

## A PASSION FOR GOD'S WORD

### *Sola Scriptura*

#### Psalm 119

In the historic days of the *Protestant Reformation*, the battle cry of the *Reformers* was *sola Scriptura*...Latin for *Scripture only*. With this bold assertion, the *Reformers* were *committing themselves* to the *absolute, exclusive authority* of Scripture over every *church tradition*. Regardless of what man may say, it was *only what God declares* in His Word that was *binding*. Even today, everything in the *church* and *Christian living* must be *regulated* by Scripture and Scripture *alone*.

On **April 18, 1521**, **Martin Luther** stood trial at **Worms, Germany**. In response to *two simple questions*, **Luther** declared, “*...I am bound to the Scriptures I have quoted, and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. I cannot do otherwise...therefore, here I stand. God help me. Amen.*”

With those *courageous words*, the tide of *history turned*... especially the *history* of the church. No *church tradition* was to take *preeminence* over the *infallible Word of God*. Everything must *come under* the divine *authority* of Scripture.

**Psalm 119** is considered to be the *pinnacle* in the **Book of Psalms**. This **Psalm** is called an *alphabetical acrostic* because it's *22 stanzas* (or *paragraphs*) of *eight verses each* corresponds to the *22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet*. Each verse in the paragraphs *begins* with the *letter characteristic* of its *stanza*.

It's written in the *first person*...emphasizing the *psalmist's personal meditation* on the Word...as well as the *human personality* that God used to pen His Word.

Until you have a *growing passion* for the Word of God...you will *not have* a *growing passion* and *deepening relationship* with God.

*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”*

~John 1:1, 14

All the Bible *knowledge* in the world *won't help you* unless you *cherish* God's *truth*. Without it, we're nothing more than *Pharisees* unless we *taste the glory* of God in His Word.

Numerous times, Jesus confronted the *Pharisees* with...

*“...Do you not know...You do not know...Do you not understand these things.”*

This **Psalm** expresses a *majestic love* for God's *written word*. It deals with the Word as a *promise, command, direction, testimony, teaching, wisdom, truth, righteousness*, and even as a *rebuke*. It's presented as the psalmist's *comfort, treasure, protection*, and *instruction* for all his needs. In it, the *psalmist* expresses a *profound love* for God by *reading, meditating on*, and *praying* over the Word. He teaches us that we will grow in *grace* and *righteousness* only as *love* for the *Word* increases in us.

### I. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORD:

While the **Psalms** overall praise the Lord for His powerful acts as *Creator, Redeemer*, and *Sustainer*, **Psalm 119** is a *celebration* of God's *gift* of the Scriptures and uses several *synonyms* for God's Word:

- **Law**...Heb. *torah*, (*25 times...over 300 times* in the Old Testament) (**vs. 1**).

The frequent use of the word **law** (*torah*) should be understood to mean *all of the Hebrew Scriptures*, not just the *Five Books of Moses/Pentateuch*.

**Law** has the root meaning, *to project, to teach, or to instruct*...and refers to *any direction or instruction* that flows from the Word of God...that *points out or indicates* God's *will to man*. It refers not only to the *moral, civil, or ceremonial law*, but to the *entire teaching, instruction, or doctrine* of Scripture.

- **Testimonies**...Heb. *edah*, (22 times) (vs. 2, 14). Basically, it means *to bear witness*. The word suggest not only *validation* by *testimony*, but sometimes includes a *warning*. It's only used in the Old Testament when it's *in reference to* God.
- **Precepts**...Heb. *piqqudim*, (21 times) (vs. 4, 15). It always appears in the *plural* and refers to an *authoritative charge or order* that is *binding* upon the recipient. It's as if it's *directly from* the sovereign Lord of the universe, *directing* and *governing* everyone.
- **Statutes**...Heb. *choq*, (21 times) (vs. 5, 8, 12, 16). It means to *engrave, inscribe*, or to *write*...to *bear witness*. In ancient times, **statutes** were *engraved on metal or stone* so people could *read* them and *keep* them. God's **statutes** are *meant to be kept*.
- **Commandments**...Heb. *mitsvah*, (21 times) (vs. 6, 10). Means to *command or charge*...and signifies a *definite, authoritative order*...anything *ordained* by the Lord. God's **commandments** are *an expression* of His *person* and *nature*.
- **Judgments**...Heb. *mishpat*, (5 times) (vs. 7).  
**Ordinances**...Heb. *mishpat*, (16 times) (vs. 13).

Refers to *judicial edicts*, not *acts of judgment*. It represents a *judicial decision* that's based on a *binding law*.

- **Word**...Heb. *dabar*, (17 times) (vs. 9, 11, 16). This is one of the *utmost supreme words* in the Bible. It's such an *idiomatic word* in the Old Testament that the *King James translators* needed *85 different English words* to translate it. It literally means *to say or speak*. The main idea is that *whatever God says* is His *word*.

**The Word of God** is...

- **Sufficient**...it is able to accomplish everything that God has purposed. That nothing is lacking.
- **Authoritative**...Because of the place that it holds in the believer's life.
- **Inerrant**...without error.
- **Inspired**...God breathed.
- **Infallible**...reliable, dependable, unfailing.
- **Eternal**...It does not change with time or culture. The words of God are eternal...they are words without end because God is eternal.

*"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness."*

~II Timothy 3:16

## II. THE DEVOTION TOWARDS THE WORD:

- **Delight** (vs. 16, 24, 35, 47, 70, 77, 92, 143, 174...9 times)  
Regardless of the *situations, circumstance, persecution, or attacks* the psalmist faced, he found *comfort* as he *delighted* in the Word. He *purposed* that he would always...*obey* God's Word...*walk* in it...*speak openly* of

it...*delight* in it...and *love* it. This is how he *wholeheartedly committed* himself to God's Word.

- **Appreciation (vs. 17-24)** The *psalmist* asked God to *open his eyes* (vs. 18) so that he could *see* the *marvelous blessings* of God in His Word.
- **Trust (vs. 65-72)** The *psalmist trusted* that the Lord would *keep* His word...and *deal* with him *righteously according* to His Word (vs. 65). He then asked for *further instructions* to *prevent* him from *going astray* (vs. 67). He also admitted that through *adversity* and *affliction* he learned to *trust* the *law*.
- **Sweet (vs. 97-104)** The central idea of this passage is how *meditating* on God's Word makes the *psalmist wise* and gives him more *understanding*. God's Word became more *precious* and *pleasing* to him the more he *meditated* on it *throughout the day*. *Honey* is sweet, but God's words are *even sweeter*.
- **Righteousness (vs. 137-144)** The *psalmist* declared that because the *Lord* is *righteous*, His *Word* is *righteous*.

### III. THE DEPENDENCE ON THE WORD:

*"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you."*

~Philippians 4:8-9

- **For Cleansing (vs. 9-16)** The *psalmist* declared that a person *keeps their ways* (conduct) *pure* by *obeying* God's Word (vs. 9)...and by *hiding* God's Word in their *heart* (vs. 11).

- **For Understanding (vs. 25-32)** The *psalmist specifically* asked God to *teach* him His *statutes* and *precepts* and to give him *understanding*...to *strengthen* him and to remove any *deception* (the false way) that his *enemies may put before* him. He said that when God gave him *understanding*, he would *comply/obey* because he *treasured* the word.

- **For Salvation (vs. 41-48)**

The *psalmist* called on God to *deliver* him *through* His *love* according to His Word (vs. 41).

*"Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God."*

~I Peter 1:22-23

- **For Hope (vs. 49-56)** Declaring that the Word has *revived* him, the *psalmist* affirms that his *hope* has come through *remembering* the Word (vs. 49, 52).
- **For Protection (vs. 121-128)** The *psalmist* asked God to *protect* him from those who *oppressed* him.

### IV. THE DELIVERANCE THROUGH THE WORD:

In the final stanza, the *psalmist* declares how the Word *affects the entirety* of his life...his very being. (Psalm 23... *Restore my soul...Soul...mind, will, and emotion*).

- **Mind (vs. 169-170)** In *total dependency* upon the Lord, he calls on God to *renew his mind* and give him *understanding* according to His Word.
- **Mouth (vs. 171-172)** The *psalmist* fervently *praises* God for His Word...for the *truths* that he has *learned*.

That which *comes out* of our *mouth*, *flows* from the *heart*.

- **Will (vs. 173)** He declares that he has *chosen* to *delight in* and *follow* the *precepts* of God. We *choose* to obey God's Word.
- **Emotions (vs. 174-175)** The Word keeps our *emotions* in *check*. With *growing desire*, the *psalmist* longs for his *salvation*...all the while, *praising* Him. While he *waits*... God's *ordinances strengthen* him.
- **Conscience (vs. 176)** In his final statement, the *psalmist* gives a *humble confession*...that he has *gone astray like a lost sheep*. He *repents* and *asks* the Lord to *continue* to *draw him* to Himself.

*“All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.”*

~Isaiah 53:6

God's Word allows us to have a *clear conscience*.

*“He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God.”*

~John 8:47

## LESSONS WE NEED TO LEARN:

- The Word is an expression of the CHARACTER and WILL of God.
- A PASSION for the Word of God...significantly strengthens the believers RELATIONSHIP with God.
- Our obedience to the Word of God determines our RELATIONSHIP with Him. (Not positionally, but in practice).