

The Sufficiency of Scripture, Part 2

Psalm 19

Let's open our Bibles to the nineteenth Psalm, Psalm 19. As you know, last week I began to share with you on the subject: the sufficiency of Scripture. And I would like to conclude that brief interlude in the midst of our study of 1 Timothy by going back to that very subject. Only this time, rather than dealing with it by looking at many passages, I want us to focus on one passage, Psalm 19.

As is my habit from time to time, I enjoy reading the Puritans and I'll pull a book of the Puritans off my shelf and sit back in my chair in my study and read. And I was reading this week Thomas Watson's great section on Scripture and he had one statement that I thought was fitting for us. He said this, quote: "The devil and his agents have been blowing at Scripture light but could never blow it out, a clear sign that it was lighted by heaven," end quote.

I shared with you last week that it's my conviction that a very unlikely group of people seem to be blowing today at Scripture light trying to blow it out. And what is amazing about it is that the attack that I am most concerned about on the Word of God seems to be coming not from those who deny it to be the Word of God, but from those who would affirm it to be so. It seems to me that one of the most subtle and dangerous threats facing the Word of God is coming from within the category of evangelical Christianity, by people who claim to believe the Bible to be the Word of God but betray a lack of trust in its sufficiency and therein speak evil of the Word of God.

Reading the Word, teaching the Word, proclaiming the Word, obeying the Word, living it out does not seem to many today to be sufficient for matters of life and conduct within the spiritual dimension. And these people are developing, I suppose, what they think to be the necessary props to hold up the Bible. Perhaps they feel that it needs some kind of a transfusion to give it the power it seems to lack on its own. And I believe, as I pointed out last time, that this is a gross sin against God and against His Word and betrays a serious distrust in the sufficiency of the Scripture.

As I pointed out last time, the almost wholesale move in the evangelical church to psychology as a means of solving man's problems, the search for methodology for church growth in the world's patterns of business and corporate structure, the demand for political power as the key to revival as some are saying, the cry for miracles and signs and wonders and new revelations and supernatural activities, the perversion of the simple gospel and the true Word of God into a sort of pop gospel of prosperity, indulgence, sensuality and success propagated by celebrities who are supposed to have a great ability to reach people that the simple Word could never reach all betray to me not only a horrifying worldliness in the church but a woefully weak view of Scripture. And it has forced me to ask the question: is the Bible really sufficient for matters of spiritual life? Is it sufficient for the people of God and all of the necessary resources for the fullness of living in the will of God? Or do we need to concede that the Bible has some rather glaring limitations that can only be overcome by wisdom and technique developed by well-meaning people who want to help God out a little bit?

Now to answer the question of scriptural sufficiency, I want you to look with me at Psalm 19...what I believe to be the most concise and direct treatment of the sufficiency of Scripture in all of the Word of God. And by the way, we'll compare with Psalm 19 Psalm 119 because it has many parallels. Let me say at the very outset that David, who is the author of Psalm 19, was a man who understood the extremities and the exigencies and the vicissitudes and struggles and trials and troubles and tribulations of life to the degree that few people have endured them. He knew what it was to have his life threatened continually. He knew what it was to have fallen into deep sin. He knew what it was to have betrayed a monumental sacred trust. He knew what it was to have his own children rebel against him. He knew what it was to have fouled up marriages and distressing family circumstances. This is a man who speaks out of the depth of human emotion. And yet finds consummate sufficiency in the Word of God.

Now Psalm 19, by way of a general introduction, is intended to convey to us the significance of God's revelation. First of all, in verses 1 through 6, we read of God's revelation in nature. God has revealed Himself in the heavens, verse 1 says, which declare His glory, in the firmament, all of the stellar bodies which demonstrate his handwork. It goes on to talk about the movement of the sun and its marvelous course in orbit through the universe. And all of that is symbolic of the natural revelation, what theologians for years have called general revelation. God is revealed in His creation. Much like Romans 1, "The things that we see reveal to us that there is a God and He is eminently powerful.

But there is even a more specific revelation in His Word and to that the psalmist turns in verse 7. And in the second half of the Psalm, from 7 through 14, the focus is on special revelation, the revelation of God in holy Scripture...to that, we want to look and we find in looking at verses 7 to 14 the sufficiency of Scripture. In fact, I want to point out three things, if I might, this morning: the sufficiency of Scripture, the value of Scripture and finally, the commitment to Scripture.

Now let me say before we dig in to it, I want you to listen very carefully, of necessity I will cover a lot of material somewhat rapidly, I want you to be tuned in and thoughtful because I really believe this is a foundational message for our commitment to the Word of God.

Now to begin with, let's notice the sufficiency of Scripture, verses 7 through 9. Follow them as I read. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. The commandment of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever. The judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous all together."

Now I want you to note, for a moment, the structure of those three verses. There are six lines of thought. And each of those six lines has three elements. It has a title for the Word of God, a characteristic of the Word of God and a benefit of the Word of God. The titles are...the Scripture is called the law, testimony, statute, commandment, fear and judgment. All of those are synonyms for the Scripture. Its characteristics are, it is perfect, sure, right, clear, clean and true. Its six benefits are, it converts the soul, it makes wise the simple, it rejoices the heart, it enlightens the eyes, it endures forever and it is all together righteous...that is, it provides full spiritual resources.

Now, in those three verses, consistent with the infinite intelligence of the infinite mind of God, you have an absolutely surpassing and comprehensive statement on the Scripture reduced to a very few words. The magnitude of this section of Scripture stretches us beyond our ability.

I want you to notice another element, another six-fold element. Six times in these three verses we read "of the Lord." The law of the Lord, the testimony of the Lord, the statutes of the Lord, the commandment of the Lord, the fear of the Lord, and the judgments, or ordinances of the Lord...again we note that this then represents that which proceeds from God. Six times the covenant name of God,

Yahweh, is used to identify the source of the sufficient Word. Now here we have then in Psalm 19 through the psalmist, God's own testimony to the sufficiency of Scripture for all spiritual needs.

Now let's look at these six. Number one in verse 7, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." Now the first title for Scripture is "the law." And that gives us an emphasis of the Word of God, the word is torah, it basically means biblical or divine teaching. It points to the teaching or the didactic nature of Scripture. It is God instructing man. The term refers to instruction. It identifies the Scripture as doctrine, dispense from God to man. It has in view divine instruction relative to creed, that is what we believe, relative to character, that is what we are, and relative to conduct, that is what we do. It is a complete explanation of God's instruction for man's life. It is teaching from God for life.

Now this teaching which comes through the pages of holy Scripture, it says in verse 7, is perfect...it is perfect. James even called it the perfect law. And it is set in contrast by the psalmist to the imperfect flawed reasonings of men. Now to understand the word "perfect" we need only to understand that it is a common word which means perfect or whole or complete or sufficient. In fact, one Old Testament scholar says that the fullness of the meaning is to say that it means "all sided so as to cover completely all aspects of a thing." It is a word of comprehensiveness. It is to say then that the Scripture covers everything. It lacks nothing. It lacks nothing. It is a comprehensive source of teaching from God which therefore embodies all that is necessary to the spiritual life of God's people.

Now the particular focus of verse 7's initial statement is that its perfection is related to converting the soul. And there we find the first of the six benefits. It converts the soul. The Hebrew term for converting can mean reviving, restoring, refreshing, converting. But my favorite synonym is transforming.

It has the idea that Scripture is so comprehensive that it literally followed can transformed a person's life. It gives full life in all aspects to the soul. Now the word soul, a familiar word also, nephesh, that word means the person or the self or the heart. It's sometimes translated all those ways. The sum of it is, the inner person, the whole person, the real you. The word then is so comprehensive as to have the ability to totally transform the real you, the whole person. It is sufficient then for a conversion, for transformation, for restoration, for spiritual birth and growth to perfection for the whole person. It is reminiscent really of Paul's letter to Timothy, 2 Timothy 3:15 to 17, where Paul reminds Timothy that the Scripture is able to make you wise unto salvation. Not only that, to make you perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

The Word of God then has the power of total transformation. It is so comprehensive that it can mold a soul, a living person, into precisely what God desires that person to be. And that begins at conversion. In 1 Peter 1, we read the same testimony, verse 23, being born again not of corruptible seed but by incorruptible by the Word of God which lives and abides forever.

In other words, the new birth or conversion, transformation is accomplished by the Word of God. And in the next verse he says and this is the Word by which the gospel is preached unto you. So it is the Word that converts the soul. Paul said the gospel of Christ in and of itself is the power of God unto salvation in Romans chapter 1 and verse 16.

The word then in its power is able to transform a life. It is the agency of the new birth. And yet today, it seems to me that there are people who do not believe in the power of the Word of God. They feel the Word of God because of certain inadequacies or impotence must be assisted by packaging it perhaps in some worldly sexy rock singer who quote/unquote from Eternity magazine "mixes her representation of the old, old story with a little vulgarity," end quote. Or is the Word of God so weak and so without power in itself as to be convincing only when it is propagated by a superstar celebrity, personality, one who is famous for being famous? And not famous for being godly and not well-known for great skill in

the Word but famous not because of great accomplishment for God or great character but because the media made them famous for being famous. Are we to believe that they can do what the power of the Word cannot accomplish? Or do we need to make slushy appeals to the emotions of people based on their feelings, their bruised egos and their need for self-esteem? Thus altering the hard gospel into something very easy so they'll take it and perhaps not even know what it really is.

Or does the gospel because in itself it's weak have to be polluted with promises of material success? Why do TV evangelists have to tell us that if only we will send them large sums of money and believe, our quote/unquote "seed" faith will bring us back more money than we can imagine? Is this necessary to add money to the gospel to make it palatable because in and of itself it cannot convert the soul? Is the Scripture so insufficient to save that we need Christian congress and we need control of the government in order to bring about regeneration of a nation? Is it really the Lord's plan for men called to preach the unsearchable riches of the Word of God to leave the Word of God not to serve tables but to become political activists and lobbyists, hoping to overcome the deficiency of Scripture with human power? Do we feel that the gospel drives people away when coming straight from the Word so it must be put in a sophisticated salable palatable marketing plan that shows the perspective buyer primarily what's in it for him?

Now what are we saying by all of this? It seems to me that what we're saying is we don't trust the power of the perfect Word of God to convert the soul. The Word is the sea where Christ, the pearl of great price, is found. The Word is the field where Christ the hidden treasure is buried. And the testimony of Psalm 119 certainly affirms this and we will be paralleling it all the way through. Psalm 119 verse 41 says, "Let Thy mercies come also unto me, O Lord, even Thy salvation according to Thy Word." Salvation, says the psalmist, is connected to the Word of God. In verse 50, "This is my comfort in my affliction, for Thy Word hath given me life." Verse 81, "My soul faints for Thy salvation but I hope in Thy Word." Verse 146 similarly says, "I cried unto Thee, Save me, and I shall keep Thy testimonies." Verse 155, "Salvation is far from the wicked for they seek not Thy statutes."

In other words, it's found in Thy Word and they're not looking there. Verse 158, "I beheld the transgressors and was grieved because they kept not Thy Word." Verse 174, "I have longed for Thy salvation, O Lord, and Thy law is my delight." The Word of the living God is sufficient. Is it any wonder Paul said, "Preach the Word"? The Word is sufficient to convert the soul.

Secondly, the psalmist says the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. And he takes another step in building this tremendous magnificent presentation of scriptural sufficiency. He uses the word "testimony" which looks at God's Word not as divine instruction, but as divine witness. It is God giving testimony to who He is and what He requires. So as you look at the testimony of God to Himself in the Word of God, you find that His testimony is, says the psalmist, sure. It is sure.

Again, in contrast to the unsure, insecure, wavering, changing, shifting, unreliable, untrustworthy notions of men, the Word of the living God is sure and the word means unwavering, immovable, unmistakable, worthy to be trusted and reliable. The Word then provides a foundation on which life and eternal destiny can be built without hesitation.

I'm reminded of what Peter said in 2 Peter chapter 1, he was rehearsing his personal encounter with the majesty of Christ at the transfiguration and he said, "I was there when He was transfigured, I saw His majestic glory in that marvelous scene when the heroes of the Old Testament appeared and we were there on the mountain in the wonder of supernatural glory. And I say this to you," in verse 19, "there is a more sure word than this." Experience, supernatural experience, signs and wonders have their place, Peter says, there is a more sure word than this, and that word is the Scripture...the Scripture given as holy men were moved by the Spirit of God. The Scripture is the more sure word in contrast to the

unsure reasonings, musings and opinions of men about God and morality, we can stand on the Scripture.

And what is its benefit? Notice again, its benefit is making wise the simple. The root of the Hebrew word for "simple" is the idea of an open door. A simple person is a person who's undiscerning. They don't know when to shut the door. They don't know what to close out. Everything comes in. They're not discerning. They're unlearned, inexperienced, ignorant and naive. But they can be made wise. And what is the source of that? The Word of God. Scripture takes the naive, inexperienced, undiscerning, uninformed and brings to that individual wisdom. I love the word "wise," it is a rich Hebrew word. It basically means to be skilled in the art of godly living, to be skilled in the matters of practical living. It is to master the art of daily living, accomplished by the knowledge and application of the Word of God.

And by the way, in Scripture, God is always the source. It is that wisdom which is, as James called it, from above. And the Old Testament really would kind of define this as the ability to make right choices about right things at the right moments in life. And here is a marvelous promise. The Word of God can take a naive, inexperienced, undiscerning, uninformed, ignorant person and bring them to such wisdom that they can live out a godly life according to the will of God. This through the Word of God. It is the providing source of all that is necessary for applying God's will to daily living.

Are we to believe the Word of God is not sufficient then? Are we to believe that we find in the human resources all around us of sociology, psychology, philosophy and human wisdom what makes up for the lack in the Word of God? Is it really necessary for preachers to go outside the bible to quote/unquote "make truth relevant" and practical, as I often hear? Listen, the testimony of God Himself is that His Word is sufficient to make the simplest wise in the matter of the art of living life in the will of God.

And listen again to the wonderful testimony of Psalm 119, as in that great, great psalm of tribute to the Word of God, the psalmist says in verse 27, "Make me to understand the way of Thy precepts." In other words, he's calling on God to teach him, for God knows the right way to walk, the right way to live. Verse 34, "Give me understanding and I'll keep Thy law, yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart." It is the source of wisdom. Verse 66, "Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I believe Thy commandments." Verse 98 to 100, "Thou through Thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies, for they're ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers." We have more understanding than all of those who propagate human knowledge. "For Thy testimonies are my meditation." Verse 100, "I understand more than the ancients because I keep Thy precepts." In verse 104, "Through Thy precepts I get understanding." In verse 125, "I am Thy servant, give me understanding that I may know Thy testimonies." Verse 169, "Give me understanding according to Thy Word."

You see, the psalmist knew that the source of wisdom was in the Word of God. The Scripture...is it sufficient? It is sufficient to transform the soul. It is sufficient to bring about consummate wisdom in the matter of daily living to the glory of God.

Thirdly, would you notice verse 8 of Psalm 19? "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart." Where does a believer go to find joy? Where does a believer go to find relief, happiness, deliverance from sorrow, anxiety and depression? Where does a believer go? Where is the resource? The testimony of the psalmist is it's the Word. It is the Word that rejoices the heart.

The term here for Scripture is the word "statute." It means not divine teaching and yet in a sense it embodies divine teaching. It has the idea of not divine witness specifically though it embodies that. But more the idea of divine principles, divine precepts, divine guidelines. The Scripture is full of guidelines for living from God. Now notice that they are, it says in verse 8, they are right. That is to say they show

the true path. They give you right guidance. They guide you in the proper way to true understanding. What a wonderful thing that is. I mean, for those of us who have been Christians for a long time to try to think back to how it was when you had to chart your own course with no knowledge of what to do, what a legacy we have in the Word of God laying out a true path. We're not left without a chart and a compass. We're not left without principles for life. We're not left to wander around in a fog of human opinion. We have a true word to follow. And the result of that is, we walk a right path that rejoices the heart. I believe true joy comes from following the Word of God, from applying its principles, from walking in its precepts and pathway.

Jeremiah in the midst of tremendous human stress, rejection of his message, rejection of his person, the disaster falling on his entire nation, gave great testimony to the joy that comes through the Word in the fifteenth chapter of his prophecy, verse 16 when he said, "Thy words were found and I did eat them and Thy word was in me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." And John writes in his epistle, 1 John 1:4 that these things are written that your joy might be...what?...full. The Word of God gives testimony to the fact that it is the source of joy. And when you walk in obedience to the will of God and you move on that right path, it rejoices the heart.

Do we have to have voices from heaven and talks with angels and supernatural experiences and miracles? And do we have to depend upon mystical science of the mind to be led by God into full joy? Can we not follow His Word? Those who might be depressed or anxious or fearful or doubting not knowing what direction to go, if not sufferings from some physical malady or ailment, can they not turn to the Word of God for the solution and the answer and the guidance and the direction that turns their sorrow into joy?

I believe the testimony of Scripture is that our true pleasure and delight comes from following the path laid out by the Word of God, not from selfishly seeking for self-esteem, self-fulfillment and indulgent pursuits. In fact, I fear that people who run from the Word of God to the psychiatrists of the world and to the sources that the world offer and to all of the material things in the world, run away from joy, not into joy. And they find less than they thought and find themselves further from the source than before they left. The testimony of Scripture itself is that it is a source...in fact, THE source of the believer's joy.

Again in Psalm 119 where we go for confirming testimony. In verse 14 the psalmist writes, "I have rejoiced in the way of Thy testimonies as much as in all riches." I wish we could say today that people were as excited about the things of the Word of God as they were about materialism. I wish we could say that we were really presenting a gospel of the Word of God and not a gospel of promised prosperity.

In verse 54 we read, "Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage." One of the most beautiful verses in all the psalms. "Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage." My life has been filled with songs about Your law.

That is to say they bring me the joy that overflows in the music of my heart. In verse 76 he says, "Thy merciful kindness, let it me my comfort according to Thy Word." In verse 111, "Thy testimonies have I taken as an inheritance forever, they are the rejoicing of my heart." Verse 14, "Thou art my hiding place and my shield, I hope in Thy Word." I go to You, God, in the midst of my needs and sorrow and sadness. The Scripture is perfect enough to convert the soul, wise enough to make the simple profound and able to make the sad joyful.

Fourthly, you will notice at the end of verse 8, the commandment of the Lord is clear. The best translation is clear, enlightening the eyes. And he uses here the word commandment. Now commandment is another way to look at Scripture. Yes, Scripture is precepts, yes it's instruction, yes it's testimony, but it is also divine decrees. And here we find the emphasis on authority, on the non-optional character of Scripture. The Bible is not full of a lot of suggestions. It is commandments, binding authoritative commandments. This is what God requires and for those who respond, there is blessing. For those who do not, there is judgment.

And the Word of God which comes to us as commandment from God, he says, is clear...is clear. That is to say it's lucid. It's not mystifying. It's not confusing and puzzling. Oh yes, there are obscure elements of it, but the Word of God in general as read is clear. It's easy to see. It gives clear direction for life. The Old Testament says a wayfaring man though he be a fool need not err.

It enlightens the darkness. When there is darkness in the world and you can't understand what's going on and you don't know why things are happening the way they are, the Word of God makes things clear, in contrast to the muddled muddy musings of men who themselves are blind. To be able to see truth in this dark world, struggling to know what truth is, to be able to understand what is right and wrong, to be able to understand and be comforted in times when we can't comprehend what's happening, times like Job endured, all the knowledge of things not readily seen is revealed in the Word of God to the degree that our eyes can be sufficiently enlightened. What a wonderful truth. The Word of God is all the revelation we need. It is clear. It is easy to understand. It leaves no doubt as to necessary truth. Proverbs 6:23 says the commandment is a lamp and teaching is light.

And so we would ask the question: is the Bible so insufficient that it can't show us these things that we have to depend on worldly wisdom? Do we have to go to men to ask them to explain what's happening? Do we need further revelation? Do we need psychoanalysis for spiritual problems from sources that long have rejected Scripture as even a source of truth? Is the Bible so incomplete that we have to turn to science to explain origin, philosophy to explain life and sociology to explain sin? No, all the light of life is in the Word of God.

And again I draw you to Psalm 119. Notice please verse 52, "I remember Thine ordinances of old, O Lord, and have comforted myself." In the midst of distress, I went back to the Word and I was comforted. Notice verse 59, "I thought on my ways and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies." I looked at the way I was going and got back in line with You.

In verse 81 to 83 we find an equally powerful testimony to the clarity of Scripture as it lightens the way, "My soul faints for Thy salvation but I hope in Thy Word, mine eyes fail for Thy word saying, When wilt Thou comfort me for I am become like a wineskin in the smoke, yet do I not forget Thy statutes." When you can't see and everything is covered with smoke, as it were, you look to the Word. In verse 86, "All Thy commandments are faithful...all Thy commandments are trustworthy." Verse 92, "Unless Thy law had been my delight, I should then have perished in mine affliction." Verse 105, "Thy Word is a lamp to my feet, a light to my path." Verse 130, "The entrance of Thy words gives light, it gives understanding to the simple." Verse 140, "Thy Word is very pure, therefore Thy servant loves it."

In other words, he's saying the Word is sufficient to give me the information I need. It lightens the dark way. It gives me understanding. Yes, the Scripture's sufficient for salvation, sufficient for skill in living, sufficient for joy and happiness and satisfaction, sufficient for clear understanding of things not easily understood.

It is also, fifthly, verse 9, "...clean, enduring forever." And here he uses the term "fear" as a synonym for holy Scripture. Why does he do that? Because the holy Scripture intends to convey fear or the awesomeness of God to bring about a reverential awe, to draw us to worship. It is used in the sense of

what it seeks to produce. The Scripture intends to produce fear or awe or respect or worship to God and so it is said to be the fear of the Lord. And since the habit of the human soul is to worship, the Scripture then instructs us who we are to worship and how we are to worship.

And this Scripture which instructs us in the worship of God, he says, is clean. Marvelous thought. The word tahowr is the root word, the word means the absence of impurity, the absence of filthiness, the absence of defilement, the absence of imperfection. That is to be unsullied with sin, without evil, without corruption, without error. This again in contrast to the evil imaginations of men. The Word of God is clean. There's not a taint of evil in it. You can go to it and know that what it says is absolutely pure. The truth it conveys has no taint of evil in it. The testimony of the psalmist in Psalm 12 verse 6 is a marvelous one. "The words of the Lord," he says, "are pure words, like silver purified seven times in an earthen furnace." The Word is so pure, hallowed, holy, separate from sin.

Now that's in contrast to the words of men. You can't always trust them. You can the Word of God. And consequently you'll notice it endures forever. That is to say you can follow it always. It's trustworthy all the time. It is the living Word and the eternal Word, as Peter said in 1 Peter 1:23, I quoted to you earlier. It never changes. It's never altered. It doesn't matter what generation it is.

And when I hear these people come along and say, "Well, the Bible isn't sophisticated enough for our high-tech society," they don't understand. The Bible is absolutely pure and without flaw and without error and without sin and therefore needs no updating and no editing and no refining. It is perfect. Are we to believe all of a sudden that it's got inadequacies and errors and short-comings that need correction and edition? Are we to believe it needs to be bolstered by people who are more sophisticated than the Holy Spirit who wrote it? Are we to believe that it cannot purify a heart and a soul and a life? Are we to believe that people have to go someplace to learn a formula to get rid of their sin, to have an inner healing, to have a soul cleansing by some practitioner somewhere because the Word of God is not sufficient to deliver people from sin? Do we no longer believe in its power to purify a nation of people so that we must turn to power politics to overcome the weakness of the eternal Word of the living God? God forbid that we should believe that for a moment. The Word is adequate and sufficient as a clean Word, to clean the heart, to purge the heart.

And again, I call you to the testimony of the psalmist in Psalm 119. It's all right there. Psalm 119, starting in verse 3 and we could look at a lot of scriptures...verse 2, rather. He says, "Blessed are they that keep Thy testimonies and seek Him with the whole heart, they also do know iniquity." They walk in His way. People of the Word are clean. People of the Word are pure. Verses 9 to 11, "Where with all shall a young man cleanse his way?" How do you go about purifying your life? By having an inner healing? By having an encounter with somebody who can direct your problems because they've got some supernatural magical power? By calling on some contemporary science of the mind? No, "By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word. With my whole heart have I sought Thee. O, let me not wander from Thy commandments, Thy Word have I hidden in my heart that I might not sin against Thee."

In verse 38, "Establish Thy Word unto Thy servant who is devoted to Thy fear, or worship." Fill me with the Word. Verse 67, "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I've kept Thy Word." The Word and obedience going together. Verse 101, "I have restrained my feet from every evil way that I might keep Thy Word." Verse 172, "My tongue shall speak of Thy Word, for all Thy commandments are right, righteous."

Listen, the Word is sufficient for cleansing. It's sufficient for purifying the life. It is eternally relevant. It is all that is necessary for the cleansing of the soul. We do not need practitioners, we need the Word of God.

And lastly and so importantly, he says in verse 9 the word called here "the judgments," or the ordinances of the Lord are true and as a result, they are all together righteous. The word "ordinances" means divine verdicts. So we have divine instruction, the law of the Lord; divine witness, the testimony of the Lord; divine principles, the statutes of the Lord. We have divine decrees in the commandments. We have divine worship in the fear of the Lord. And now we have divine verdicts from the bench of the judge of all the earth. The Bible is God's judicial determination for the life of man and eternal destiny from the eternally supreme judge. And he says, "His Word is true." Oh what a statement.

Do you know how hard it is for people in our society or in any part of planet earth to find truth? Do you know what a battle it is to discover truth? And we have the Word that is true. The Word of the Lord is true. It's always true. Therefore it's always dependable, always relevant, always applicable in contrast to the lies of men who are victims of their father, the lying devil himself. It is always true.

Listen, beloved, if the Word of God is sufficient for salvation, if it is sufficient to perfectly transform the soul of a person, if it is sufficient for all the skills of spiritual living, if it is sufficient to bring full joy to overcome the sorrows and struggles of life, if it is sufficient to bring understanding to the dark things hard to see, if it is sufficient to purify all sin and if in all of this it's always true, then it's got to be the source of everything in spiritual living. And it is so trustworthy. The fact is that God in a scripture that we hold in our hands has given us a relatively perfect expression of His eternal will to establish all the necessary truth for spiritual life and duty. And I believe that with all my heart because that's the testimony of God Himself. And that Word in the life of an individual energized by the Spirit of God brings about consummate sufficiency. To believe anything less is to strike a blow against the integrity of the living God.

Now notice the result of the truthfulness of Scripture in verse 9 is that it is all together righteous. That is it is totally right. And the idea of that phrase is to talk of its comprehensiveness. It is all together righteous. There are no errors in it? Yes. But more than that, it is a complete comprehensive sufficient source of truth. And that is why the Scripture says things like this, Deuteronomy 4:2, "You shall not add unto the Word which I command you, neither shall you diminish anything from it that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." You better not add anything, you better not take anything away. Why? This is all together comprehensive. This is complete. It says in Revelation 22:18 and 19, if you add anything to it, it will be added to you the plagues that are written in it. Don't add anything. Don't take anything away.

In giving instruction to how a king should live in the seventeenth chapter of Deuteronomy verses 19 and 20, the Word of the Lord said this, "And it shall be with him--that is with the king--he shall read the Scripture all the days of his life that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes to do them that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren that he turn not aside from the commandment to the right hand or the left, to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel." Promised blessing came in connection with obedience to holy Scripture.

Are we to believe that we need more revelation? Are we to believe that we need more visions and words of prophecy? You see how ridiculous all of this is? The Word of God is sufficient. It is true and absolutely comprehensive.

And I draw you one more time to Psalm 119. Verse 76...pardon me, verse 89, let's start at verse 89, "Forever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in heaven." Marvelous statement to the sufficiency and the comprehensive completeness of Scripture. Verse 128, "Therefore I esteem all Thy precepts concerning all things to be right and I hate every false way." Verse 137, "Righteous art Thou, O Lord, and upright are Thy judgments." Verse 138, "Thy testimonies that Thou hast commanded are righteous and very faithful, unchanging." Verse 142, "Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness and Thy law is the

truth." Verse 151, "Thou art near, O Lord, and all Thy commandments are truth." Verse 160, "Thy Word is true from the beginning and every one of Thy righteous ordinances endures forever." Tremendous testimony, utterly complete comprehensive source of spiritual truth necessary for spiritual life and perfectly meeting all the spiritual needs of man.

Now that, beloved, is a running gasping effort to capture in a brief period of time the magnitude of those three verses. They present the sufficiency of Scripture. Secondly, I want you to see as a result of that the value of Scripture...the value of it. Look at verses 10 to 13, I'm only going to mention them, so listen carefully. It is so valuable as a comprehensive resource for life, unequalled in value because number one, it provides the greatest possession. Verse 10, "More to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold." Listen, the Word of God is the greatest possession. To have the Word of God is more valuable than all the precious metal. Oh, if we could only make our society realize that. If we could only even get many people in the evangelical church to realize that we don't have to promise people material things. The Word is the greatest possession. It is supremely valuable for it leads to the path of joy, it converts the soul, it makes wise the simple and all those things we've seen. It is the source of the greatest possession.

Secondly, the greatest pleasure. In verse 10 he says, "Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb." Nothing is as sweet, nothing is as pleasurable, nothing is as enriching, nothing is as personally meaningful, it brings the sweetest things of earth. What do you seek for? Where do you find your pleasure? I can honestly say to you there's no pleasure in life like the pleasure and the joy, the lasting pleasure and lasting joy of hours spent in the Word of God. You see, the resolution of all of our problems is not a result of inadequacy of Scripture, it's the result of an adequate application of Scripture, inadequate diligent study of Scripture. Scripture is the greatest possession and the source of the greatest pleasure.

Thirdly, it's the source of the greatest protection. Verse 11, "Moreover by them is Thy servant warned." It's a source of protection in the face of temptation and sin and ignorance, we need the Word. It protects us. We hide it that we might not sin.

And fourthly, it's the source of the greatest profit for in keeping of its truths there is great reward. The true reward is not here and now, the true reward is not positive confession, visualization of what you want right now, the true reward is the obedience to Scripture that brings about the glory to come. In fact, the word "reward" here in Hebrew is literally "the end...the end." And what he is saying is in keeping of the Word of God there is a great end...great end, an eternal reward. Instead of living for what we can amass here and now like the Christian cultic preoccupation of health, wealth and prosperity, and immediate success, we need to know the blessedness of living for the eternal reward.

The Scripture, yes it is the one thing that gives us without question the greatest possession, the greatest pleasure, the greatest protection, the greatest profit and fifthly, verses 12 and 13, the greatest purification. It is a purifier. Look at the response of the psalmist. Even as he is going through all of this, he says, "Who can understand his errors." In the midst of this kind of statement about Scripture, how can I ever understand why I sin, right? Why would I ever violate that which can transform me and make me wise and fill my heart with joy and enlighten my eyes and purify my heart and comprehensively supply all my resources? Why would I ever violate such truth? How can I understand that? And in looking into the Word he cries out, "O cleanse me from secret sins." Those are the ones that I don't plan and I don't premeditate, they're the hidden ones. And maybe I don't even remember to confess.

And then he says, "And keep me also from presumptuous sins," those are the sins I see and premeditate and plan and know about, the arrogant sins. "Keep me from the ones I don't know about and keep me from the ones I do and don't let those dominate me, then I'll be upright and I'll be innocent from the great transgression." That phrase simply means apostasy...I won't apostatize, I won't totally rebel. O

God, hold me back. The term "the great transgression" is the idea of freeing oneself or breaking past a barrier, escaping the dominion of God, the realm of grace. So you can see that a look at Scripture causes a backwash, a cry for purity in the heart. Yes, it is the source of the greatest purification.

That little list ought to be something you keep somewhere and when you study the Word of God and look at it, it will remind you of what it will do in your life. It is the greatest possession because it gives you that which is needed for every issue of life. It is a glorious wealth. It is the greatest pleasure. It fills your heart with joy in all circumstances. It is the greatest protection because it warns you. It is the greatest profit, it leads you to eternal reward. And the greatest purification, it cleanses the heart.

The sufficiency of Scripture, the value of it, finally, the commitment to it. What is the response to all of this? It comes in verse 14. As the psalmist cries out and I trust you will from your heart, "Let the words of my mouth and the thoughts or meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and redeemer."

What he's saying is, "O God, may the things I think and the things I say be acceptable to you." Why? Because they're consistent with Your..what?..Your Word...Your revelation. And he's saying, "Make me a man of the Word. Make my thoughts biblical. Make my words biblical. Keep me in the Word." That's the right commitment.

I really believe that we're seeing sad things happen in the evangelical church today. And I pointed them out in detail, if you weren't here last week, you need to get that tape and listen to it. People are leaving the Word of God while affirming its truthfulness and chasing after all other kinds of things because they have the feeling that the Word can't meet their need and that is a lie of the devil that has arisen because they've never really lived a biblical life and they've never really been noble like the Bereans who daily searched the scriptures. And they've never allowed, as Paul said to the Colossians, the Word of Christ to dwell in them richly. They've treated it in a cursory way and never enjoyed the power of its depths. And oh how in this day we ought to call the church of Christ back to a preoccupation that consumes them with the living Word of God and let our message not be the message of the Bible plus the world, but let it be the message of the sufficiency of the Word of God alone.

As an old African said in a tribe one time, speaking to the great missionary Robert Moffet(?), he held up a Bible and said to that missionary, "This is the fountain where I drink and this is the oil that makes my lamp burn." May it be so for us. Let's bow in prayer.

In your heart in this moment, can you make before the Lord a renewed covenant to commit yourself to His Word? Can you pull your thoughts together to do that? A covenant that you desire to keep before Him? I mean, what we have heard this morning out of the Word of God is without equal and importance in the life of a believer. Will you covenant with God to be a man and a woman of the Word, finding your resources there and applying them? Oh, you'll never know what the Word can do if you don't study it. You'll never know what it can do if you don't apply it. It isn't enough to just verbalize that you believe it, but when given its place in the life of a believer, it is the consummate spiritual resource through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Father, I pray for my own life and the life of all who are here and who hear this message that we might be committed to the Word which as we read in the beginning in Psalm 138, You have magnified above Your name. O Lord God, help us to be like those noble Bereans who searched the Scripture daily. Help us to find in it like that old African, the fountain from which we drink and the oil that lights our lamp. And energize it in us, O Holy Spirit, that it might not be cold orthodoxy or academics but living truth for Christ's sake. Amen.

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