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**"Making God's Word Your Firm Foundation"  
(Psalm 119:105-112)  
Pastor Peter Yi  
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**(Psalm 119:105-112)**

<sup>105</sup> Your word is a lamp for my feet,  
a light on my path.  
<sup>106</sup> I have taken an oath and confirmed it,  
that I will follow your righteous laws.  
<sup>107</sup> I have suffered much;  
preserve my life, LORD, according to your word.  
<sup>108</sup> Accept, LORD, the willing praise of my mouth,  
and teach me your laws.  
<sup>109</sup> Though I constantly take my life in my hands,  
I will not forget your law.  
<sup>110</sup> The wicked have set a snare for me,  
but I have not strayed from your precepts.  
<sup>111</sup> Your statutes are my heritage forever;  
they are the joy of my heart.  
<sup>112</sup> My heart is set on keeping your decrees  
to the very end.

We've all had the experience when we've been misunderstood. We see it happening in the media all the time. A TV personality is called out for saying something offensive and he or she claims that they were misunderstood, that their words were taken out of context. Or someone tweets something that ends up being highly offensive. These things happen to us as well. We say something in an email or a text and the other person misreads it or we didn't communicate clearly enough. Misunderstanding occurs and then we have to explain and clarify and perhaps even apologize. These things happen with God as well. In fact, God might be the most misunderstood person in the universe. There are reasons for misunderstanding God. First is not having the correct information about him. If we do not have the correct information about God there is no way we can rightly understand him. If our understanding of God comes from media sound bites and caricatures and misinformation, we're bound to think of God in a way that is completely off.

Second, misunderstanding God comes from misinterpreting the information you have about him. So you might have the right information, the correct facts about God, but that doesn't necessarily mean that you properly interpret those facts. For example, you take the time to write a pretty clear, organized, logical email. It's thorough. It explains everything. And then a couple days later the person you wrote to asks you a question that was clearly articulated in your original email. They had the facts, but they still didn't understand.

So, you might not have the facts. Or you might have the facts, but misinterpret them. Or third, there is an immovable prejudice or bias against God. Recently I finished reading the New York Times bestseller *The God Delusion* written by the celebrity atheist Richard Dawkins. This is how he describes God.

The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully. (Dawkins, Richard. *The God Delusion* (p. 51). Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Kindle Edition.)

Now, I think Dawkins falls into the third category. He has access to the same Bible that you and I have, but comes to a completely opposite conclusion about God. I think he is pre-judging the God of the Bible. Well, I know he is, because he is an atheist, a naturalist, a person who doesn't believe in anything that can't be proven by science. His worldview precludes the possibility of the supernatural.

Well, what about us? What about you? How well do you know God? Do we have all the facts, all the information? Have we looked at it? In other words, have you read your Bibles with the goal to understand the author, the main character, God himself? Or, are you coming at God with prejudice, with assumptions? And I guarantee that all of us are. There is not a person in this world that doesn't come to the Bible or to God without preconceived notions about God. No one is a completely blank and empty slate. Well, it's those preconceptions that often times keep us from knowing God as we should, and it keeps us at a personal disadvantage.

Consider it this way. Imagine your closest friend or spouse and you think of yourself to be the person that knows that person the best and understands that person like no one else, but that familiarity can cause us to make assumptions. "Oh she's so understanding. She's so nice. She's so accommodating." So, we start taking her for granted or we begin to assume that she won't mind if we don't ask her opinion on this or that and so on. And that is what we must be careful of, not only in human relationships, but especially in our relationship with God. Many false teachings/heresies come from those misguided assumptions. For example people say, "The Bible teaches that God is love and if that is true then it must follow that he would never send anyone to hell." From there you get the heresy of universalism, where there is no hell, no need for the cross and everyone goes to heaven. We must be willing to allow the Word to shape our beliefs and worldview.

As we've been working our way through this psalm we encounter a fellow God-worshiper and Christ-follower that is utterly captured by God's word. His entire worldview is shaped by God's word. His view of morals, his understanding of people and human nature, his view toward the present and future life are also shaped by the word. His understanding of God, who he is, what he requires of us, what our relationship to God is, all come from God's word.

The way you and I come to know God is through communication, through words, that God himself has revealed, through a book. In fact we all know that that is the only way to truly get to know someone, through their words. With our words we reveal ourselves. Our words are our self-revelation.

*For example, and I trust Jamie won't mind me sharing this story. Many of you know that since MiRha's injury she has lost most of her speaking ability, though she still retains the ability to understand everything that's being said to her and around her. Well, one time, Linda and I went to visit her in the hospital, and this was just when doctors started to reintroduce solid foods to her. So I think Linda cooked some Korean kimchi stew and brought it to her. So, we started asking Jamie, does MiRha like this food or that food, so that we could bring it to her the next time we visited. We were naming all these foods and Jamie's like, yeah she does or no she doesn't, or I think so and on and on we went. Well, we mentioned Vietnamese food and wondered if MiRha liked Pho noodles, which got us talking about the herb cilantro, which is sprinkled in Pho noodles. Linda said something like, ooohh, not everyone likes cilantro, and Jamie said, "Yes, MiRha likes cilantro." Up to this point, MiRha had not said a word and as soon as Jamie said that MiRha liked cilantro, MiRha blurts out,*

*“NO!” And we all looked at her in disbelief and burst out laughing; so much for knowing what your wife likes.*

Well, this was just her food preference, but that day we all learned something about MiRha that we would never have known, if she hadn't communicated so strongly her dislike of cilantro.

So it is with God. God has revealed himself with words, in a book. Everything in this book, the Bible, is everything that God wanted us to know about him. There is no need to look for another book or look anywhere else? Or even to seek some mystical voice of God in your head or heart or to consult someone connected to the spiritual world. All that God wants us to know about him will be found in this book. So, whether you're a Christian or not, this is the place to turn. If you're not a Christian, I want you know that there are many people in this church that would be delighted to study the Bible with you so that you too could come to know God. And if you are a Christian, what are you waiting for? Go to the Bible, with your prejudices, and learn who God is. Be ready to have your worldview confronted and changed and rearranged. We mustn't go to the Bible to merely see all the places that God agrees with our worldview. More importantly we must look for the places where our worldview is in conflict with what God reveals and then be willing to submit and change our beliefs and thinking.

Allow me to draw out some highlights from this passage.

**First we are to have great confidence in the Word of God**

119:105 Your word is a lamp for my feet,  
a light on my path.

This verse is telling us that God's word is like a light for my journey in life, for the way I live my life, for all the trials and struggles that life will throw at me.

Similar words are used in the beginning chapters of Proverbs, where a young man is given strong encouragement to be careful of going on the wrong path and then a couple chapters later he's told to take a different path altogether, the path of wisdom.

Prov 1:15 my son, do not go along with them, do not set foot on their paths;  
Prov 3:17 Her ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace.

Jesus also mentioned paths.

Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the **road** that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it. **(Matthew 7:13–14)**

But, in what way is the Word of God a lamp and a light to my path, my way of life? It's saying this. If God's word is indeed God's word, then it should address everything we need to know about God and address every life situation we can go through. Consider Proverbs 3:5–6:

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

To trust in the Lord is to trust in his word and to lean not on my own understanding, is to lean on what God has revealed in his word. When we submit, obey, follow God's word, then God will make our paths straight.

It's like this:

*Last week Linda and I went camping and of course you have to have a campfire. So, we bought some wood and to prepare to get the fire going, we had brought some newspaper, but the wood we got was just too big, so we had to split the wood with an axe into smaller pencil sized pieces. Now there are two ways you can cut the wood. It's the difference between using the word split and the word chop. When you chop wood, you are going against the grain, and that is very very hard work. You're going against the way the wood was meant to be cut. And then there's the other way, you can split the wood, where you cut with the grain, and compared to chopping, it's quite easy. When we try to live life cutting against the grain, doing life our way, then our lives will be complicated with difficulties and problems. It's like when the Lord Jesus met Saul on the Damascus road and said, Saul why are you kicking against the goads? Jesus is asking, why are you struggling so hard to live life your way? But, when we live our lives cutting with the grain, that is, according to God's way, then our lives in general will be filled with deep joy and fulfillment. Because we're living life the way it was meant to be lived. We're walking on the path that God has already paved, not trying to wrestle through a dense forest.*

That's why we can have great confidence in God's word, because it will never lead us astray. It will forever be a never dimming light for our lives.

### **Second we are to have great commitment to the Word of God.**

The confessions and commitments of the psalmist are staggering. Let's look at them. Look for the things he says he will do and the things he says he will not do, which is common practice for all commitments. When you promise a friend that you'll be on time, you are promising that you won't be late. There's something you will do and something you won't do. Let's take a look:

- 106     I have taken an oath and confirmed it,  
          that I will follow your righteous laws.
- 109     Though I constantly take my life in my hands,  
          I will not forget your law.
- 110     The wicked have set a snare for me,  
          but I have not strayed from your precepts.
- 111     Your statutes are my heritage forever;  
          they are the joy of my heart.
- 112     My heart is set on keeping your decrees  
          to the very end.

If it is true that the Word of God is the Word of God, then it follows that we should have great commitment to it, to Him, to God. One of the ways the psalmist shows his commitment to God and his word is by taking an oath.

- 106     I have taken an oath and confirmed it,  
          that I will follow your righteous laws.

There is nothing wrong with making a promise to God as a response to his undeserved mercy and grace. Do you remember the story of Zacchaeus, the short, corrupt tax collector. Upon having his life changed by meeting Jesus, he makes a vow, an oath.

In the Bible we see three kinds of oaths. There's the "if" oath and there's the "because" oath and there are general oaths.

Here's an example of an "if" oath:

And she made a vow, saying, "LORD Almighty, if you will only look on your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head."  
(1 Samuel 1:11)

Lord if you grant me this job, then I will give you my first fruits of my earnings. It's something above and beyond that we promise. We don't say, If you grant me this job then I will tithe. You're required to tithe regardless. But if you say, Lord if you grant me this job, then every bonus I get, I will give to you.

Now, here's an example of a "because" oath:

Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount. (Luke 19:8)

This is the oath that says, "Because you've done so much for me, I will do this for you God." Lord, you've done so much more than I deserve, so I promise to...

The final oath is the general oath. And I'm sorry, but I couldn't pinpoint a Biblical example, but it's an oath that goes like this. In your walk with the Lord, God may lay a burden upon your heart, that moves you to make an oath to him. Lord, I promise to pray every day for the salvation of my child. Please honor my oath and save him/her. Lord, I promise to carry out my work and business with the utmost integrity. Please bless and honor my oath.

People of God, have you ever made an oath to God—an "if" oath, a "because" oath, or just a general oath? Knowing what you know about God, and having experienced his inexpressible grace, shouldn't we make promises to Him, which we endeavor by that same grace to keep?

We looked at having great confidence in the Word. We looked at having great commitment to the Word, and now finally, **we are to have great contentment in the Word of God.** I think the sequence makes sense. We begin with confidence, that moves us toward commitment and then we follow up with contentment. For this point we want to look at verse 111.

111 Your statutes are my heritage forever;  
they are the joy of my heart.

Another way to understand the word heritage is with the word inheritance. Consider how valuable and precious we would view an inheritance. Imagine if you got that call that someone had left you an inheritance. Think of the value you'd place on it. You'd keep it safe and you would pass in on to the next generation. And then because this inheritance is from God himself, our hearts would overflow with joy, to know that in the Word are life and wisdom and truth.

Think about that. Isn't it amazing to think that God, the creator of the universe has actually spoken and has clearly communicated to us? That means we can know this God. That means we can know what the problem is, and what the solution is. All the guesswork is gone. We can now know. From this we gain great contentment in God and his Word.

Friends, God and his word will never disappoint us, it will never let us down. Only in his word do we find the way to joy and happiness. Therefore trust in it, rest in it, and find great contentment in it because in it, we discover Jesus, our Saviour, the Author and Perfector of our faith.

Let's pray.