

Sermon Notes

WORSHIP SERVICE -

11.10.2024

PSALM 119:9-16 - GUARDING
YOUR WAY WITH GOD'S
WORD

I. INTRODUCTION

Psalm 119:9-16

Beth

9 How can a young man keep his way pure?

By guarding it according to your word.

10 With my whole heart I seek you;

let me not wander from your commandments!

11 I have stored up your word in my heart,

that I might not sin against you.

12 Blessed are you, O Lord;

teach me your statutes!

13 With my lips I declare

all the rules of your mouth.

14 In the way of your testimonies I delight

as much as in all riches.

15 I will meditate on your precepts

and fix my eyes on your ways.

16 I will delight in your statutes;

I will not forget your word.

II. THE PATHWAY TO PURITY

- Psalm 119 is the longest psalm in the Psalter, written in the style of an acrostic poem, moving through the entire Hebrew Alphabet, and each stanza extolls the Word of God and magnifies the God of the Word.
 - The psalm writer loves the word of God because it leads him to know and love the God of the Word.
 - This stanza, Beth, the second letter of the Hebrew Alphabet, seems to flow directly from the first in that it seeks to address how one enters into the blessed life of v1.
 - The psalm's author uses at least eight terms to describe God's Word. These terms, though they have different meanings and nuances, are used interchangeably.
 - And he uses several of them in this stanza and each line echoes the truth that Scripture is the Word of God.
 - V9, "your word"
 - V10, "your commandments"
 - V11, "your word"
 - V12, "your statutes"
 - V13, "the rules of your mouth"
 - V14, "your testimonies"
 - V15, "your precepts"
 - V16, "your statutes" and "your words"
 - These are not man's words, these are the authoritative words of the Sovereign God of the universe who is the covenant God of Israel.
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- While the psalm is generally for all the people of God, and applicable to every Christian, this stanza itself is addressed specifically to young men.
 - "How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word."
 - Feels like a proverbial statement. The book of Proverbs was written by a father to instruct and commend his sons in the way of wisdom.
 - Psalm 119 has the same flavor of an older man teaching younger men how to walk in God's way and obey God's word.
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- Why to young men? The words of this psalm are written to spare young men from going down the wrong path in life and how to walk in the right path.
 - Young men in particular, face great perils.
 - There are fierce external pressures that imperil young men.
 - There are internal temptations that imperil young men.
 - The very question the psalmist asks, "How can a young man keep his way pure," reveals to us two things.
 - First, It assumes there is an answer to that question, and it's in the same verse—the power of God's Word.
 - But it also assumes young men don't always keep their way pure, it assumes man's depravity, that we are not naturally pure.
 - We're not naturally inclined to do what is right and good. We are all born sinners, our world is fallen and our lives are lived in the context of all of the sin and brokenness.
 - Young men face enormous temptations from within and from without.
 - William Plumer, an early 19th century preacher, wrote about the necessity for the repeated warnings and encouragement given to young men in Scripture, *"By birth's sin, their way is already defiled and they are inexperienced, self-confident, rash, and inconsiderate. The imagination of their hearts is evil, their passions are strong, and their principles are weak, their lusts imperious and their self-knowledge very imperfect. 'Til taught from heaven, they are void of wisdom and their will is stubborn and they are impatient of restraint."*

- He rightly concludes, “*God’s word is the only antidote by which we can protect ourselves against the corruption of our nature.*”
 - Young men are full of hot passions and inclinations and the best time to help a man is when they are young, setting them on the path of wisdom according to God’s Word, so that they will mature and be spared of the ruinous things in life.
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- Generally, I want us all to see in this passage that what the psalmist is describing is our sanctification.
 - God desires and is heavily invested in growing us in godliness and grace and conforming us to Christ.
 - We cannot cleanse ourselves. Unless our nature is changed, we remain spiritually dead in our trespass and sins.
 - When we are made alive by the Spirit of God our heart pulsates with new affections and desires that we did not have before.
 - Paul writes, “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” (2 Cor 5:17)
 - From the moment we are regenerated by the Spirit of God and made alive by grace, every single second of our life until we are called to glory, is in the process of being sanctified.
 - God is at work in us producing true holiness of heart by conforming us to Christ.
 - And one of the primary means God uses to sanctify us is through his Word.
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- The psalmist simply states that the power a young man needs to keep his course in life, his way pure, is by “guarding it according to your word.”
 - “Guarding” is “watching over” and the sense is that a young man who keeps his course in life oriented to heeding God’s Word, and obeying God’s Word, that has sufficient power to keep him on the pathway of purity.
 - “Pure” does not mean sinlessness, as we saw in v1 of the term, “blameless.”
 - To be pure means to be morally clean, to have your guilt pardoned and the pollution of heart removed.
 - The only way to lead a holy life, that results in true blessedness as in v1, is by guarding one’s course in life according to God’s Word.
 - What is assumed is that young men who desire to be on the path of blessing, will live with their Bible open, reading and studying God’s Word, with a holy watchfulness and attentiveness over the course of their life.
 - Everything the young man needs to know about how to live a life that is pleasing to God, what God expects of him, how to avoid the ruinous things in life, to find the strength needed for the times of weariness, the comfort in times for suffering, loneliness, sorrow, to keep him on the path is contained in God’s Word.
 - That is true for all of us.
 - The Word of God is the means of this sanctifying operation that enables a young man and each one of us to be clean before God.
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- Don’t ever underestimate the power of God’s Word in your life.
 - What would you know of God and his gospel, what would you know about what is pleasing to God, apart from His Word?
 - The word of God is a living and powerful Word. God has ordained that his Word have a transformative effect on the believer.
 - 2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,
 - Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
 - John 17:14-19 I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the

world. 15 I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. 19 And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.

III. THE PROCESS OF PURITY

- V2 Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart.
- Here in v10, With my whole heart I seek you...notice he is not seeking God's Word, he is seeking God.
- The word of God is not an end in and of itself, it leads us to the knowledge of God.
- The greater end of knowing the Word of God is to know the God of the Word.
- Jesus decries the unbelieving Jews, "*You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you will have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.*" (John 5:39-40)
- Here the psalmist says, "Lord I seek you with my whole heart..."
- But then in the next breath he prays, "Don't let me wander from your commandments."
- V10 is an expression of holy aspirations and humble dependence.
- The default mode of the human heart is to wander, to stray from God.
- The world, the flesh, and the devil seek to drive us off of our course.
- We are being sanctified, but we're not fully there yet. We are not the driving force behind our sanctification--God is!
- Human exertion alone cannot cause a young man to keep his way pure.
- Divine enablement is needed, and praise God we have that in Christ. In him we have received grace upon grace in Christ.
- We have God's Word and God's Spirit working in our heart and transforming us.

- The psalmist makes several resolutions in this stanza.
- Resolutions are good to make as long as we keep in mind that our ability to do the thing we have resolved to do is not equal to the task of the resolution we have made.
- The 18th century American theologian and preacher, Jonathan Edwards, had a list of 70 resolutions, which he reviewed every week and sought to live his life by. But he acknowledged his own inability to keep them. "*Being sensible that I am unable to do anything without God's help, I do humbly entreat Him by His grace to enable me to keep these resolutions, so far as they are agreeable to His will, for Christ's sake.*"
- So also the psalmist here, acknowledges sheer willpower alone is not equal to the task of keeping his holy resolutions.
- Pursue holy aspirations, it is the Spirit of God that is working in your heart to produce those holy desires.
- Remember, that God is committed to your sanctification, even when you are not.
- Sanctification is first and foremost his work.
- Philippians 2:12-13 ...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.
- If you are in Christ, prayers for God to produce in you true holiness of heart are always answered, they are "yes" and "amen."

- V11 is the main point of this stanza.

- I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.
- The word of God is the ordained means of our sanctification.
- The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to sanctify the people of God.
- The word is fuel for our sanctification.
- The person who has stored up God's Word in their heart, that hides God's Word in their heart, will have their desires, aspirations, direction in life, their tastes, their judgments, all shaped and formed by God.
- To "store" means to "hide, to keep safe and secure."
- We store and secure that which is valuable to us, that which we do not want to lose.
- God's Word is a treasure of inestimable worth that we should never lose.

- How do we go about storing up God's Word in our heart?
- The only way to store up God's Word in your heart is through serious Bible intake.
- You can't store up God's Word if you don't read God's Word; If there isn't a continual, habitual, ongoing inflow of God's Word.
- Storing up involves much reading, hearing, memorizing, and meditating upon God's word.
- To meditate on God's Word is to digest it, to ponder it, to consider it deeply, to reflect on it, to think seriously about its meaning; to turn it over and over in our mind; to contemplate its application to your life.
- Psalm 1:2, the blessed person is the one who "delights in the law of the Lord and on his law he meditates day and night."
- A casual reading of Scripture does not nourish the soul but a deep, prayerful reflection on Scripture will.
- The psalmist resolves to meditate on God's precepts. He makes a vow to undivided, undistracted devotion to God's word.

- Set yourself to the task of memorizing large portions of Scripture. Commit God's word to memory.
- Have in mind always, that when you are in God's Word, that is God speaking to you.
- How much more important are his words than the words of all of the counselors and most learned and educated and influential people off the world?

- Storing up God's Word in our heart involves prayer
- The psalmist petitions God, "Teach me your statutes." He is asking God to write his word on his heart so that it guides his thinking, shapes his affections, and directs his will.
- He wants to be a learner, to sit at the Lord's feet as it were, to be disciplined in the Lord's word and in the Lord's way.
- We should pray as we read, asking God to illuminate our minds and hearts, to open the eyes of our understanding, that we might apply it to our hearts and lives, and that we would grow in our knowledge of God.
- We should pray Scripture. Every verse of Psalm 119 can be turned in to a prayer, expressing holy dependence on God to do his work in our hearts.
- But again, this is not just an intellectual exercise, we must embrace God's word with our heart.
- And we must be doers of the word, not hearers only.

IV. THE PRIZE OF PURITY

The effect of the stored up Word of God in the heart:

Greater Victory over Sin

- The primary effect the psalmist writes about is that the hidden word in his heart will keep him from sinning against God.
- God's word preserves us from sinning. The safe keeping of God's word is an invaluable aid in our spiritual warfare, in our battle against sinful desires, and from the temptations within and without.
- 2 Cor 7:1 Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.
- The more you are in the word of God and the word of God is in you, the less pull the world has on you, the less you will want to give into fleshly desires, and the less likely you will fall into the devil's schemes.
- The Word of God equips you and empowers you to resist temptation and sin.

Greater Praise

- The stored up word of God always produces a doxological response.
- V12a Blessed are you, O Lord
- In v7 the psalmist declared that upon learning God's righteousness rules he will praise God with an upright heart.
- God's Word as it is embraced in the heart and revealed to the mind furnishes you with inexhaustible reasons to praise and worship God.
- Worship and the Word are inseparably connected.
- You cannot worship God rightly if you don't know God as he is revealed in His Word.

Greater Proclamation

- A heart filled with God's word will overflow to the lips.
- V13 With my lips I declare all the rules of your mouth.
- You have opportunities every day to speak of God's Word.
- You have opportunities with friends, co-workers, family, neighbors, clients, to bring the word of God to bear on their situations and circumstances.
- You will find the more you have God's word in your heart, the bolder you will be to proclaim his word to others.
- When you internalize God's word, when you memorize Scripture, when it is stored up, you will find God's word bubbling up to the surface when you need it.

Greater Appreciation and Delight

- The psalmist expresses that he delights in God's word and values it above all riches.
- Having God's word to guide his life, having the word of God stored up in his heart, having the Lord teach him, was better than having all the riches in the world.
- He expresses this a few times in this psalm.
- V72 The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces.
- 127 Therefore I love your commandments above gold, above fine gold.
- When you treasure God's Word, when you delight in it, when it becomes a joy to you, you won't let anything keep you from it, You won't allow distractions, busyness, media consumption, or tiredness keep you from it.

Greater Remembrance

- Lastly, the stanza closes with the final resolution, "I will not forget your word."
- Those who have stored up God's word, treasured God's word, meditated on God's word, proclaimed God's word, will not readily forget God's word.

- May God give us ongoing grace and sanctify us completely to the Day of Christ, and may we be a people who have stored up this great treasure that is God's Word in our heart, and commit to live our lives according to his Word, in the power of the Spirit, for the glory of Christ Jesus our Lord.

APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?