I Love Your Law

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[0:00] Psalm 119, verses 161 through 168. It says, Princess, persecute me without cause, but my heart stands in awe of your words.

I rejoice at your word, like one who finds great spoil. I hate and abhor falsehood, but I love your law. Seven times a day I praise you for your righteous rules. Great peace have those who love your law. Nothing can make them stumble.
I hope for your salvation, O Lord, and I do your commandments. My soul keeps your testimonies. I love them exceedingly. I keep your precepts and testimonies, for all my ways are before you.
I don't know if you guys own anything that might be considered a treasure, maybe an heirloom of some kind. I remember reading about this show.
[1:12] It's like Antiques Roadshow. You guys know about it? Yeah, I've never seen it, but there was an interesting article about a woman who had the original Boston Red Stockings baseball cards.

It's like the original team. Like that Boston just formed their team. I think it's 1871 or something. And it's the first, very first original cards. And she happened upon it because her great-great-great-grandmother had like a boarding house in Boston.
And the Red Stockings players at that time, they stayed there. And they developed a relationship and then gave them these cards. And so she had these cards and some letters that she had exchanged with them.
And then passed it down, fifth generations down. And then this great-great-great-granddaughter brought it to the Antiques Roadshow in 2014.
And guess what it was appraised at? One million dollars for baseball cards, right? So it's like something that's, you know, it's a...
[2:18] And so they kept it and they cherished it because it was like a treasure, right? It's like an heirloom, right? And so when people have treasures in their hands, they take care of it, right? They keep it, right?

And their minds are fixed on it. And likewise, the psalmist tells us in this passage, 119, 161 to 168, that those who appreciate the value of God's Word rightly, they love it and keep it.
And so the first part in verses 161 to 164, he talks about the treasure of God's Word, what a treasure it is. And then in verses 165 to 168, he tells us about those who cherish God's Word, what it looks like to cherish God's Word.
And then let's look at it from verse 161. He says, Princess, persecute me without cause, but my heart stands in awe of your words.
So the word awe there is literally fear. Like he fears or trembles before or venerates God's Word, right? And so there's a contrast between the psalmist's posture toward the princes who are persecuting him, coming after him, and his posture toward God's Word.
[3:30] Because it's usually princes or rulers that you venerate, right? You fear, especially if they're coming after you, persecuting you. But the psalmist doesn't have any fear for them.

Instead, his heart fears God's Word. We're in Psalm 119, verse 161. So that's like a really powerful contrast, you know?
Like he's not afraid of the rulers or the princes. He's rather standing in awe in fear of God's Word, venerating God's Word. And to fear God and to fear his Word, it refers to a posture of reverent obedience and humble submission.
That's the posture that the psalmist has toward God's Word. Because if you think about it, right, when a citizen receives an edict from a king, you don't just dismiss an edict from a royal edict offhand, right?

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You tremble before it. You pay attention to it. You obey it, abide by it, because it's from the throne. Which means it comes with the king's will and the king's authority, right?
[4:37] And so in the same way, this psalmist trembles before God's Word. He fears the Word of God. And so the first thing we learn in verse 1 about the treasure of God's Word is that, not verse 1, verse 161, is that God's Word is venerable, that it is worthy of our fears.

And then secondly, the Word of God is valuable. We see that in verse 162. So I rejoice at your Word like one who finds great spoil. So like a man who is digging behind in his backyard and then happens to dig up a gold mine, and he finds this great spoil.
He delights over it, rejoices over it. And so likewise, we should rejoice in God's Word like one who finds great spoil. And I think when we're rejoicing at God's Word rightly, it's going to be often on our lips.
And I think when we're doing that, I find that on our church members' lips. It's like they say things like, hey, look at what God said to me this morning. Hey, look at, have you seen this? Have you really grasped this?
Have you seen this gem here in this passage? And so the Christians should cherish God's Word because it's valuable. And it's valuable like nothing else, right? Money can be devalued.
[5:53] You know, stocks can depreciate, right? Even precious jewels can be lost or corrode, right? And we can't take any of those things with us after death. But God's Word endures forever.

It's valuable. It's riches for our souls. And then third thing is that the Word of God is veritable. You might have caught on that I'm using words that start with a V so you can remember it.
But it's maybe this one is not as bad. The last one is a little bit of a stretch. But this one is true. The Word of God is true. It is veritable. It's venerable, valuable, and veritable.
It's real. It's genuine. It's true. And we see that in verse 163. I hate and abhor falsehood, but I love your law. So the psalmist who hates falsehood loves God's law because God's law is true.
Because it is real. In a world where we have to get second opinions for our medical diagnoses or second guess what our professors say or fact check whatever you find online, right?
[6:58] It's so reassuring and comforting to know that God's Word is always true. And we never have to do any of that with God's Word. It's in fact impossible for God to lie, right?

It says Hebrews 6.18. So we can always rely on it and even stake our lives on it. And then fourth thing it says is that the Word of God is virtuous. It says in verse 164, Seven times a day I praise you for your righteous rules.
So God's Word is righteous. It's virtuous. It is just, upright. That means all that God says to us is not only true to reality, it's also right.
It's good. It's upright and just. It reflects God's justice. And because of that, he says seven times a day he praises God for his righteous rules. So seven symbolizes fullness or completeness in the Bible.
So it means that he praises God for his Word all throughout the day. And so that's the treasure of God's Word. It is venerable, valuable, veritable, and virtuous.
[8:02] And then having spoken of the treasure, he tells us now that something about those who cherish God's Word, what they look like, what it looks like to cherish God's Word. And it says in verse 165, Great peace have those who love your law.

Nothing can make them stumble. So those who cherish God's Word have great peace. Nothing can disrupt them or trip them up in their life. This reminds me of the bop bag.
You guys know what that is? The bop bag. So, like, I had this when I was a kid, like, in Korea. But it's like a punching bag of sorts.
Like, it was really popular in 1960. And basically, it has this sand-filled pocket at the bottom. So because of that heavy center of kind of gravity, it doesn't matter.
Really? It's a famous iteration of it was the bozo clown. Was it called Bozo the Clown? Yeah, it was the bozo bop bag. Yeah. Bop bag is the name of it. Bozo's name is a clown. But the most famous bop bag was the bozo bop bag.
[9:05] And basically, you could, like, knock it over and animate as many times as you want. You can't make it fall because of its center of gravity. It's like, it's so secure. It always comes right back up.

You can't trip it up, right? And, like, I think of that in a similar way. It's like we're, like, if people who are, have centered their lives on God's Word, because the Word of God, the rock of God's Word is

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the center of their gravity.
They can't trip. They can't fall. They're always, they always get right back up. They're always standing. And that's what I think of. We have great peace like that as people who cherish God's Word.
They also have hope, right? Verse 166 says, I hope for your salvation, O Lord, and I do your commandments. And this is a frequently misunderstood concept because we use the word hope differently than it is used in the Bible because we use it to express our wishes, you know?
I hope, you know, I get to, you know, get a good night's sleep tonight, you know, like, or I hope, you know, I get to go on a vacation or whatever. People say things like that.
[10:10] But then this is, when Bible talks about hope, usually it's talking of something entirely different. God's people hope for their salvation, not because it's uncertain, but because it's not yet.

It's certain to happen, it just hasn't happened yet. That's why we hope, because we know it's coming, but it hasn't happened yet. And so those who trust in God's Word and obey His commandments are holding on to their hope of deliverance because they believe fully that God's deliverance is going to come.
We're going to, because God's Word always proves true. And then in the last two verses of this stanza, the psalmist tells us what it means for us to love and cherish God's Word.
Three times in this stanza, verses 163, 165, 167, the psalmist says, I love your law. And then he explains here in verses 167 to 168 what that looks like.
My soul keeps your testimonies. I love them exceedingly. I keep your precepts and testimonies, for all my ways are before you. To love God's Word, you have to keep them.
[11:16] It says, you can keep the letter of the law without loving the law, but you can't love the law and not keep the law. Those who love the law of God keep the law of God. That's one important aspect of cherishing God's Word.

And that's why it's repeated. In verse 166, he says, I do your commandments. 167, my soul keeps your testimony. Verse 168, I keep your precepts and testimonies. Because if God is our greatest treasure, we will cherish Him.
And if we love God's Word, we will keep His Word. That's a very similar idea to what Jesus says in John 14, 15. He says, if you love me, you will keep my commandments.
Notice how Jesus shifts the claims for himself, that love and obedience that's due to God alone, due to God's Word alone. He says, whoever loves, if you love me, you will keep my commandments. Right? We're taught here in this psalm to love and keep God's Word. And Jesus says, you should love me and keep my commandments. Right? So he's saying something very significant about his identity, that he is the Word of God, that he's the Son of God.
[12:27] Right? That's what John 1 talks about. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made.

In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory. Glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.
So that passage teaches us that Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of this psalm. We just talked about that on Sunday, right? How every, I guess, every hamlet in England has a road that runs to London. Right? And likewise, every passage and verse in Scripture has a road that runs to Christ. Christ is the ultimate fulfillment of it all. That points, everything in Scripture points to him.
And it's because of Jesus that we have hope of salvation, right? 1 Peter 1 talks about how we were born, again, to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus. And it's because of Jesus that we have this great peace that this psalm talks about, right?
[13:30] As Romans 5, 1 says, Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus atoned for our sins by dying on the cross, and he appeased the Father's wrath by dying on the cross and being raised from the dead.

And that's what gives us this peace, and this gives us hope of salvation. And that good news that Jesus is the King that redeems us, saves us, and ushers us into God's kingdom is described in Matthew 13 this way, verses 45 to 46.
Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

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It's very similar to this psalm that we were just reading, verse 162. I rejoice at your word like one who finds great spoil, because the gospel of Jesus Christ is that great prize, that pearl, precious pearl, worth forsaking everything we have for, in order to claim.
worth giving up everything to love and cherish. And so I want to end by asking you guys some questions. Do you love and cherish the gospel?
[14:47] Do you keep it in your mind and guard it in your heart? Do you praise God for the goodness of Jesus seven times a day? Is the gospel your center of gravity?

It keeps you grounded. Let's pray that God will make it so more and more. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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