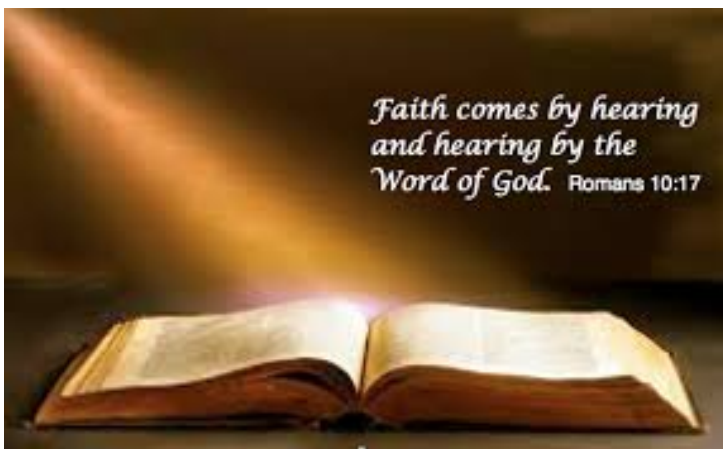




# GOD'S WORD AND THE GOSPEL

*"1 To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. 2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. 3 There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. 4 Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, 5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. 6 His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. 7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. 8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. 11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward. 12 Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. 13 Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. 14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer."*

- Psalm 19

## God's Word And The Gospel

The meaning of the Scripture is the message from heaven. We talk about the Bible being inspired by God and it is. We talk about it being without error and it is. We talk about it being the revelation of God, and it is, but only when it is understood correctly. God was not saying anything we want Him to say. We can't determine for ourselves what the Bible means, but rather God has spoken in such a way that is clear so that we can know what He meant when He inspired His Scripture.

I often tell people that the Bible means today exactly what it meant when it was written because the meaning cannot change. It means what the author meant, not just the human writer, but more importantly God the Holy Spirit who inspired every word. It's so very important not only that you have a Bible, not only that you read the Bible, but that you understand the meaning of the Scripture. It says in 1 Corinthians 2:16 that we have the mind of Christ. To be able to think like Christ, to be able to understand everything the way Christ understands everything, how can we possibly do that? Well, the answer is because His mind is revealed in the Scripture. So if the Scripture is rightly understood, rightly interpreted, rightly explained, we know how Christ thinks. That is the greatest gift that could ever be given to us. The most important reality in the world is truth, divine truth. Divine truth from God is contained in the pages of Scripture, but only transferred to our minds and hearts if we understand its meaning.

The study Bible will enable you to see not only what the Scripture says, but what it means by what it says. That then is the message that God has declared. Again, deep thanks to Joseph Lee for amazing work, faithful, diligent work on the translation and publishing of the study Bible.

Sermon notes are critical to me. I preach in the same church for 45 years. I have preached at Grace Community Church in Los Angeles over 45 years, and 45 years in the same church in the same congregation preaching every Sunday morning, every Sunday night, different book in the morning and the evening. I've preached through the entire New Testament. It took me 42 years to preach through the New

Testament. I've preached from portions of the Old Testament during those many years.

All of that comes out of the study and the preparation that becomes the notes that I carry into the pulpit. That becomes the prepared part and then, of course, the Holy Spirit goes from there to lead and direct as I preach. I also want to let you all know that all of you at the conference will receive a gift. You will be given a copy of the Chinese MacArthur Study Bible as a gift from the folks that are there.

I wish I were there for this event. I'm so sorry not to be there. I wanted to be there in order to honor Joseph and to honor all of you and the leaders and all of you faithful pastors and Christians from across China. But please accept my love and gratitude for your gathering and I trust that this will be just the beginning, and you'll receive this tool that will become very, very useful for you in the future.

Let's have a word of prayer together. Our Father, we thank you for your Word. We thank you that the entrance of your Word gives light. We thank you that your Word is pure and true. We thank you that we are saved by your Word, begotten again by the Word of truth. We are sanctified by your Word as Jesus prayed. Sanctify them by thy truth. Thy Word is truth. We are comforted by your Word, the comfort of the Scriptures. We are edified by your Word. Everything comes to us from your Word. As the Scripture says, we even have hope in your Word, hope for the future in this life, and hope for the glory that is to come.

So we thank you for the Bible. We thank you for your Holy Word. Bless us tonight as we look into it and see it give testimony to its glory. We ask these things in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

I want to speak with you from Psalm 19. If you have a Bible, you can open your Bible to Psalm 19. Psalm 19 is a very important Psalm because Psalm 19 talks about divine revelation. It talks about divine revelation. The only way we could ever know God is if God revealed Himself to us. We cannot crawl out of our time-space physical universe and on our power enter into eternity. We can't do that. We are bound by time and space. We are captive to the material physical world.

The only way we can know the supernatural world, the only way we can know God who rules the supernatural world is if God breaks into our world and reveals Himself, and He has done that. According to Psalm 19, He has done that two ways. First of all, in His creation. Psalm 19 begins, “The heavens are telling of the glory of God, and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech. Night to night reveals knowledge.”

What the Psalmist is saying is you can see God revealed in the universe, in the creation. Romans chapter 1 says, “What may be known about God is visible through His creation so that man is without excuse.” You have to believe there is a Creator. How else can you explain the creation? Every effect, every reality must have a cause behind it. So the very universe itself reveals something of God’s nature that He is intelligent, that He is powerful, that He is complex, that He is highly organized, that He loves beauty, that He loves righteousness, that He disdains sin. There are many elements of the nature of God that are manifest in creation, even things that are true about Him morally. That’s why Romans 2 says, “The law of God is written in the human heart.” Every human being has a sense of right and wrong, and that’s a God-given reflection of being created in His image.

So we can know that God is by the creation around us and our own lives, our own moral sense. So we can know enough about God, the Bible says, to be judged. We can know enough about God to be condemned. We can know enough about God from the creation to be damned. The problem is we cannot know enough about God to be saved. For the message of salvation, we have to go beyond the natural world. We have to go beyond natural revelation. We have to go to Scripture. Scripture alone informs us of God’s will for us, God’s plan of redemption, God’s purposes in salvation. That’s the main part of this Psalm that I want you to look at.

So drop down to verse 7, and in verse 7 through the end of the chapter, we have the revelation of God in Scripture, the revelation of God in the Bible. I want you to look at it, particularly, verses 7, 8, and 9, because in verses 7, 8, and 9, we have some very important simple straightforward statements about Scripture. There are six lines of thought here; two in verse 7, two in verse 8, and two in verse 9.

In these six lines of thought, God is telling us what we need to know about the Bible, about Scripture. Six titles for Scripture. It is called law and testimony and precepts and commandment and fear and judgments. Then there are six characteristics of Scripture. It is perfect. It is sure. It is right. It is pure. It is clean, and it is true. Then there are six benefits of Scripture. It restores the soul, makes wise the simple, rejoices the heart, enlightens the eyes, endures forever, and produces comprehensive righteousness.

Now, this is saying everything that needs to be said about the Bible with an economy of words. If you compare this, for example, to Psalm 119, which is all about Scripture. In psalm 119, God speaks of Scripture 175 verses. It's an extensive and repeated tribute to the Bible. Here, just three verses and six statements sum up all that's in Psalm 119. It is a comprehensive treatment of Scripture. Now, I want you to notice, first of all, how many times the phrase "of the Lord" is used. In verse 1, "of the Lord, of the Lord." Verse 2, "of the Lord, of the Lord." Verse 9, "of the Lord, of the Lord." Six times we are reminded that Scripture is from the Lord, that this is a divine book. No mistaking that. This is God's own revelation of His Word. This is God's own view of Scripture. That's the most important one to have, isn't it?

Now, let me break those six statements down, okay? Statement number one, "The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul. The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul." This, the law of the Lord, looks at the Bible as the manual or the directions for man's conduct. Scripture is the law of life, the law of human life. It is God's designed order for man. When you look at the Bible, you know that. You have the Mosaic Law. You have the mention of law all through it, and this is God's rules for man's conduct. That's all contained in Scripture.

All right, so the Bible is God's law, God's rule, God's absolutes for human conduct. As such, it is perfect. It is perfect. Now, what do we mean by perfect. We could mean a lot of things. We use the word "perfect" in many ways, but what are we seeing here in particular? The word "perfect" in the Hebrew means "complete." It's not perfect as opposed to imperfect, but it's perfect as opposed to incomplete. That's the original Hebrew. So what we have here is divine instruction that is

complete. We don't have anything left out. Everything we need to know is here. It means all that is necessary for life and godliness is here. This is God's complete revelation, His complete instruction for man's life. Now, what is the effect of this complete instruction? It restores the soul. It restores the soul.

Let's take the word "soul" for a minute. The word "soul" in Hebrew is *nephesh* [???]. That means the inner person. If you were to go to the Old Testament and you knew the Hebrew, you would see this word repeated many places in the Old Testament. Sometimes it's translated soul, sometimes spirit, sometimes person, sometimes heart, sometimes mind, but it always means the inner person. It means the inner person. Not the physical you, but the spiritual you, the eternal you, the person that never dies. Now notice, what happens to that person under the influence of the Scripture; the soul, the inner person is restored. Now, that word means to be transformed, converted, changed. The whole inner person changed.

There is the first of God's testimonies to Scripture. It is divine instruction from the Lord that is comprehensive and complete so that it can totally transform the whole inner person. What an amazingly comprehensive statement, and that is exactly what Peter means when he says, "We are regenerated, born again, given life by the Word of truth." We are transformed by the power of the very Word of God. Scripture is sufficient, then, for the conversion, the transformation, the restoration, the completion of the whole person.

Peter says, "We are not born again, we are not regenerated by corruptible seed, but by incorruptible, but the Word of God," the Word of God. The Word is the key to transformation. When you take the Bible and you just read it, in the hands of the Holy Spirit, it has the power to regenerate. It has the power to save. In fact, no one can be saved, regenerated, born again apart from understanding the Word of God. In particular, the Word of God concerning the person of Jesus Christ.

A second statement, and that second statement is also in verse 7. "The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The testimony of the Lord is sure making wise the simple." This looks at Scripture as God's own testimony. Yes, the law sees it as divine instruction, but this sees it as God's own personal testimony. It is God

revealing Himself. It is divine instruction, but it is also divine witness, God's own testimony. In other words, while it's written by men, it is not the testimony of men. It is the testimony of the Lord, just as it is the law of the Lord. As such, it is sure. That word means trustworthy or reliable. This testimony from the Lord Himself. All Scripture given by inspiration of God, every word from God the Holy Spirit is reliable. It is unmistakably true. It is to be trusted. It is to be followed. That's why Peter calls it, 2 Peter 1, "A more sure word." More sure than what? More sure than any other word. More sure than any other word. God's Word as law is more binding than any other law. God's Word as testimony from the Lord is more true, more sure than any other word.

What does this do? This is so important. It makes wise the simple. It makes wise the simple. Let me just talk about that for a minute. The Hebrew language is very concrete. It's not kind of ethereal. It's not just cognitive. It's very down-to-earth. So the phrase "simple" or the word "simple" basically means an open door. It's an open door. It means to be naïve. It means to lack discernment in its metaphorical sense, but in its simple sense, it means an open door.

Why is there a connection there? Because people have a mind with a door, and for many people, they don't know when to shut the door or when to open the door because they lack discrimination. They don't know what to reject. They don't know what to accept. That's how it is in the world. The Psalmist talks a lot about this. The book of Proverbs talks a lot about being simple-minded, naïve, ignorant. That's having a mind with the door open. You hear people say that, "I have an open mind." Well, God would say, "Close it." You have a door on your house or a door on your apartment, and you have that door so that you can close it and keep certain people out and certain people in; namely your little children in and somebody who might do harm out.

You make judgments as to who you let in and who you keep out, and your mind is the same thing. The Word of God comes to the person who doesn't know what to accept and what to reject, what to embrace and what to push away, doesn't know what is good and what is bad, what is helpful, and what is dangerous. The Word of God makes that simple person wise, wise. Well, what does that word mean? Well,

again, in the Hebrew it's chakam [??] and chakam [??] means skilled in living. It isn't just wise in a mental sense. It isn't just wise in a philosophical sense. It's wise in conduct, wise in behavior.

We call it in English, common sense, being sensible, being reasonable, mastering the matters of life. How does the Word of God accomplish this? The Word of God, the testimony from the Lord is trustworthy to take a simple-minded person and make that person skilled in all aspects of living, and it does that because it is so comprehensive and so complete. When you look at the Bible you have the law of God that can totally transform the soul; that's salvation. And then you have the testimony of the Lord that can make the simple wise; that's sanctification, edification, spiritual development, spiritual growth.

The Word of God is necessary for salvation. The Word of God is necessary for spiritual development and sanctification. The Bible gives us adequate instruction on every issue in life. Again, we have in Scripture the mind of Christ revealed to us so we know how He thinks about all the matters of life. What an incredible and amazing treasure the Bible is. So it is law and it is testimony. It is perfect, comprehensive, and it is trustworthy. It transforms the inner person, and it makes the naïve and the simple-minded, skilled in every aspect of living.

Then go to verse 8. In verse 8 we are, again, looking at Scripture under a different term. "The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart." Precepts or statutes mean doctrines, principles, guidelines. The Bible is law. It is God's testimony, and it is also doctrine. It is also precepts, principles. As such, these principles in Scripture are right. Now, let me talk about right for a minute. Not right so much as opposed to wrong, although they are right as opposed to wrong. They are righteous. But the word here means they set a right path. They establish a right path. The Psalmist says in Psalm 119 that the Word is a, "Light to our path." Well, that's true. The Word is not only the light to the path, the Word establishes the path. Scripture says this is the way; walk in it.

So how do you live your life? How do you navigate through your marriage? How do you navigate through your family issues? How do you navigate in your

neighborhood? How do you get along with the people around you? How do you interpret the issues that you face as a nation or the issues you face in your town or your village? How do you deal with all the matters of life that concern your heart, that have an impact on you? The precepts of the Lord revealed in Scripture, the truths and doctrines, lay out a clear path. I have to say, the path is clear. It is well-lit by the Word itself.

It needs to be said that the Bible is clear. In fact, this is its own testimony. Do you remember many times when Jesus was talking to the Jewish leaders in the gospels, He said to them this, "Have you not read? Have you not read? Have you not read?" He was asking them if they had read the Old Testament. They were demonstrating ignorance. How hard should it have been for them to understand what they didn't understand? Jesus said, "Read it. Have you not read?" It doesn't take some kind of an erudite, elevated, highly trained scholar to understand the message of Scripture. In fact, Jesus said you have to become as a little child to even enter into the kingdom.

The Word of God is clear. It is clear. It is understandable. I think as you begin to use the study Bible that you're going to receive, you're going to find that the Word begins to open up in a simple, straight-forward and clear fashion. There are people who think the Bible is very complicated, almost dark, hard to understand, but it is revelation. It is light itself. It is so that you will understand, you can understand. As I interpret the Word of God, I interpret the Word of God the same way that men of God have interpreted the Scriptures back centuries and centuries and centuries all the way back to the age of the New Testament itself.

We're not teaching some new doctrine, something that's never been taught, something we invented, but simply making clear for this generation and this world what the Bible means and what the faithful men have always known that it means. I will assure you that you can read the Scripture, and with a little bit of help, you can understand what it means. What is the benefit of that? Go back to verse 8, look at the benefit. "The precepts of the Lord are right," or they lay out a right path, and what's the benefit? "Rejoicing the heart, rejoicing the heart."

Scripture provides joy. True joy comes from following God's Word, Jeremiah 15:16. Jeremiah said, "Your Word was found and I ate it – " I received it, " - and your Word was in me, the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Now, you have to know, Jeremiah had been rejected by the nation Israel. Israel was about to go into captivity into Babylon. Jerusalem was going to be destroyed. Nobody listened to Jeremiah. In fact, they took him prisoner and threw him in a deep pit hoping he would die. Here is a preacher and nobody listens, and still in the midst of all that he suffered he can say, "Your Word was found, and I rejoiced."

The Word is the source of joy. John the apostle said, "These things I write unto you, little children, that my joy might remain in you and that your joy may be full." Full joy comes from walking the right path. That's the path of joy. You want joy in your life? Walk the right path. Be obedient to the Word of God. What an incredible gift is the Bible. It is so comprehensive that it can totally transform the inner person. That's salvation. It is so trustworthy that it can make us skilled in all aspects of living, and that's sanctification. It lays out a right path, and when we walk in that path, it becomes the source of constant joy in the inner man, rejoicing the heart.

This is not superficial. This is not external. This is a deep down joy. In Luke 11:28 we read, "Happy are they who hear the Word and obey it." Do you remember the two disciples on the Road to Emmaus in Luke 24? They were sad. They couldn't quite understand why Jesus had been crucified. They thought He was going to be the Messiah. They didn't yet know about the resurrection. They're walking on the road to Emmaus, and then Jesus all of the sudden appears to them, has a conversation, and what did He do? He went to Moses and the law and the prophets, the Old Testament, and taught them the Old Testament, taught them all the things concerning Himself in the Old Testament.

What was their response? They said this, "Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us on the way?" Literally, their hearts were lit on fire with joy when they understood the Word of God. I can experience that constantly in my life. I do. I look at the world around me, and there's a lot to be sad about, a lot to be discouraged about. The world is full of terrible and frightening realities. There are devastated relationships everywhere. There are people who are crushed and

broken everywhere. There is hopelessness everywhere. How can you maintain joy? Because you're not caught up in that. Your joy is not connected to the changing world. Your joy is not connected to the circumstances. Your joy is connected to your obedience in the right path, leading to eternal glory and reward.

Obedience produces joy. Do you remember the eunuch in Acts chapter 8 when he received the message of the Gospel and he opened his heart to Christ? It says, "He went on his way rejoicing, rejoicing." So Scripture is the source of joy, the source of joy. "These are written that you might have full joy." Ask yourself what people want? What do people want? What do your neighbors want? What do you want out of life? You come into life. What's the meaning? What's the sense of it? Do you just live in a mass of humanity until you die and it's over, or is there something else? What do you want?

How about this. You would want a total transformation of yourself. You would like to be a far better person than you are in your sin. The Word of God provides that. You would like to be able to comprehend and understand the things in the world that are so challenging, but you don't have the wisdom, but the Word of God gives you the wisdom to be able to interpret life in all of its nuances. You'd like to go through life with joy, with real deep down unassailable joy, and that's what the Word of God provides.

Now, that brings us to the second part of verse 8, "The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." Now, this views the Bible as commandments. They aren't just insights. They aren't optional. The things that the Scripture lays out are commandments. They are mandates. They are requirements by God, but notice this. God's commands are clear. That's what the word means, clear. Some translations may say pure, but the better word is clear. God's commands are clear, clear, enlightening the eyes.

We talked a little bit about that already, but life can be a very dark reality. It can be very bleak, trying to understand the way things are in the world. We need to see things clearly. I often say that if somebody would ask me, I would be glad to talk to the leaders of the United States of America, the president and the congress and the

senate and give them a clear understanding of everything. I'd be happy to tell them clearly what's going on, to give them full understanding, to enlighten them. I could tell them about the future. I can tell them what's coming in the future because I have a divine revelation that has been laid that out. I don't walk in the darkness. I walk in the light. We walk in the light. Things are clear.

I like to tell a story. We had a young family come to our church, and there were two daughters about the age of 18 or 20, and there was a son a little bit younger, maybe 16, and mother and father. They were driving their car through an intersection, and a truck came and hit the car at high speed, and killed both the daughters instantly, killed them both. Devastating injuries to the young boy, who was placed in the hospital. The mother and father had only superficial injuries, but they were sitting in the middle of the highway with two dead children lying nearby.

I knew about them because I knew them. They were missionaries, and I found my way to talk to the father. His name was John. I said to him, "John." This is just a few hours after the event. I said, "What are you thinking?" He said, "Well, we had another boy in the car, and he didn't get injured, and he was not a Christian." He said, "I'm just thankful that God in His mercy spared that boy who would have gone to hell, and took my daughters to heaven." How can a father have that kind of clarity? How can he see with that kind of clear vision? Because the Word of God tells him where his daughters were.

He said to me, "I was bringing my daughters to your church, to Grace Church to hear the big choir. I wanted them to hear the big choir and the orchestra and the music, but God had another plan." He said, "He wanted them to be in the heavenly choir." How can you see that clearly? You can't without the Word of God. He knew the promise of the Gospel that, "If you believe – " Jesus said " - I am the resurrection the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live." The Scripture is clear, and he saw clearly the reality of that darkness. Apart from Scripture, people can't see through the darkness. Life looks sad and bleak and dark. Even with technological advances such as you're experiencing in China, the darkness of the mind and the soul is never dispelled. It never goes away apart from the revelation of the Word of God.

Now, verse 9, "The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever." What is the fear of the Lord? Fear is another word for honor or worship. The Bible is a book of worship. It tells us how to worship God in spirit and in truth. It is God's manual on worship, and it is clean. What does that mean? Without corruption, without error, without evil. Every word of God is pure, the Bible says, like silver seven times purified in a fire. What we have here is instruction on worship, how to worship God in an acceptable way. The words of the Lord are pure words. They are hallowed, holy, separate words. So, I love this, they endure forever. They endure forever. They're timeless. What we're reading in the Psalms, thousands of years ago. The words are timeless.

I am in the United States of America. You're in Hong Kong, China. We have completely distinct cultures, completely distinct cultural experiences, and yet the Word of God in every generation in every location in every culture speaks clearly and truly and cleanly without error, the Word of God.

The Bible doesn't need to be edited. It doesn't need to be updated. It doesn't need to be repaired or changed. It is the same now and forever. "Not one jot or tittle shall in any wise be removed from this law until all is fulfilled," Jesus said in Matthew 5. In John 10:35 He says Scripture can't be broken. No single Scripture can be released. You can't pull anything out. When He said, "Scripture cannot be broken," He was referring to one word in the Old Testament. You can't pull one word loose out of Scripture. It is a chain that cannot be broken and because it is pure and because it is without error, it endures forever. Where there is sin, there is death. But with the Word of God, there is no error. There is no death. We will literally throughout all eternity be worshipping God in the purest and fullest expression fulfilling the very patterns of worship that He laid out in Scripture.

One final statement is made. "The judgments of the Lord are true. They are comprehensively righteous." What are the judgments of the Lord? Divine verdicts by the God who is the judge of all men. Scripture says He is the judge of all the earth. He renders the final verdict on every nation, on every individual. All determinations belong to God and Christ. The Father has committed all judgment to the Son, and Scripture reveals His judgments, His verdicts, His decisions. Scripture

reveals destinies, and His judgments are true. That is accurate and dependable. When God says something, that's a true judgment. That's a true evaluation. His Word is truth.

Then at the end of verse 9, "His words, His judgments are completely righteous." Everything that God says, every judgment made in Scripture is completely righteous, comprehensively righteous, and we end up where we started. Scripture is complete to restore the soul, and here it is complete righteousness. This is the Word of God.

So what more could God offer? You want a totally transformed inner person? The Word of God produces it. You want to be skilled in all areas of living? The Word of God produces it. You want to live a life of joy in the heart? It comes from obeying the Word of God. You want to be able to understand the dark issues of life and see them clearly? It's all revealed in the Word of God. You want a timeless book that is not bound by the calendar, that is not bound by the centuries, that is not bound by cultural constraints of definitions? This is the spotless, pure Word which endures forever in all times and all cultures. Do you want something that is totally true, totally true and only true to produce complete righteousness? God testifies this is His Word. This is His Word. It has no equal.

When I think about ministry as a pastor, ministry as a Bible teacher, here's the simplicity of ministry: everything God has revealed is in one book. Everything God has revealed is in one book. It starts with Genesis. It ends with Revelation. All God's revelation is in that book. This is the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

So we have to know this one book, preach this one book, live this one book, and God promises all these benefits. Now, since Scripture does this, look at verse 10. Here is our response. Here is our response. The words of Scripture are our most valuable possession. They are more desirable than gold, yes than much fine gold. There is nothing that equals the value of Scripture. More desirable than gold, yes than limitless fine gold, more precious than any other possession. Then it is our greatest pleasure. It is sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.

In ancient days the sweetness of honey was the most delectable of all things. The Word of God is more pleasurable, more delectable than the purest honey. It is sweet. It is precious. Then in verse 11, it is our protection. “Moreover, but the words of Scripture your servant is warned.” We read the Word of God and it warns us to avoid things that are destruction and that steal our joy and rob our influence for the Gospel. It’s our greatest protection. “Thy Word,” says David, “have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against you.”

Then it’s our greatest reward. Verse 11, “In keeping the words of Scripture, there is great reward.” Literally, in the Hebrew it has a great end. It doesn’t use the Word reward. It leads to a great end, a great eternal conclusion with an eternal reward. Crowns of righteousness, crown of life that we will receive when we see the Lord. Scripture is our greatest possession, more precious than gold; our greatest pleasure, sweeter than honey; our greatest protection, we are warned by, our greatest reward.

Then in verse 12 he says, “Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults. Keep back your servant from presumptuous sins. Let them not rule over me. Then I will be acquitted of great transgression.” What does he mean there? Scripture is what purifies us. Scripture helps us discern our sins. Scripture keeps us back from hidden sins. Scripture reveals our tendency to lust on the inside, to be characterized by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

Where we follow Scripture, we will be blameless and acquitted of great transgression. Scripture is positively our greatest desire, positively our greatest pleasure. But negatively, it also is our greatest protection, and it keeps us from sin.

So what should be our response? Our response is in verse 14. “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.” What’s he saying here? He’s saying I have to make sure that the things I say and the things I think are acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. What does that mean? That means that the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart to be acceptable must be consistent with Scripture. I must think your thoughts. I must speak your words. And I think that the Psalmist drew this from Joshua chapter 1.

Listen to Joshua 1:8, “This book of the law – ” Scripture, “ - shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night.” That’s exactly what Psalm 19 says. Meditate on it and let the words of your mouth and the meditations of your heart be acceptable. To be acceptable, says Joshua 1:8, they must be on the book of the law, Scripture, “So that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. Then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.” A life that is prosperous and successful spiritually, influentially in the world around you, in your family is the product of thinking, meditating on the Word of God, speaking the Word of God.

What kind of thoughts are acceptable to God? What kind of words are acceptable to God? Biblical thoughts, Biblical words. All that we think and all that we say should be concerning the Scripture. Job said this, Job 23:12, “I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.” I will starve with no food if I have the Word of my God. Psalm 138:2 says, “You have magnified your Word above all your name.” When you hold the Scripture in your hand, this is what you have, this treasure laid out here in this magnificent Psalm 19.

Yes, the first part of the Psalm talks about general revelation that you can see around you in the creation and know there is a Creator and know He’s powerful and wise and all of that. That’s enough to make you condemned because you’re without excuse, Romans 1 says. But to be saved, you have to have the written word. “Faith comes by hearing the word concerning Christ,” Romans 10 says. You could never put a price on the Bible, and that’s what the Lord is saying to us here. This is God’s own testimony to His Word. It’s important what people think about Scripture, but it’s far more important what God thinks about it, and this is His own declaration.

May God light a fire in you so that you’re like those disciples on the road to Emmaus that you can say, “Did not our hearts burn within us while He opened the Word of God to us?” Now, in just a word to you that are pastors, I have showed you tonight a pattern – tonight for me, this morning for you. I have showed you a pattern to bring the Word of God to life. This is what all pastors are called to do. This is why the

apostle Paul says, “Preach the Word,” not preach about the Word, but “Preach the Word.” Go into it and let it speak.

You looked at that passage with me. It’s clear. It’s not hard to understand, and it’s so enriching. It brings joy to your heart. The Word should always do that. It should never be a burden. You should never come to it with indifference. “It is alive and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword,” the writer of Hebrews says. So may God light a fire in you in these wonderful days together, a fire of joy around the understanding of His precious Word.