction. All that wrapped together is this word here *'ešer*. Okay, this is biblical happiness. Think about the times when you feel discontent or feel unsettled or agitated or

something. It's the absence of all that. There is no discontentment, there is no lack of satisfaction, there is no agitation churn. Sometimes you talk about churn. A sense of kind of that stomach acid, you know, kind of coming up, you know, you feel that argh. None of that, just complete rest, contentment, peace, satisfaction. Looking to the future, never seeing one dark cloud or foreboding, never one fear. Never one worry, anxiety, nothing. Any stress that comes upon you, you got it. You know, no problem. And at the same time, a deep sense of joy, of elation inside. That is untouchable.

That said, it's a happiness here, biblical sense of happiness that doesn't depend on situation or circumstance, has nothing to do with physical or temporal needs, the fulfillment of those things. Though we do experience this practically in physical and temporal living, it still doesn't depend on physical temporal things being satisfied.

Notice the reverence in verse 1 to the word, way, "Blessed are those whose way is blameless." And then the end of verse 3, the word, way, again. "Walk in his ways." So, in the first

instance we are talking about a human way, right. This is practically lived out experience, a human way. And the second instance, this is God's ways. So, you've got ways, human in the first instance, God's in the second. True happiness comes when our ways, and the word way *derek*, it refers to a manner of living.

There's also a real picturesque term, it's the word walk. Okay, so you can see it there a couple times. Walking in his ways. Walking, living, it's our lifestyle, it's our manner of life. So, true happiness comes when our manner of living, our lifestyle, our ways are joined to God's ways. When our walk, our way of living conforms to what God has revealed in his law, his *Torah*. His wise instruction for living life. When we listen to his testimonies, his perspective on life, then we are living the blessed life, the, the happy life.

Notice how there are two aspects to this. Put in both negative and positive terms. In negative terms happiness means blamelessness. Okay, so it's the lack of blame. So that is negative, a negative concept, in verse 1 there. And then also in

verse 3, "doing no wrong." So, the idea of doing no wrong. That word for, wrong, there talking about an unrighteousness, talking about an injustice. So, that which doesn't conform to God's righteousness. There are some connotations of this, could mean like perversity and wickedness, but really, we're just talking about things that are contrary to God's law. His revealed justice, his revealed sense of righteousness.

So, mentioned in scripture there are heinous sins like robbing people, murdering, oppression. There are also more subtle forms which I think we can fall into, partiality in judgement, dishonest trade dealings, failure to pay taxes, failure to conform to laws, ordinances of the land all that. I think of it every time I start to break the speed limit and Melinda says hey, what, what speed are you going? Like, ughhh. Thank you, Lord for a Godly and righteous wife. That's what I think every single time, every single, every single time she points that out.

And vicious words fall under the rubric of this word for wrong. So, even if you take like the heinous sins like robbing

somebody, murdering somebody, oppression, you might think, I'm not knocking over any banks, I'm okay. There's no bodies buried in my backyard, I'm okay. What does Jesus say about all those kinds of sins, right. He talks about it goes to the heart, right. So, if we have covetous desire what is that. It's unrealized theft, unrealized stealing. What is it if we have anger in our heart toward our brother or sister? It's murder of the heart. Same thing, maybe not outward adultery, but internally what's going on inside the heart and the mind. Partiality in judgement, dishonesty, the words that we use. How about this, words that we think. "Those who seek him with their whole heart, who do no wrong." None of that, that's the negative way of putting it.

The happy way is very far from sinful dealings with other people. Whether doing injustice or walking in a less than righteous way. And especially when we're talking about the heart attitude. Okay, God always looks, he sees the heart. He sees our devious or less than honest forthright manner of dealing with people and we know before him how those things convict our own conscience and rob us of peace and joy when we're devious in our hearts.

Positive expression: by positive expression, happiness is found in living out God's instructions, verse 1. Happiness is keeping, a word that means guarding or observing, protecting his testimonies, in verse 2. And then happiness in verse 3 is walking in God's ways.

How does it follow that doing no wrong is going to result in our happiness? This God is the blessed God, he's revealing the blessed way. He is the most blessed being in the universe. First Timothy 1:11, First Timothy 6:15, he is called the blessed God. Which means that God is the most happy, joyful, contented, satisfied being in the entire universe. There's no one more blessed than God is and blessed than God is. There's no one more joyful. There's a supreme joy in the supreme and absolute sovereign God and he, like a father to his children, wants to share that blessedness with them.

And the blessedness comes by them living the way he lives. Thinking the way he thinks, speaking the way he speaks, doing as he does. If that's the way he acts and he is the most blessed

with unmitigated joy, then it follows that if we practice that, we're also going to experience the same joy and satisfaction because we're made after his image. "God is light. In him is no darkness whatsoever," First John 1:5. So there's no sin to trouble, agitate, and slave. God is holy and pure and righteous. He's always doing what conforms to the perfect wisdom of his perfect will. So, happiness is holiness, and the happy walk is the holy walk.

That ought to be enough to compel us to pursue holiness constantly, right. To pursue holiness consistently as the constant preoccupation of every waking moment of our lives, right. Okay, so why don't we do that? Because the sin that so easily entangles. Because we don't want to do what's in front of us. We don't want to do what's there. So, we don't pursue the way of true happiness because we're sinful. We're redeemed sinners. But there's still, while we're in this flesh and in this life, we still have that sin that so easily entangles. That sin that comes up from, that sin principle that's still living in us.

So, if we need a little more motivation, look at the next part here in this number two about wanting what happiness requires. Look at verse 4. Verse 4

"You've commanded your precepts to be kept diligently." That word commanded, the verb *sāvâ* means, to order, or direct, or appoint something. So, to order, direct, appoint, in other words this is not a suggestion. You've commanded your precepts. It's not you've suggested your precepts be kept diligently. Like, it's a good idea if you'd like to if you feel good about it. No! It's you've commanded, this is an order, it's a direction, it's an appointment.

One commentator said, "While the chief note of these verses is that the law is good and a friendly purpose, it is not wholly devoid of the idea that man must submit to it or suffer the consequences." We must submit to this law. It's not optional and there's a perfection of law keeping that's required of us. Jesus said, Matthew 5:48, "You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly father is perfect." He said that, Matthew 5 verse

48, after going through all the ways we fail to keep the law of God in the heart, from the heart.

So, we're to keep God's precepts. There's a word there its translated, diligently. There's a word, *m'ōd*, it's an adverb. So, you could translate it muchly, greatly, like *tôb* is the word for "good." *Tôb* it's good, this is good but if you say, like, "God saw, saw what he created and it was good." And then brought the woman to the man and that was what, *tôb m'ōd* very good, right? So, *m'ōd* is like, really, really good. So, *m'ōd* is a word that intensifies how we are to keep God's commandments. So, diligently, fully, carefully, perfectly. So, this demand for diligent attentiveness to obedience prompts in verse 5, he gets it, he recognizes, you have commanded your precepts everything you prescribed to be kept with all diligence. Contestant attentiveness, and that's what drives his prayer in verse 5.

"Oh, that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes. Oh, that they would be. Would that my ways would be steadfast, never veering, never falling away in keeping your statutes and then I shall not be put to shame. If that's the way

with me, then I won't be put to shame having my eyes fixed on all your commandments." So, this is a prayerful expression of Godly desire to be steadfast, firm, inflexible, always constant in keeping God's statutes. Is that a futile prayer or can the Godly expect to fulfil that desire.

We're starting with God's initiative to save, to regenerate, to cause to be born again, all of the sudden we're a new creature and now we have what's called Godly initiative, Godly ambition, desires, affections for what's true and good and righteous, right? So, yeah now we put that initiative into practice. There's a sense in which that's the longing of our heart. And so, we're not working contrary to that longing. Even though we find ourselves deceived by old desires, old habits, old ways of thinking, but really what's truly there in a, in a true Christian, a true believer, is a new nature. We long for the things of God. We put that into effect we find no reliance in the flesh, we find all reliance in God. We pray, we act, we walk.

So, that's where there's a cooperation between us and God, God and us. His desire for us is it blamelessness? Is his desire for us sinless perfection? Yes, it is! What God has saved us for is what? Absolute sinlessness. He's saved us to be totally completely Christlike and that is going to happen, isn't it? It's going to happen. We can live a thousand lifetimes and never arrive but thankfully we don't have to live a thousand lifetimes. He's, by his grace going to kill us off after one lifetime and take us to heaven. Either that or he's going to come and get us and bring us to himself and completely glorify us in a, in a moment of a twinkling eye. That's going to be awesome. Or we'll die and go to heaven and then we'll be with him, and we'll be perfected, glorified.

Let's look back at verse 2, about the blessedness for those who seek him with their whole heart. For those whose intent in studying God's word is to find God, to love and worship God, they will receive their heart's desire. They will have a pure unmixed motive to seek and worship God. Jesus said, Matthew 5:8, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall," what? "See God." Right? Some refer to that as the beatific vision, the vision of the blessed. Those who long to see God, know him, worship him,

and love him they will get their heart's desire. That's what they get, they get what they long for. God is going to grant that to them, he's going to reward them with that.

Another evidence of the psalmist's longing in verse 4 doesn't come across as well in the English translation, but when he writes there, "You have commanded your precepts." When he says "You've commanded" there's an emphasis there highlighting the fact that God himself is the one who has issued the command. So, literally there it's, You, yourself, have commanded. So, the implication is I'm listening to what you, yourself, have commanded me. So, it's not just here's the command, here's the printed word, here's the instruction and I'm a rule follower. I like to read all the instructions, the manuals, before I put things together. I'm a rule guy. That's not the idea here. It's who wrote the rules. It's the rules are precious to him because of who wrote them.

So, You, yourself, have commanded. So, his ears are attuned, his eyes are focused on the word. He's listening because his heart is rightly oriented there. Another clue there

in verse 6 about having our eyes fixed on all God's commandments. The verb is *nābat* and it denotes there a careful and a sustained contemplation. So, his heart is seeking after God to worship him, his ears are attuned, his eyes are focused, his heart is rightly oriented.

But then, there's this idea of meditation of thinking about God's Word, reflecting on it, contemplating its meaning and its wisdom, the right application of it. So, it's Psalm 1 and 2, "Blessed is the man who doesn't walk in worldly counsel" or get comfortable there or sit down and sit in the seat of scoffers. But, what? "His delight is in the law of the Lord," and in his law, on his law, he's meditating day and night, he's ruminating, he's chewing it over, he's thinking it over all the time. To meditate on God's Word like that, you know, to turn off the television, to, to put away all distractions and say, I actually want to spend time in the Word. What does that require? It requires a love of the Word. And a love of the God of the Word.

So, that's what has to happen. That's the attitude in the psalmist. There's a humility, there's a hope and a trust in God.

But at the heart of it is a love for him. It's a heart fixed on God. That's why he seeks him with a whole heart is because he loves him.

Now, do you always find your heart delighting in God's word? Do you always find yourself rightly oriented to God? Ears attuned, eyes focused, you can say "No I don't, Travis. You got me, guilty." Okay, so if not, why not? Why don't we always find our hearts that way. Our eyes focused, ears attuned. Why don't we find ourselves rejoicing, delighting in God's word all the time?

When you think about Christ, you think about Jesus. Did he, I mean in every distraction, in everything that came into his life do you think for one moment he didn't filter that through love for God and his Word? Pursuing obedience, pursuing faithfulness, pursuing joy. Steadfast all the time. He never faltered in one moment. That's what makes him perfect, that's the definition of sinless perfection. So, he did that. So, if he did that as a man walking on this earth, that's our pattern too. That's what we follow after.

Now, do we do that perfectly? No. And this is where I'm so comforted by, God is mindful of us, he knows us, he knows, he's mindful that we are but, Rebecca, dust. But he is so gentle and compassionate and gracious with us. Even in our weakness, even in our failings. And that's why he sent Christ to perfectly fulfill all the law for us. A law that we could never fulfill, and Christ fulfilled it perfectly for us. That is our salvation, right there. To know that my sin is forgiven on the cross, and my righteousness is completely fulfilled to perfection.

So "You've commanded your precepts be kept diligently." There's one who's done that for me. There's one who's fulfilled that for me. And now it's my joy to try to put that into practice, to conform more and more to his image, because is there any more blessed, joyful person than Christ? No. That's what I want to be like. How about you?

So, what do you do about it when you find yourself not delighting in God's Word? We got to be honest there are times when we look at the bible, we're like, I don't, I don't feel

like it. I don't find it in myself to want to do that. What do we do? We pray. What do we do? We go on our knees and we go to the one who it's his desire that we desire his word. So, let's ask him to help us. Psalm 86:11 "Unite my heart to fear your name," right?

So, if our ears are attuned to God's Word because our hearts are rightly aimed at God's Word, our eyes are focused on his Word, then we're going to be steadfast in keeping his statutes. We will not be put to shame.

Number three leads us to doing what happiness demands. Doing what happiness demands, that's verses 7-8. "I will praise you with an upright heart when I learn your righteous rules. I will keep your statutes. Do not utterly forsake me." So, just quickly, several things, several commitments to obedience in those two verses. And we'll take these, kind of, as marching orders.

First, notice there's a commitment to praise God from the heart. So, what does that commitment to praise God in the heart

about? It's a heart of private, where only God can see, worship. Love and worship of him. To praise God with an upright heart. When we think about praise biblically, it starts from the heart and God knows false praise and counts that as not praise. So, true praise is always going to be centered and coming in the heart. But, you know, where it's going to come out of is the lips. It's going to come out of the mouth. And so, we involve others in our praise.

So, in other words we're evangelistic. We don't keep our praise to ourselves. We don't have our own private worship services in our hearts and say, that satisfies God because I'm doing it from the heart. No. If you're truly doing it from the heart, then you can't not tell people about it. So, there is an internal and an external extension of true praise. If you do not have that, you don't have true praise.

So, first a commitment to praise God from the heart. Secondly, a commitment to learn God's word. "I'll praise you with an upright heart when I learn." When I learn, that word is *lāmad* it's the Old Testament word for discipleship. So, the

discipleship is in learning God's rules, his judgements, his *mišpāt*. It's like studying case law, the history of God's dealings in righteousness. So, we go back like cracking open the law books and saying, okay, let me see how this judge ruled on this case and see what the result was. What were the circumstances of that case? How did that happen? Why did that law apply so well to this case? And what's the precedent that was set? We go into scripture, and we see God's dealings with his people, Israel, we see his dealings with the church, we see his dealings with mankind, we see the case law, we study it, we see the examples, we see how the law was applied, and we say, I'm going to learn that. I'm going to learn that and I'm going to put it into practice. I'm going to be a disciple of his ways. So, he's discipling me from the Word.

So, a commitment to learn God's word, which is a commitment to discipleship. That accelerates your learning because you're taking the legislated rule, the law, you're taking that legislation and you're seeing how it works itself out practically. So, you're taking the principle and you're seeing wisdom, you're seeing it worked out in wisdom. That is what we're talking about here. You can't worship the one you don't

know. You can't share the one, or praise the one, you don't understand or don't know deeply. But just a commitment to this praise, devotion to study, it's not just that, it's also, thirdly, to obedience in verse 8, "I will keep your statutes." Okay, I will keep your statutes; there's a command to obedience and that requires then, as we continue to find ourselves lagging behind in obedience, even not just externally, but in speech and in the heart and in everything else.

This requires then, fourthly, a commitment to prayer for God's abiding presence. "Do not utterly forsake me." I'll just say this because we're going to come back to it in the study, that when he says, "Do not utterly forsake me" there's a forecasting or a foreshadowing of what's coming in the Psalm. That he does, at times, feel utterly forsaken by all others. He feels afflicted, he feels ignored and persecuted and set aside. We all feel this from time to time. We all feel abandoned, we all feel like a pariah in our own way. And so, he cries out to God when he thinks about keeping God's law and being obedient. He cries out, don't, don't, don't you leave me. Don't you go anywhere.

And so, that's a prayer that will be answered because he belongs to God and God belongs to him. That's a prayer that will be answered because, well, just based on the attribute of omnipresence. God is always there, there is no place, Psalm 139, that we can flee from God's presence. God is always there. So, that's a good note to end on. Let me close us in prayer.

Heavenly Father, thank you so much for this opening into Psalm 119. We're thankful for the first step, the first, first section climbed. We just ask that you give us strength and perseverance to make it through the next one. And in the meantime, help us to meditate on what we've learned. And, and to, to put these things into practice, to really examine our hearts and see, do we, do we really long for you? Do we really love you? And worship you? And is that our, is that our deepest and most pressing desire and joy? And if it's not, father, help us to be really honest about that and transparent before you in prayer. That we would come before you and, and ask for you to give us an undivided, undistracted heart. One that fears your name, one that longs to worship and praise you. So, father, please produce these Godly attitudes in us and then lead us to work our repentance in our lives in wise ways and, and then to

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bear fruit in keeping with that repentance. We love you, thank you so much for the power of your word and the power of who you are. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.