

We Worship

Psalm 119:169–176

Pastor Jeremy Cagle, May 6, 2018

Get those men up here and hear that again, amen? As I was hearing that, I was thinking about what they would say. I have been at Grace Fellowship for just over a year now, and I've heard it said several times that we have some wonderful people here. And I would echo that completely.

I had one friend who told me, “When you go there, these people are going to bless your socks off.” And he was absolutely right. You guys have been such a tremendous blessing to me. And I actually started listing all the different ways you've done that this past year. That's what the whole sermon's about. I mean how you guys have blessed me. I just have a few here. I wanted to give my personal testimony to you.

You know, first of all, you guys have prayed for me. That's probably the biggest blessing you've given to me as a church. You guys know how much I love Charles Spurgeon, but he was once asked, “You know, Pastor Spurgeon what's the secret to your success?” And he said, “My people pray for me.” He said, “They pray for me.” And I know you guys do that for me. You've told me that. You pray for the work here. You pray for the blessing of the gospel in this town. And you pray for all the things that are going on here, and that's the only secret to success in ministry. And I thank you for that.

You also encourage me. I can't think of too many Sundays when someone doesn't come up and say something encouraging to me about this church. About our care groups, about our worship team, about how friendly the people are. It's just encouragement after encouragement here, that I hear from you.

Actually, when I first came, I had one man ask me if I could preach longer. Some of you are saying, “No, no, no, no.” That blew me away. I've never heard that before. But this man came up to me and he said, “I'm in the world all week. I'm around sin all week, I just want to be in church longer. Can you preach a longer?” I said, “Okay.” But that is such an encouragement to hear. And I hear that kind of thing from you guys all the time.

You've also accepted my family. That's another thing you've done for me. You know, Canada is new for my wife and kids as well. It's new for me, it's new for them. We come from a long way away. I think it was 2,300 miles from doorstep to doorstep when we moved. That's a long way, but you couldn't tell that we're new by the way you treat us. You guys just embraced us as your own.

You know, you've got my wife drinking tea now, she drinks hot tea. She hasn't gotten into the crumpets yet, but she drinks hot tea. You've got my sons to wear Canucks jerseys. If you go up to Jason, he'll say, “Goal!” He'll say, “Goal!” He doesn't know when to say it, but he'll say it. And then he'll eat whatever you have in your hand.

But I have just a whole list of these things. I just want to say thank you. I mean I don't think I've

had a chance to say that in a while. But thank you for accepting me as your pastor, accepting my family. Thank you for all the ways that you've blessed us and continue to. It's just been a privilege and a delight to be here. When I came, I didn't know what it was going to be like. A lot of people said, "Are you going to like being in Canada?" And I said, "I've never lived there before, I don't know." I've liked it, because of you guys.

As a matter of fact, you know, I think I told you guys this before. But when I first heard about this church in Chilliwack, Canada, I thought, "Well I'm going to go home and my wife is going to say 'no.'" Because she said, "I'll go south and I'll go east and west, but I won't go north from central Indiana." And so, I came to her, and what she said was this. She said, "If you love the people, you can make it work." And it's worked because of you guys. And I just want to say thank you.

I'm supposed to cry at the end of the sermon, not the front. So, let me get myself ... It's been said the people make the church. The people make the church, and we have some wonderful people here, which means we have a wonderful church, amen? And I want to say thank you for that.

All right now, what I want to talk about this morning is why are we here as a church? Okay, so we have some wonderful people. That's a given. We have some tremendous folks here at Grace Fellowship Church, but what do we want to do with them? What are we trying to accomplish as a church body? What's our vision? As you know, it says Vision Sunday.

Last summer when I was at the Grace Advance Academy, they had us put together a vision statement for our church. To talk about what we wanted it to be and where we wanted it to go in the days ahead, kind of a projection for ministry. And the opening paragraph says this (you can follow along on the screen up here). But the opening paragraph of our Vision Statement (it's also on our website, if you'd like to look at it later), it says,

Our vision is to proclaim grace upon grace to Chilliwack, British Columbia and to the ends of the earth. John 1:16-17 says, "16 For of His fullness we have received, and grace upon grace. 17 For the law was given through Moses; but grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ." At Grace Fellowship Chilliwack, we believe that salvation is all of grace and not of works. We believe it is something that God alone accomplishes in our lives, and nothing we contribute to ourselves. We believe it is unmerited favour...

(By the way that word "favour" is spelled with a "U". I think you guys will like that. I got my American computer, and I got my Canadian cell phone, and they battle back and forth about where to put "U's". I just want to tell you that real quick).

...That we believe it is unmerited favour where Jesus earns the Father's approval and, in His mercy, gives us the benefits of that through His shed blood on the cross, and victorious resurrection from the tomb. Since we have received all of this, it is our vision as a church to proclaim grace upon grace in several ways.

And I've got them all listed up here for you. I believe it's up here in the next slide. That we proclaim grace upon grace through the Bible. We proclaim it through worship. We proclaim

grace upon grace through evangelism and through service. We proclaim it through counseling, through leadership, and finally, through equipping the saints.

And again, if you would like to read all of that, all those points are listed on our website. But this is what we're here for as a church to proclaim grace to people. To tell people that salvation is through faith and not through works. They don't earn it. You don't contribute to salvation, you believe in Jesus and He does all the work, and you're saved through Him.

I met someone from town the other day, who looked kind of rough. He had tattoos all over his neck and arms. And he had part of his head shaved and an earring in his ear, very friendly guy, very nice guy. And I was going to try to evangelize him. Our conversation got cut short, but I remember thinking, "Look, I don't know your background. I don't know what you believe but you can be saved just like me. You can be saved through grace. You don't have to let your hair grow back. You don't have to take your earring out, you don't have to wash those tattoos off before you go to heaven. You can be saved now through Jesus Christ, amen?"

That's what we tell people. That's our vision as a church. You don't earn it, God does it all. And we proclaim it several different ways. The first way, we talked about a couple of months ago: We proclaim grace upon grace through the Bible. So, the preaching and teaching of God's Word is one way we proclaim this. But I want to talk about the second point this morning. We've talked about that first point before. But what I want to spend our time this morning is talking about the second point of our Vision Statement: We proclaim grace upon grace through worship.

And the second point says this. It says,

Because God's grace is so prevalent in the Bible, we're also committed to emphasizing it in our worship. Colossians 3:16 says, "Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your heart to God." and we take that admonition seriously. As we hear the Word of God preached and taught, we respond to it in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. We're so thankful for all God has done for us that we cannot help but proclaim it through music and through the ordinances of baptism, and the Lord's Supper.

You know, just to comment on this, Colossians three says to "Let the word of God richly dwell in you." That means to let the Word of God live and thrive in you. Let it get comfortable in your soul. And as it does that, you worship. As it does and you respond to it in song. If you noticed, there's a progression of thought in that passage. You let the Word of God dwell in you, and then you worship. You let the Bible marinate in your heart and then you sing about it.

The word "worship" means "to give worth to something, to give value to it". One of the Hebrew words for that actually means "to give weight to it, to make it feel heavy or important." You know, when the prime minister walks into a room, people stand, right? Why do they do that? Because he's important. His office has weight.

I remember being at a funeral several years ago and I saw a three...there was four-star general at

this funeral. Someone told me, “You will probably never see someone that high rank in the military again.” But the interesting thing about that guy I remember, was every time he walked by a soldier, they stiffened up. It was like someone put a rod in their back. That’s because his office had weight to it. It was valuable on the side of the US Army.

It’s the same way with God. We stand when God walks in the room spiritually speaking. We bow before His throne. That’s what worship is. Worship is acknowledging the value and importance in height and depth and majesty of God. And we do it through music as the Vision Statement said. We do it through baptism and the Lord’s Supper. We worship God that way. We do it through prayer, you saw that this morning. We have some wonderful prayer warriors up here week in and week out, don’t we? They do a great job. We worship God through testimony, like you heard today. We do it through our giving, our financial giving. We do it through the reading of God’s Word.

But it all goes back to that, it all goes back to the Word of God. God’s Word can’t spill out of you if it isn’t inside of you, right? Does that make sense? God’s Word can’t come out in all those different ways if it isn’t in here to begin with. We can say it this way, a non-believer can’t worship God, not like this. Because he doesn’t have the Word of God richly dwelling inside of him. Only Christians can do that, only the church can do this. And that’s why it’s so important for us to get this this morning.

And with that said, I want to take you to a passage today that helps you understand this relationship between the Word of God and worship. It helps us to get our minds around this topic. It’s Psalm 119. You guys said you wanted me to preach longer. See, that’s a funny joke. I’m trying to give you guys good quality pastor funny jokes. And we’re going to look at how to worship as a church this week and next week. We’re going to talk about how we’re going to give praise to God. And we’re going to do it by looking at Psalm 119.

This is the longest chapter in the Bible. It has a total of 176 verses in it. To put that in perspective, the second longest chapter in the Bible is Numbers seven, and it only has 89 verses in it. So, this is way bigger than the next largest chapter. It’s also, interestingly enough, it’s also right next to the shortest chapter in the Bible. Does anybody know what the shortest chapter in the Bible is? Psalm 117, right? It’s a few chapters beside it.

And it’s also next to the exact center of the Bible. You guys are going to get a lot of Bible trivia today. You’re going to impress your friends when you go home. But the exact center of the Bible, if you were to count up verses, is Psalm 118:8. That’s the middle of the Bible, it’s a great verse. It says, “It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man.” That’s a really neat center of the Bible there. But our focus this morning is on Psalm 119, which is anonymous. We don’t know who wrote it. Some say David did, some say Ezra or Daniel. Those are all good guesses, but we don’t know for sure.

Also because of its size, it’s generated a lot of discussion and commentary in the church. So for example, in his commentary on the Psalms, Charles Bridges wrote 481 pages on it. And the Puritan, Thomas Minton in good Puritan style, wrote three volumes on it; each one containing 500 pages. Imagine sitting through that sermon series. “Pastor, what are we preaching? Psalm 1

...we've been in this thing for 20 years, you know.” There's also been...(Just as background, I think this is helpful to kind of get our minds around this chapter). There's been some great stories told about Psalm 119. I'm just going to mention a few.

In the 17th century, a bishop named George Wishart was sentenced to be hung. So, he asked that Psalm 119 be read at his execution. That's brilliant. I'm going to hang on to whatever chance I got you know, and get somebody who stutters. Who needs help. “I don't know what this word...” And it took so long to read...(this is a true story) it took so long to read it, that word got out that he was unjustly accused and a pardon arrived from the king. It was said the Psalm saved his life and his soul. It saved him physically and politically and spiritually.

Another story comes from David Livingston, the missionary. When he was a boy, his Sunday school teacher told the class that if anyone could memorize Psalm 119 in a week, he would buy them a Bible. It was 1800s and Bibles were not as common. So, this Sunday School teacher said, “If anybody can come back next week and recite the entire Psalm 119, I'll buy you a shiny new Bible.” David Livingston came back and did it. As a 12-year old boy, he came back and repeated this whole thing word for word. It was kind of a sign of the man he was going to become. He took that marvelous memory and brain that God gave him, and he went through medical school and seminary at the same time. And then went off to Africa to become a missionary.

But that's some of the history that's in this portion of the Bible, some of the history in this chapter of the Word of God. From start to finish, Psalm 119 tells us how to worship in light of the Word of God. In fact, you see the phrase “the word” mentioned more than 40 times in this chapter. Because that's what it's all about. This is about the Word of God and the impact it should have on a man's life.

I told you in our series in Romans, that nobody ever throws dynamite in a room and expects nothing to change. You throw dynamite, you throw the gospel in a room, everything changes. The Psalmist says, “If you throw the Word of God in a room, everything changes.” It especially changes the way you worship. A saved man is a worshipping man. A saved man, a born-again child of God loves to give glory and honour to his Father. He loves to sing, he loves to pray. He loves to do all those things we just talked about. He can't help it, it just flows out of him.

Have you guys ever heard of the young man who said that he had a drug problem growing up? His mother drugged him to church. Yeah. See, my jokes if you just give them time...sometimes time doesn't help. But he said, “Yeah, my mom drugged me to Sunday School, drugged me to choir practice, I had a “drug” problem.”

Listen, a believer does not have to be dragged anywhere, amen? When it comes to worshipping God. We want to be here. We want to be with God's people. We'll tear down the church doors if we have to, to get in. We'll beat them down, and that's what this Psalm is all about. And we don't have time to look at all of it. But what I want to do this morning is look at the very end of it with you. Next week we'll look at another portion of this Psalm. But I actually want to start at the very end of it, because it summarizes the whole thing. The end of Psalm 119 gives us a summary about it.

So, if you want to turn over to verse 169, and we're going to look at the letter Tav. If you noticed, a lot of your Bibles have these strange looking things right above them. Do you guys see that? It says Kaph and Shin, and Tav. My brother Matt Viljoen is here. Matt and I were in Hebrew class together. So, if you want Matt to write all these letters out for you on a piece of paper, he'll do that. I don't remember them. But I did pass Hebrew.

The reason it does this, is because Psalm 119 is an acrostic poem, which means every section starts with the same letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Hebrew is not a very pretty language to speak, and so they didn't get into rhyming and all that. But what they did do is, they would arrange their poetry with different kind of word orders. And one word order they would do, is they would start every section off with a different letter of their alphabet. And so that's what Psalm 119 is.

And starting in verse 169, you see that everything with the last letter of the alphabet here, the letter "tav". And the author does this to summarize everything that chapter is about. So, this is a summary of Psalm 119. Again, we'll talk about another portion of it next week. But I want to talk about the summary of it. And the summary is this (the outline's very simple if you're taking notes). Here are four responses to the Word of God. Four responses to the Word of God.

This Psalm is about that topic, it's about the Word of God. It's about the impact the Word should have on your life. It's about how you should worship and praise God as it richly dwells in you. He says, "This is what you should do. This is how you should respond." And we have four responses.

The first one is this: you should cry out for understanding. The first response a believer should have to the Word of God, is you should cry out for understanding. Maybe another way to say this, you should pray. You should pray. All worship starts with prayer, right? It starts with you calling out to God. You can't give worth and glory and honour to God without praying and speaking to Him. And that's how the Psalmist starts out. If you look at verse 169, he says, "Let my cry come before You, O LORD; Give me understanding according to Your word."

The word "cry" here is an interesting word. It's from the Hebrew word *renanah* which means "a ringing cry or a loud cry". It could mean "shout". As the Psalmist is wrapping this thing up, he shouts out loud, "Give me understanding according to Your word. Now that's interesting, because you would think that a guy that wrote the longest chapter in the Bible would not have to pray for understanding, right? You would think at the end of this thing, he would kind of get it.

But when he uses the word "understanding" here, he means discernment or perception. And the way he uses it makes it sound like he wants to apply this to his life. He wants to live out what he's learned, and he's wrestling with that. And so, he prays, "Lord, give me understanding. Help me know how to make this a part of my life. Help me live in a way that pleases You." And it's always this way with the Bible. The more you know, the more you need to know, amen? I mean the more you learn, the more you have to cry out for understanding. You don't ever get to a portion of the Bible and say, "Okay, I got that. I'm done." and shut the book.

You know, one author said, "The Scripture is a river where the lamb may walk, but the elephant has to swim." And the idea is a child can understand the Bible, right? You can go downstairs and

get your flannelgraph out and kids can follow you. But a scholar is going to spend years on this book. And you have to ask God to help you.

You know, the French have a proverb that says, “All good meals start with hunger.” And worship is the same way. You have to be hungry for the Word of God. You have to be starving to know what it says. You have to always come back for more and keep coming back for more, and keep coming back for more, and keep coming back for more. That’s how you know you’re alive, right? You have an appetite. Dead men don’t have appetites. They don’t eat anything. Those who are spiritually alive do. Jesus said, “I’m the bread of life,” and when you taste the bread you always want more of it. And you keep eating.

You know, I was thinking about this, I went to seminary right after studying philosophy in university. Now, let me tell you a little bit about philosophy. Philosophy is a great degree if you want to think deep thoughts while you’re waiting tables. I’m giving up on these jokes. Can’t get you a job skill, but you can think about a lot of deep stuff while you’re doing some part time job. But I learned the writings of Frederick Nietzsche and Albert Camus. I studied David Hume and Jean-Paul Sartre. I studied the Greeks and different people like this. And I’ll tell you after four years of that, I was done. I had enough. It was like trying to eat your lunch out of a trash can. You might get a little bit of something here or there, but most of it is going to make you sick.

And then I went to seminary, and I started studying this, and I’ve never gotten enough of this. I mean I’ve never lost my hunger for this book. You guys say amen to that? You guys know what I’m talking about? I mean the Psalmist, he writes 169 verses in the Bible and he still cries out for more. He writes the longest chapter in the Word of God, then he finishes with the prayer, “Give me understanding,” he says. “I’m not done with this Lord. I can never be done with this.” In fact, you could say this is one long prayer from the Psalmist, for understanding. Because this is how you respond to the Word of God, you do it with prayer.

Let me give you a story from philosophy. A young man once came to Socrates, the philosopher, and asked him to teach him because he said he wanted to learn. And so, Socrates took him out into the ocean and he shoved his head in the water and he held it down there for several minutes. And finally, he let the man’s head up and the man gasped for air, and then he shoved it back down again in the water and left it there for several minutes. And then left him up, and he gasped for air and he did it again. And he finally, let the man up and the man said, “What are you doing?” And Socrates said, “When you want to learn like you want to breathe, then come back and I’ll teach you.”

See that’s your response to the Word of God. You want to learn this book like you want to breathe. You want to study this book as your life depends on it. So, let me ask you, are you doing that this morning? Are you studying the Bible like your life depends on it? Do you want to learn this book like you want to breathe? Is that why you came to church today? Is that why you’re here? We’re talking about our Vision Statement, let’s just be blunt. We want to teach you the Bible, is that why you’re here? Are you hungry for the Word of God? Are you starving for it? Do you have an appetite for it?

Let me ask it this way, how’s your prayer life? Have you cried out to God lately? Have you said,

“Give me understanding”? It’s the foundation of worship. You can’t worship God if you aren’t talking to God. You can’t give Him glory if you don’t give Him your undivided attention. You know, it’s a sad thing but the way some believers live, they want to read their Bible once a year at Christmas time and that’s it, right? They do it once a year, maybe Easter and then they’re done. They pray and then that’s it. Can you imagine if you treated your wife that way? “Honey, we don’t need to talk today because we did it last year at Christmas, and that’s enough.” You talk to your wife because you love her. You talk to the Lord because you love Him. He’s worthy of your worship.

And that leads to a second response to the Word of God, and that is to praise. You cry out to God for understanding. And as we talked about a moment ago, that leads to praise. This ties in directly to our Vision Statement. But the second paragraph says is, “...We hear the Word of God preached and taught, we respond to it in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.” That’s what the Psalmist says here. He says, “As I’ve meditated on the Word of God and as I’ve learned it, and prayed for more understanding, here’s my response.” He says in verse 170, it says,

170 Let my supplication come before you; deliver me according to Your word. 171 Let my lips utter praise, for You teach me Your statutes. 172 Let my tongue sing of Your word, for all Your commandments are righteous.

If you noticed, the prayer continues as he says this. These are just several prayers back to back. “Let my supplications, let my lips, let my tongue.” Verse 169, “Let my cry.” Verse 173, “Let Your hand.” Verse 175, “Let my soul.” This is all a prayer. And now it turns from a request to praise. When he says, “Let my lips utter praise,” that’s the Hebrew word *naba* which means “to pour forth or bubble up”. It means your soul is so full of the Word of God that the praise bubbles up inside of you. Your heart is so full of Scripture, that it simmers in your soul and pours out. We saw that in Colossians three. Paul said, “Let the word of God richly dwell in you.” Now he says, “Let it pour forth or bubble up.”

I mentioned to you, my wife likes to drink tea. And I haven’t gotten her into coffee yet, but I’m trying. But she likes tea, and when you make tea, if you put it on the stove it what? Bubbles up, simmers, right? You leave it on there long enough, what’s going to happen? It’s going to spill out. The Psalmist says, “That’s what’s going on in my soul. The Word of God is spilling out of me.” You know, I don’t come into church and sing because I have to. I can’t help it. You know, I don’t drive around in the car and sing because you know, someone is making me do it. I just can’t help myself.

I remember when we brought my oldest son home for the first time, I couldn’t stop singing. Does anybody relate to that? It was Christmastime, and there was Christmas music on the radio. I don’t know that I’m all crazy about Christmas music, but I just found myself singing all the time. Because I was so thrilled to have this precious life in my home. It wasn’t a pleasant noise, it was a joyful noise. It wasn’t pleasing to the ears, but it came from the heart. That’s what the Psalmist is talking about. That’s what happened to him as he studied the Word of God.

And to give an insight into this, when he says, “Let my tongue sing of Your word,” that could mean let my tongue keep singing of Your word. Let me sing over and over and over again. I

want to be passionate about this. I want to be excited about this. Listen, can we say “amen” to this? Nobody wants to come to an unexcited church, amen? Nobody wants to come to a church with no passion in it. I don't want to come to that. You come in everybody's singing...And the church has been called the frozen-chosen, baptized in vinegar. We don't want that on our sign outside the door. It doesn't please God. That's not worship. Real worship comes from the heart. It's not manufactured.

It reminds me what the Lord told the church in Revelation two. He said, “You have left your first love.” And that was not a compliment, that was a rebuke. Remember that? He said Revelation 2:2-4. He says,

2 I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; 3 and you have perseverance and have endurance for My name's sake, and has not grown weary. 4 But I have this against you that you, that you have left your first love.

In other words, “You've done all these wonderful things. You've got sound doctrine, you persevere, you toil in labour, you test false apostles, but it means nothing because you don't love Me any more. Your heart isn't in it. You've lost your passion.” Listen, you can't worship God without passion. You can't love anybody without passion. I mean if you have a “drug” problem, if someone has to drag you in here, then you can't worship.

A. W. Tozer said, “I can safely say on the authority of all that's in the Bible, that any man or woman that is bored and turned off by worship on earth, is not ready for heaven.” And he said, “Worship is the missing jewel of the church, and we can't rest until everything inside of us worships God.” Everything inside of us means everything: heart, soul, mind, strength, everything is involved in this.

I saw a survey recently that said when the average person sings at church he wonders, “Did I turn off my coffee pot at home? Or did I leave the iron on? Or will the person behind me ever sing on key?” (I guess that depends on where you sit in the...). Or “Are there any doughnuts left in the kitchen? That's because everything inside of him is not worshipping. It's because his heart's not in it. His mind is far from God. May that never be the way we are. May our hearts always be focused on God and praise Him accordingly.

And that leads to a third response to the Word of God. And that is: You need to live in obedience to it. You need to cry out for understanding or pray, you need to praise Him in song and other ways and you need to live in obedience. You need to do what the Word of God says. God should have so much of your heart that you worship and obey Him when you leave this place, right? He should have so much of your soul and your attention. The Word of God should be so full in you, that not only does it spill out in this place, but it spills out wherever you go. You're just a fountain spilling Scripture.

Verse 172 alludes to this, when the Psalmist writes. He says, “Let my tongue sing of Your words, for all Your commandments are righteous.” That phrase “all Your commandments” in

this context would have been a reference to the Old Testament Commandments. The Old Testament law was basically the Word of God to the Jews. And then he goes on and he says,

Let Your hand be ready to help me, for I have chosen Your precepts. I long for Your salvation, O LORD, and Your law is my delight, let my soul live that it may praise You, and let Your ordinances help me.

This is great poetry, but all those words “precepts” and “laws” and “ordinances,” are just another way of saying the Word of God. He just hits it from several different angles. He's being very creative. He says, “I want to do what the Word says.” And this is a theme that runs all through Psalm 119. Over and over again, he talks about obeying the Word of God.

I told you earlier that the word “word” appears 40 times in this chapter. But the word “law” that we see here, appears 22 times. The word “ordinance” appears 19 times in Psalm 119. The word “precept” appears 20 times. It comes out to something like a hundred references in the Psalm to the Word of God, to obeying it. It's almost one per chapter, because obedience and worship go hand in hand. We don't obey so that we'll be saved through our obedience, we obey because we're saved. We obey as a result of His grace.

Let me say it this way, you can worship God and be tone deaf, but you can't worship God and be in sin. Now, some of are relieved by that, some of you are a little worried. But some of you are relieved. You don't have to be a great musician and worship God, but you do have to obey His word, right? To quote Tozer again, he says, “If you don't worship God seven days a week, then you can't worship Him one day a week.” He says, “If you're not worshipping Him on Monday the same way you did on Sunday, then it's safe to say you weren't worshipping Him correctly on Sunday.”

And just so you can see this for yourselves (I want you to see this, I think a couple of times in this chapter) how important this was to the Psalmist. But let me just give you a couple of references in this chapter to the Word of God and worship. And I'm just going to fly through these. You can write them down or even turn, if you get the opportunity.

But verse one, very first verse of Psalm 119, it says, “How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the LORD.” The phrase “walking” is a wonderful expression of what it means to obey the Lord. It means you put one foot in front of the other and you do it every day. It's a walk, it's not a run. It's steady, it's consistent. That's how you worship the Lord. By the way one thought on that. You know, some people I think their idea of worship is like a rollercoaster, right? You get really some kind of worship high feeling when you're away somewhere, at a camp or a conference or something. And then you come back and it's just like the pits for a couple months or years. The Psalmist says, “This is how you worship, by walking in the law of the LORD, every day - steady, steady Eddie.

Verse nine says, “How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word.” So, this is how you stay pure, he says. “This is how you stay clean from sin, by keeping the Word of God.” Verse 22, it says, “Take away reproach and contempt from me, for I have observed Your testimonies.” Now it takes away reproach and contempt. Now it takes away your

shame.

Verse 44, and I'm going to go through these quickly for the sake of time, but verse 44 says, "So I will keep Your law continually forever and ever. And I will walk at liberty..." This is continual obedience. He said this is continual worship forever and ever. "And if I do it through faith knowing I'm saved by grace, it gives me liberty." Verse 98 says, "Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever mine."

Actually verse 105, how many of you have memorized Psalm 119:105 before? "Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light to my path." I think someone prayed a moment ago for God's help in the darkness. That's the idea here. The Word of God helps you see through the darkness of this world. That's part of your worship. And we could go on and on through this Psalm, talking about the impact the Word of God has on your life. But over and over again, he says, "This is how you worship God. This is how you bring Him glory by following His Word. By obeying Him."

It was said that on His retreat from Greece, King Xerxes of Persia was caught in a storm, and the captain told him that, "If we don't lighten the ship, we're going to sink." And so, Xerxes turned to his sailors and he said, "My life and safety depend on you." And without saying another word, some of them willingly threw themselves overboard to lighten the load.

Now, I'm not saying the Lord asked us to do that, but there is a principle here. And the principle is we should be willing to do that for our Lord. We should be willing to do that for our King. Whatever it takes, whatever He asks, we'll do it. That's worship. That's how we give Him glory. If the Lord says "it has to go," it has to go. If the Lord says, "Throw it overboard," we throw it overboard. If He says, "This is sin, you repent," then that's what you do.

And it leads to a final response. And this is the conclusion to the whole Psalm here. This is how Psalm 119 ends. You cry out for understanding, and you praise Him and you obey, but you do it all for this reason, and this is very important. The final response to the Word of God is: You stay close to Him. That's the goal of our worship, that's the point of this thing. We don't pray just to pray. We don't sing just to sing. We don't obey just to obey, we do it so we can be close to God. And that's how he finishes the Psalm.

If you look in the final verse, verse 176. He says, "I've gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Your servant, for I do not forget Your commandments." It's kind of a strange way to end this thing. It sounds a little abrupt. He's talking about the Word of God, talking about obedience. And as he comes to the end of it, he's feeling convicted. After writing all of this stuff about following the Word of God, he says, "You know what? I'm going astray like a lost sheep, I'm not doing it." And he says, "But Lord, I don't forget your commandments. I don't forget You, would You please draw me back in? Would You please be merciful to me and forgive me?"

And I want to tell you that this is worship to God as well. When you pray like that, when you approach Him with this kind of humility, God is worshiped and honoured. You know, I say that because some of you may be convicted about all this discussion about obedience. You know, you are going astray, you're not doing what the Bible says. You're living in sin, but you're bothered by that and you're going to go home and do something about it. And I want to tell you, that

pleases God, amen? That's worship. God is honoured when you draw close to Him.

Some of you aren't reading the Bible the way you should. It's not bubbling up inside of you. It's not pouring out. As Jeremiah says, "You've got a dry well inside of you. You've got an empty cistern that holds no water," but that bothers you. And you're going to go home and do something about that. See that's worship. I don't want you to walk out of here this morning and think, "Boy, I can't worship God because I'm not perfect, and I don't have the right suit." No, no, no. If you want to be close to God, that's worship. If you do all you can to be close to Him, that gives Him glory.

Let me say it like this, this is Vision Sunday, we're talking about what we're going to be as a church. Our church doesn't do everything it's supposed to do. I don't know if that's a shock or not. We're not a perfect church. We don't pray like we should or sing like we should or read Scripture like we should. I want to say I think we do a great job of doing those things, but we can excel still more, amen? We can always get better at these things. I've never preached a sermon in my entire life that I thought I'd been satisfied with.

It was Martin Lloyd Jones who said, "You know what?" (He preached for years, was a fabulous preacher). He said, "I feel like I've preached three sermons my whole life." I don't know if I've preached three. You could always excel still more. But the point is, is your motivation to be close to God? Is that why you're doing it?

You know, as you hear all this stuff about worship this morning, you might be wondering what this has to do with our church. How does it apply to us specifically? And I'll tell you, we are a work in progress. Just like the Psalmist here, we have a long way to go. But I can also tell you that our music, we'll strive to make it Biblical music. Our worship team does a great job of that, don't they? Amen? Our prayers will be based on Scripture. When we take the Lord's Supper, we'll be Biblical with that. When we baptize, we'll be Biblical with that. When we give testimonies like you heard earlier, you heard the man glorify and exalt God. That's the point of our worship, to draw closer and closer to God. And I want to say some more about that. So, we're going to come back next week and actually talk about this theme of worship some more.

But for this morning, let me just tie it off with this. Stephen Charnock was the author of several books and the chaplain of Oliver Cromwell's son. He lived in the 1600s, and in the middle of a busy life, he preached some sermons on worship. And in one of those, Stephen Charnock said this. He said,

Worship is an act of the understanding, applying itself to the knowledge of the excellency of God and His Majesty. Worship is an act of the will whereby the soul adores and reverences God and is ravished with Him, embraced with Him, enters into communion with Him and pitches all its affections upon Him."

He says,

God is a Spirit infinitely happy therefore, we must approach Him with cheerfulness. He is a Spirit of infinite majesty therefore, we must come before Him with reverence. He is a

Spirit infinitely high therefore, we must offer up sacrifice with deepest humility.

He says, "God is a Spirit infinitely holy therefore, we must address Him with purity. He is a Spirit infinitely glorious therefore, we must acknowledge His excellency." But Charnock says this, "But why do we do this?" He says, "Because God is near to those who seek Him." Why do we worship Him like this? Because He can be found.

My friends, does that encourage you this morning? You serve a God who can be found. You worship a God who is near to you. To think that the God of all creation would want to draw near to a sinner like you, and a sinner like me, should be our grounds for worship, amen? How could you not praise a God like that? And let's pray to Him this morning.

Father, we're talking about a deep subject today, we're even going to approach it next week. So, it's hard to ever come to the bottom of something like this but Lord, we pray that our church will be one that worships You with glory and honour. We thank you Father that You do care to be close to us. Think of all the gods that were ever made up by men, none of them ever wanted to love men like you do. None of them gave their sons. None of them dwelt among their people. You've done that with us, through the Lord Jesus Christ.

And Father in response, we want to worship You for that. We want to give You honour and glory, for You're worthy. Lord, would You be praised this morning from our congregation. And as we move forward as a church, would You be glorified and honoured. That's the goal of what we do. That's our heart this morning.

Father we thank you for a message like this: Psalm 119. It contains more than we could ever plumb to the bottom of about the subject of worship. Lord, thank you for whoever wrote it, we don't know who it was. But Father, may we go out this morning and live lives according to what it says. May we give You glory and honour as we cry out to You and praise You and obey and draw near to You today. We pray this in Christ name, amen.