

The Importance of God's Word

Sunday, March 18 – 8:00 & 10:45

Fifth Sunday in Lent – 2018

Holy Week: TH at 11 & 7; FR at 11 & 7 | Easter Sunday at 7 & 10:45

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ:

We know the importance of God's Word:

1. It is God-breathed ([2Timothy 3:16](#))!
2. It came *from God to us* as the Holy Spirit worked in conjunction with the prophets, Jesus, and the apostles!
3. It tells us the truth about creation, sin, and salvation!
4. It is the means through which *God made us His children!*
5. It is the means through which *God continues to work* in our lives today to ♦curb our sin, ♦keep us looking to Jesus, and ♦guide us in how to live as Christians!

Today we focus today on a small portion of Psalm 119:

- ✦ It is the longest chapter in the whole Bible.
- ✦ Martin Luther, *as an Augustinian monk*, probably memorized all of its 176 verses.
- ✦ The structure of the Psalm is based on the 22 letters of the *Hebrew alphabet* – *Aleph, Beth, Gimel*; for example:
 - The first letter is Aleph, so – *in Hebrew* – the first word in verses 1-8 begins with Aleph.
 - The first word in verses 9-16 begins with Beth.
 - The first word in verses 17-24 begins with Gimel.

As we move through the “Beth” section, may the Holy Spirit encourage us to **use God's Word** against the devil and the world – *as they try to lead us into sin and condemnation!*

1. **⁹ How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word.**
 - a. Why does it reference a “**young man**”? In general, *young men and young women* are less experienced with life, so they – *along with all of us* – need the instruction of God’s Holy Word!
 - b. Unbelievers tend to live for themselves, but believers – *according to their new nature* – desire to live for God. Consider this passage: “...let no one deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous...; the one who practices sin is of the devil...” (1 Jn. 3:7-8 NAS).
2. **¹⁰ With all my heart I have sought You; Do not let me wander from Your commandments** [*from the authority of Your word*]. // Those who **know they are sinners and believe in the LORD** are the ones who seek Him; they “**seek Him in an attitude of repentance**” (TLSB, 843), with sorrow for their sins **and trust in His great mercy!**
3. **¹¹ Your word I have treasured** [*hidden – like buried treasure*] **in my heart, That I may not sin against You.**
 - a. When we treasure something, *we try to hold onto it in such a way that it can never be taken away from us!* When it comes to the Bible, *the best way to treasure it is to memorize it!*
 - b. The Holy Spirit works through God’s Word to **guide our living and convict us when we fall.**
 - c. Dr. Luther wrote in the Large Catechism: “**We should daily be engaged with God’s Word and carry it in our hearts and upon our lips**” (LC I 89).

4. ¹² **Blessed are You, O LORD; Teach me Your statutes** [*Your laws, the witnessing character of Your word*].
- Dr. Luther commented: “Because You, the Blessed One, bestow blessing, I want to be taught by You, for You are such a lawgiver who gives blessing” (AE 11:419).
 - In the world someone might say to a successful financial expert: “I know your words can make me rich, so I am eager to learn them!” The psalmist basically said, “LORD, I know Your words will richly bless me, so I am eager to learn them!”
5. ¹³ **With my lips I have told of All the ordinances** [*orders, judgments, laws*] **of Your mouth.**
- Before we speak God’s Word, it is important to know the Bible is God’s Word, study it thoroughly, and put it into practice (Ezra 7:10).
 - The Lord told Ezekiel to go to the people of his nation and “tell them [God’s Truth], whether they listen or not...” (Ezekiel 3:11 NAS).
 - Paul said to the pastors in Ephesus, “I am innocent of the blood of all, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:26b-27 ESV). So when we know God’s Truth, *it is important to declare it!*
6. ¹⁴ **I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies** [*Your solemn declarations*], **As much as in all riches.** // Why did the psalmist rejoice in what the LORD said? His heart was fixed on things most important and eternal!
7. ¹⁵ **I will meditate on Your precepts** [*Your rules intended to regulate thought or behavior, Your word as the supervisor of my*

life] **And regard** [*respect*] **Your ways.** // The LORD said to Joshua, *regarding the first five books of the Bible*: “**This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth** [*thus you shall not stop talking about it*], **but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it** [*But why?*]; for then you will **make your way prosperous**, and then you will **have success**” (Jos. 1:8 NAS).

8. ¹⁶ **I shall delight** [*take great pleasure*] **in Your statutes** [*laws*]; **I shall not forget Your word.** // These are some reasons to **delight** and **not forget**; Moses said to the people, “...the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God **for our good always and for our survival...**” (Deut. 6:24 NAS).

Conclusion: These are some comments from the People’s Bible Commentary on Psalm 119 (pages 195-197):

- ✦ “Psalm 119 requires meditation.... remember [that] the great truths of God’s Word are worth saying more than once. They are worth thinking about.”
- ✦ “God’s Word gives us *stability* so that we are not pulled in every direction by pressure from people of the world.”
- ✦ “God’s Word should be read, studied, meditated upon, and memorized, so that it is hidden in our hearts for use whenever we need it.”

Let us pray: Father in heaven, we thank You for Your Word; *help us to treasure it!* Since we cannot keep it perfectly, *keep us ever-trusting in Your perfect Son and His perfect sacrifice!*

CONNECT WITH US → Website: www.BethlehemLutheranChurchParma.com
Podcast: Benefit from the Bible | Facebook: Bethlehem Lutheran Church Parma
Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, Ohio 44134, 440-845-2230