

GOD'S UNALTERABLE WORD

Psalm 119:89-96

Intro: God's Name, Jehovah, teaches us that He is an eternal and unchanging God. What He has been in the past, He continues to be now, and what He is now, He will be forever. This is one of the most glorious truths about God.

Here in this Psalm we learn that God's Word has the same distinctive character. This is the meaning of "settled." It was true when He revealed it, and it remains true. The promises stand firm. Nothing in it ever needs to be revised or changed. And it is so "in heaven" where it is beyond the reach of man. Men might seek to destroy the Word, but God would only reveal it again. Men might seek to oppose it, but they are the ones who are destroyed, but never the Word.

When we trust in the Word, we are on the safest possible ground where we can stand. It is hard for us to comprehend this truth because one characteristic about life on the earth is that things constantly change. But in the Word we have ultimate truth which cannot change. It is there that we find the truth about ourselves and our needs in relation to God. And we also find the remedy. Truth may be progressively revealed, but there is nothing that God has revealed at a later time that contradicts what He has revealed before. It is "settled in heaven."

But to make all of this even clearer we learn in verse 90 that God stands behind His Word. What He has promised, He will do. What He has planned, He will accomplish. This was true in Adam's day, and it will continue to be true "unto all generations." Even the earth reflects this unchanging character of God. We are living on the same earth that Adam lived on. Under the blessing of God the seasons come and go in the same order year after year. Crops are planted and harvested just as they always have been. The machinery used may change, but not the crops themselves. If we stop to think about this we will realize what a comfort all of this is to us. God has established the earth, and it remains as He set it up in the beginning. All of this is completely beyond human control.

Verse 91 could have been written this morning. It was true when it was written probably 3,000 years ago, and it is still true. God determined how everything in creation should function, and they continue on down to the present day. The sun is His servant. So are the clouds, and wind, and

rain. Man has all kinds of trouble even predicting what the weather will be because the weather serves God, and God is perfectly free to use it according to His will. Thus, the unchanging God of ours, Who has given us an unchanging Word, remains in charge of every detail of the operation of the whole universe. Thus we have evidence all around us of the omnipotence of our unchanging God.

And so in verses 89, 90, and 91 we have the foundation, not only of the truth in this twelfth stanza of Psalm 119, but of all of life itself under the blessing of God. There is much about our lives that is changing. Customs change. But our security and peace of mind rests in those unchanging truths about God, about His Word, and about His creation. And people who do not know God, nor His Word with all of the wonderful teaching that it contains, have nothing that is even a close substitute for what we have in God. All of the “mother nature” talk of our weather prognosticators is just an evidence of how ignorant they are. But they use the same talk and keep on making their predictions which are more wrong than they are right.

In line with what we saw this morning in Psalm 1 about the tremendous importance of meditation, we can't appreciate these truths by a hurried reading of these verses. We have to think about what the Spirit of God led the psalmist to write. We need to stop here and meditate. These are great truths which we need to digest. This is how we come to know God, and to experience the peace and joy in the truth of God's Word that He intends for us to have. People who don't know the Lord, recognize the stability that there is in the universe, but they have never put God and His creation together. In fact, more and more people are not speaking about creation with an infinitely powerful and wise God behind it all. And so the order of creation really doesn't bring any blessing or support to them.

In verses 92 through 96, notice that the Psalmist speaks about himself and his relationship to God and His Word.

Verse 92 also reminds us of Psalm 1, doesn't it? In Psalm 1 we read about the one who delights himself in the Word of God. He treats the Word as a priceless treasure. He values the Word above everything else that he has read, or everything else that he has. He loves it. He is constantly thinking about it. He reads it and re-reads it. He never tires of it. He finds it to be his greatest joy. Consequently, when afflictions come, he is sustained and comforted in the knowledge the Word has brought to

him of an unchanging God. Our circumstances can change suddenly and radically, but that is when we need to find our peace in a God Who never changes and who has given us a word which never changes in this world which is never out from under His control. Our mighty God will see us through the greatest afflictions, and even turns the afflictions into blessings which we have never thought possible. This emphasizes the importance, the great importance, of learning firsthand what it means to delight ourselves in the Word and in the Lord Who has given us His Word. The main idea in the calling the Bible “the law” is that it is there that God teaches us. It is there that we learn. And God designs our afflictions to bring us to the Word where we become more convinced than ever that God’s Word is truth, really true.

But look on to verse 93.

One thing that meditation on Scripture will do for us, is to write Scripture on our minds and in our hearts so that we can never forget them. They become a part of us. I am sure that most of you could stand and tell us about how God has used a certain verse or passage from the Scripture to help you in a special time of need, and you probably have told others before now that that is a verse, or that is a passage, or even a book of the Bible that you will always remember because of how God has used it in your life to bring you out of turmoil and anxiety into peace of heart.

The psalmist said that God had “quicken” him through the Word. It had given him new strength and life. His spiritual life had undergone a great move forward. God was more real in his life. His fellowship with the Lord had been strengthened. We have many illustrations of this in the Bible. Daniel could not have gone through what he experienced if it had not been for the way God worked in his heart. The same is true of his three friends who were put in the fiery furnace. They knew that God could deliver them, but if He did not choose to do so, they still would not worship the image of Nebuchadnezzar.

And then as we go on to verse 94 we see that the psalmist is still speaking for himself.

It is the Word that gives us assurance of our salvation, assurance that we belong to the Lord. People make a mistake by looking back to some experience that they have had, as the ground of their assurance. The psalmist, through his knowledge of the Word which he had come to love,

was assured in his soul that he belonged to the Lord. This is a very, very important point. It is important that we know that we are saved, and it is through the Word that we get that assurance. Then, when trials come, or we face future trials, we know where to turn for our help and deliverance. His prayer is brief and to the point: “Save me.” Some of our best prayers are our shortest prayers. But what gives us confidence in times of trial is that we are able to say to the Lord, with the psalmist, “For I have sought Thy precepts.” When we speak of the Word as “precepts,” it should mean that we are thinking about every detail of what it means to please the Lord. Knowing the truth which the psalmist has rehearsed at the beginning of this stanza, makes the child of God careful about the details in pleasing the Lord in any particular situation.

In verse 95 we see what the psalmist had in mind when he spoke in verse 92 about his “affliction.” This is one verse which may be an indication that King David was the writer. Probably no man in the OT was more frequently the one whom others sought to kill than was David. It would have been a very stressful and upsetting situation. Solomon wanted to kill him. Absalom and the men who were with him wanted to kill him, and Absalom was.

What did he do? Look at the last part of verse 95 – and here is another reason for meditating on the Word. He turned to the Word, and thought about the Word. He looked to the Word for his support. Cf. Heb. 13:5-6:

5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

And here he called the Word the Lord’s “testimonies.” This means that he took the promises of God as a personal testimony from God Himself that He would help him.

Finally, in verse 96 the psalmist speaks either of the final outworking of God in past circumstances, or of what he had seen in the Word of how God had met the needs of others when they had their backs to the wall, so to speak, but turned to the Lord and had found that the Lord’s “commandment is exceeding broad.” K & D say that this means that the Lord’s authority “is unlimited in its duration and verification.”

And so he rests his case with the Lord on the same note with which this

stanza began. That is, that the Word of the Lord is forever “settled in heaven.”

How different things would have been for David (or whoever wrote this Psalm) if he had not spent time in the Word, learning about God and about God’s unfailing faithfulness to all that is recorded in the Word. If men in those days could profit so much from the small amount of Scripture that they had when compared with what we have, the completed Word of God, how it should shame us that having so much more we rarely see such a strong faith in ourselves or in most of the believers in our generation. Let us pray that the Lord will make us like they were in their confidence in Him, and in our confidence in His unchanging Word.