

# How to Be Grounded

*Psalm 119*

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**Bible Text:** Psalm 119:73-80  
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This morning, I want to encourage you to open your Bibles to the book of Psalm 119 and today, right there in the middle of your Bible, Psalm 119, we're going to begin in verse 73. Now, I know there's many of you who are with us each and every week and it was last Sunday morning when we gathered, you're like, hold on, time out, we skipped a section. Well, yes and no. One of the blessed curses of Psalm 119 is there are 22 respective eight verse sections and as we're walking through this chapter of the Bible in this season of our lives, unfortunately there are not enough Sunday mornings to quote get it all in, and so one of the things we're doing right now is addressing these respective sections both in our morning and in our Sunday evening service. So I want you to know we didn't skip over a section, we're just kind of combining with our Sunday services.

Now, for those of you who are new to us, guests or visitors, I want to welcome you to a journey through the longest chapter of the Bible. Psalm 119 has 176 verses, and of those 176 verses, 172 of them explicitly, clearly mention a description of the word of God, his precepts, his commandments, his words in specific. This is critical because as a church family, let me introduce you to what we're walking through this calendar year. We as a church family are challenging ourselves to place the word of God not just in our Bibles, but in our hearts. In fact, we've challenged ourselves as individuals to take an entire chapter of scripture and to memorize it this calendar year. In doing so, hopefully as a church body, we will take the collective Bible from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22 and have all of it, quote, memorized or placed within our heart. Now, that's the first reason we're walking through this chapter.

The second one is, again, 172 out of 176 verses, there is a single solitary primary subject matter of this chapter, it is the word of God. It challenges us each and every time we gather to realize, not just to acknowledge that the word of God should be primary in our life, but to see how does it change our life, how does it impact our life? And today, we're going to discover that the word of God can make us grounded. It can provide stability in our lives. I did not use the word balance. I used the word grounded, stability. In fact, James chapter 1 verse 8 says a double-minded man is unstable in all of his ways. And so today we're going to discover how is it that we live our lives in such a way that the word of God gives us a grounding, a foundation, a quote, stability, and in doing so, we're going to approach it in two manners. The first two verses of the section deal with the

perspective that we must have if we're gonna allow the Bible to ground us. And secondly, we're gonna deal with the petition, the request that we give to God to allow us on a daily basis to make this a reality.

Psalms 119 beginning in verse 73. It says,

73 Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments. 74 They that fear thee will be glad when they see me; because I have hoped in thy word. 75 I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me. 76 Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant. 77 Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for thy law is my delight. 78 Let the proud be ashamed; for they dealt perversely with me without a cause: but I will meditate in thy precepts. 79 Let those that fear thee turn unto me, and those that have known thy testimonies. 80 Let my heart be sound in thy statutes; that I be not ashamed.

As I mentioned, when we talk about being grounded or having stability in our life, the first two verses actually speak of a very specific perspective that must take place in our life and this is kind of the big picture of this section, and it begins with a very specific belief that we need to understand and quote adhere to. Notice the first statement, "Thy hands have made me and fashioned me." You know when you begin to look at the world in general or at large, there's really only two main perspectives that you can have when it comes to your life, you either came from God or you came as an accident from something that is not God. That's really the only two choices that we have, and it says here that we must understand, we must believe that our lives have originated with, are being sustained by, and will culminate with the Creator of the universe, the one who fashioned and formed us.

Now, this is revolutionary, particularly in today's cultural context, and we could give illustration after illustration that verifies and proves. By the way, for me, maybe not so much you, I'm pretty simple. The Bible says that God formed us, God fashioned us, God created us. I'm good with that. But for those of you that may be on the off chance would say, you know, I kind of question whether God's hand really was what brought all this into existence, again, I don't have necessarily a background or a degree in biology, but I've done some reading and when you begin to study what you and I know as DNA, that which we cannot see with the naked eye that makes us who we are, there's several layers to what we can't see with the eye and the first is this: there are 8.1, as of this moment, billion people on planet Earth, 8.1 billion of us, and not one single one of us has the same fingerprint. Now think about that for a moment, 8.1 billion different shades of those little circles that are on your thumb. And at the same time, those that are experts in the field will tell you that when you begin to look at our DNA strands within us, there's not a single one of us that looks like anybody else. You talk about variety, but it even gets more extensive. When you begin to really get in the weeds when it comes to all that DNA talk, you know the word that's used most frequently? Billions. Billions of pairs. Billions

of this. In fact, on a conservative estimate, this may blow your mind it blew my mind, did you know that within your body there are at least 10 billion miles of DNA strands; 10 billion, that's with a B. And so when you begin to look at how intricate and how yet delicate and yet how amazing even your very existence is, now do you understand why in the book of Proverbs it says only the fool has said there is no God. In other words, that is that foundational belief.

And I understand that today, particularly in this context, the overwhelming majority, if not every single one of you, "All right, all right pastor, we can move on, we got that." Okay, so if we have that understanding, it should lead us to this conviction in verse 73, "give me understanding." In other words, that conviction is, if we're willing to admit and claim and believe that we originated from God, are sustained by him, and one day our lives will culminate in him, then that means that when it comes to guidance, direction, instruction in life, why would we listen to anybody who is contrary to him? Why would we give them attention? Why would we give them the time of our lives? In fact, today, there are so many voices that you and I are susceptible to. There are so many voices that we have access to and according to what we just read, it says, okay, if we believe that God created and fashioned us, then he is the one who we should seek out for understanding. Now, for some of you, let me make this a little bit easier. It's real simple. You ready? What this basically says is this: if somebody or anybody says something contrary to what God said, they're wrong. There you go. Now, I know you say, "Pastor, it's not that simple." Yes, it is. It is simply that simple that whomever the voice is that speaks contrary to the voice of God, they're not God, so they're wrong.

So once we have this belief and once we have this conviction, it leads to a very important decision in verse 74. It says, "They that fear thee will be glad when they see me." You know what that means? It means we have to render a decision. Every single one of us, whether you realize it or not, every single one of us has to render a decision based on what God has spoken about our lives. Now we understand that we come from him. We have a conviction that what he says is true, anything else contrary to is not. So let's kind of walk through what your Creator says about you. You know how the Lord describes you? As sheep. Yeah, isn't that a compliment? We're stinky and we're stupid. That's who we are. That's just who we are. In fact, the Bible says in Isaiah that even our best works are nothing but filthy rags. Let me make it clear. In Romans chapter 3, it says, for all, y'all know what the Greek word for all means, right? For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. So what is the Bible saying there? It says, per his understanding, that every one of us has messed up, every one of us is, quote, unholy, and that the wages of our sin, chapter 6 of Romans, the wages, the result of our sin is death. But back in Romans chapter 5, verse 8, it says, but the gift of God is that Christ died for us while we were yet sinners.

Now I want you to think about how that message flies in the face of the other voices. You know what the other voices of our world say? If you'll just do this, if you'll just stop that, if you'll just receive or change this, then everything's going to work out. You know what the Bible says? There's nothing you can do to fix it. There's nothing you can do to change it which is while is important, it says while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. In

Romans 10:9 and 10, it says if we believe in our heart and confess with our mouth the Lord Jesus we shall be saved.

Now here's why the decision is important, it says those that fear thee rejoice when they see me. You know in the book of Luke chapter 15, Jesus tells three stories. He tells the story of a sheep that goes wandering off, he tells the story of a coin that was lost that is found and then a son that was prodigal that returned home. You know what's amazing about that chapter is that in every one of those stories, whenever what was lost is found, it says there's rejoicing that takes place. There's a party that breaks out. It says all of heaven rejoices. All the angels rejoice. The Father at the end of Luke 15, he throws the biggest party he's ever thrown because that which was lost is now found. Now, I'm about to put this quote decision to the test. I think that most of you would agree with me that the Bible means what the Bible says, that those of us, all of us who have sinned, when we call upon Jesus Christ to save us and forgive us, he does and we celebrate that and we rejoice. But you ready for a fun little exercise? I want you to imagine, do not say the name out loud. I want you to imagine the one person on planet Earth that just is nails on the chalkboard to you. Just you cannot stand to hear their voice. You can't stand to see them and the very mention of their name makes you want to go crawl in a hole. Now I want you to imagine that in about 20 or 25 minutes that person walks down this aisle and gets saved. Can I tell you what most of our responses would be? "What? No. Oh, they just putting on a show." What does it say here? They that fear thee rejoice when they see me. In other words, the decision that we have to make is not only our decision to believe in Jesus Christ, but our decision to rejoice and to celebrate by not looking at somebody's past, but by celebrating who Jesus has made them for today and tomorrow.

But you know what? It also changes our behavior. Notice at the end of verse 74, "I have hoped in thy word." What that basically says is when we understand that we came from God, we're convicted that what he says is true, we believe in how he has laid everything out, it changes us. Our hope is no longer in anything else but what he has said, how he has said it, and what it means for our life. Basically what this says is this, that what we know as a life of belief is different than a life of unbelief, that I'll put it in our context today, that a Christian ought to look at things differently and ought to live differently. Now I'm going to give you some low hanging fruit. I'm going to give you a big old fat softball today. You ready? I'm not going to get in all the weeds. I'm just going to talk about the basics. I'm going to talk about the things that we as believers struggle with on somewhat of a regular basis and have a propensity to make some unbelievable excuses regarding. Talk about our prayer life. "Man, I just find it hard to pray. I find it tough to pray. I don't have time to pray." Well, the Bible says pray without ceasing. "Well, I just don't think God understands my life." OK, you just said you understood that God was right, any voice different than his is wrong, that means you're wrong. Do you see how that all worked out? How about this? How about the Bible? "Oh, yeah, we're celebrating the Bible. We're meditating on the Bible. We're memorizing the Bible. The Bible's good. Yes, yes, yes. But you know, I just don't have time. I just don't have the energy. I just don't have the focus. I don't have the ability to do so." The problem there is 2 Timothy chapter 2 verse 15 says study the word of God, rightly divide it so that you will not be ashamed. How about this one, now I'm preaching to the proverbial choir, how about

going to church? I've heard people tell me all the time, "You know, you don't have to go to church to be a Christian." Well, you're absolutely right, but you need to go to a restaurant to get food. Nonetheless I'm just saying. Hebrews chapter 10 verse 25 says, do not forsake the assembly of believers.

We could go through a whole list. In fact, it's a Baptist church, it's daylight savings time, so I'm feeling a little spunky this morning. I never go here, so I'm going to go here. "Uh-oh, you going to talk about giving?" Yeah, I am. "Well, you know that whole giving thing is it the gross, is it the net, is it saying this, saying that? You know, back then, pastor, they didn't give, you know, dollars and cents, they gave of, you know fruits and vegetables and turtledoves." I get it. Do you know what 2 Corinthians chapter 9 says? Be a cheerful giver, not a begrudgingly giver. But in other words in an amazing that we're easily persuaded and we're easily decisive when it comes to, "Oh, Jesus, save me and make sure I go to heaven," how amazing it is on, quote, the other side we make all these excuses.

And so here's the secondary question: how is it that we can go before the Lord, how is it that we can petition him, how is it on a daily basis that we can live out that last statement in verse 74 that I would hope in your word, in other words, "God, how do I do this thing called life as a believer?" I'm gonna do something to you that was first shown to me when I was in fourth grade. That's right. You know that if somebody teaches you something in fourth grade Sunday school and you still remember it, oh, it's good. This was an acronym that was given to me years ago, I practice it still to this day, of how to pray. The acronym is this, ACTS, A-C-T-S. It stands for Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication. Allow me to just somewhat describe it and then we're gonna walk through how it's laid out here in Psalm 119. Adoration means you honor, you recognize, you demonstrate your acknowledgment of who the Lord is. To be quite honest with you, that's how our prayer life should start, okay? The C stands for confession. That's right, you just lay it all out. You admit to God what he already knows about you. Then there's the Thanksgiving part. You say, "Why does Thanksgiving come next?" Because a lot of everything you confess, you need to thank him you're still alive. That's how that works. And then there's supplication. Supplication is a big fancy word for asking for something. Now, you do realize how this acronym is the complete opposite of most of our prayer lives, right? Most of our prayer lives are a list of wants and needs. In fact, I would say, and I'm not here being ugly, I'm just being honest, I have been a part of quote unquote prayer meetings for half a century and do you know that most of our prayer meetings are organ concerts? You're praying for kidneys, hearts, lungs, knees, hips. You know it's true, don't you? And there's nothing wrong with praying for those things. When it hurts, I pray for it, trust me. But I want you to know something, that the supplication, the asking is at the end, not the beginning. And I'm gonna challenge you today, if you begin your prayer time, whether this is in your closet, driving down the road, whatever it may be, and you change the way you pray to acknowledging God, confessing your sin, thanking him, your list of ask will change dramatically.

That being said, I want you to notice in verse 75, it's laid out. You say, "What do you mean it says adoration?" "O LORD, that thy judgments are right." You understand that

adoration of God? He's basically saying, "God, it doesn't matter what you say, it doesn't matter what you think, you're right." Now, the first thing you're gonna notice here, and this flies in the face of our culture today, is that God is not interested in how you feel about it. His judgments are right. You know, two of the words that are so powerful in our culture is the word "and" and "but." Anytime you use the word "but," you're saying with the exception of or this is a difference than. How many of us say, "O God, your judgments are right, but this one. Your judgment's right, but that one." He says all your judgments are right. If you're willing to acknowledge to the Lord that everything he said is right and he is never wrong, trust me, you have adored him.

But then there's this second one in verse 76. I'm sorry, at the end of verse 75, "that thou in faithfulness has afflicted me." You know what you're basically saying to God? That when you reaped what you sowed, you deserved it. Boy, it's getting tough, isn't it? In fact, in Hebrews chapter 12, there's this passage there, and I say this all the time, but I don't think people believe me. You know, there are passages in the Bible that I don't like. You say, what do you mean there's passages? I didn't say I didn't believe, I said I don't like it. In Hebrews chapter 12, it says that one of the ways that I know I'm a child of God is that he corrects me, he chastises me, and he tells me I'm wrong. I don't like it. But what does he say? He says, "thou has afflicted me." In other words, he's confessing that God was right in his ways, he was right in his response and that we have sinned. You have sinned and I have sinned.

We adore him, we confess, and notice the next, Thanksgiving in verse 76. "I pray thee, thy mercy, thy kindness be for my comfort." That's what I talked about earlier, once you confess your sin, thank him that you're still alive. The word mercy is all throughout the book of Psalms, particularly chapter 119, because if you will honestly adore God for who he is and confess your sin before him, you will realize that the fact that you're breathing is an act of his mercy.

Ah, but then there's the supplication part. See, beginning in verse 77, there are four things that are asked of God. There are four items, and now every one of them is mentioned, and then it's predicated by "according to thy testimonies, according to thy statutes." We're talking about stability. We're talking how to be grounded according to the word of God. Well, the first thing is have the proper perspective. We've got to be a believer in Jesus Christ because apart from that, there is no stability, there is no groundedness. But once we're a believer, how is it that we petition, how is it that we pray, we adore, we confess, we thank, but what about the ask? What are the things that the Bible says that we should ask for? I find it fascinating, verse 77. Yes, "his tender mercies, that I may live." Now let me unpack that for just a moment. What do you mean "that I may live"? You realize from the perspective of a Jewish Israelite of the days of David, it had not been long ago that their forefathers had been in Egypt. They had been subjected to 400 plus years in slavery. They had been subjected to what we know as the famous plagues. But back in the book of Exodus, there is this story about when the plagues began to happen in Egypt that there was a Goshen. There was a place that when it was dark outside, it was light inside, when there was death outside, there was life inside. The very first, quote, supplication is a supplication, it's a prayer of refuge. Basically, the Bible is saying this, "God, may you

make my life a place like Goshen. In a family," not that this ever happens to yours, "in a family where everybody has gone sideways, let me be Goshen. In a place of business that is so contrary to you, God, let my office be Goshen. I got one for you, in a culture and in a community that consistently thumbs its nose at God, may my house be Goshen." In other words, one of the first things that we ought to pray, if we want stability in life, I got news for you, it's not about, quote, praying against what's going on out there, but making sure that what's going on here is what it needs to be.

Now, for those of you that are interested in out there, that's the next point. Notice it says in verse 78, "Let the proud be ashamed for they dealt perversely with me." Now, I'm gonna give a word that all of you want to enact, but you don't wanna talk about at church, it's called revenge. Oh, don't act like you don't want it. Somebody's done you wrong, haven't they? 90% of every country western song is about this, okay? Somebody did you wrong, alright? Here's the problem: most of us, when seeking out revenge, do it so wrongly. In fact, the Bible says in Deuteronomy chapter 32 and in Romans 14, "Revenge is mine, saith the Lord." Let me give you a little, I guess, just testimony of my own life. Throughout the years when people have done me wrong, throughout the years when things have been done erroneously to me, you know the Lord has a better way of dealing with them than I would? His ways are not your ways. His thoughts are not your thoughts.

So when we go before the Lord, if we want to wake up every day and be grounded, first off, we've got to pray, "God, may I be Goshen wherever I am." Secondly, "Whoever does me wrong, God, I'm going to turn them over to you, and I'm not going to get involved in it." Here's the third one, verse 79. It says, "Let those that fear thee turn again unto thee." Now remember that verse back up in verse 74, those that fear thee, those are believers. What's this a prayer for? Revival. It's a prayer that those who are believers, those in our context today are Christians, are part of the body of Christ, that they, if they have strayed from, if they'd wandered from, if they, if you want to talk about Jeremiah, if they've backslidden, that they would come back to the Lord.

Now, I'm gonna make you a promise. Today, tomorrow, and each, and every other day, that if you begin to pray like this passage in Psalm 119, it will do two things. Number one, it will give you more stability in your life, and number two, it'll make that list of wants and needs grow shorter and shorter each and every day because when you realize your need for Goshen, when you realize that it's not your call to be revengeful, when you realize that only the Lord can turn a heart back to him, you know what you begin to believe? You know what you begin to live? You begin to live this. You ready? It's not yours to deal with, it's his, and you know that brings peace in our life. But there's one last thing. Verse 80, "Let my heart be sound in thy statutes, that I be not ashamed." It's called being resolute or having resolution in our life. In our culture, in our context today, this is powerful. We need to have a prayer life. We need to have a stability. We need to have a grounding that says, "No matter what I face, no matter what I'm up against, no matter what comes my way, I shall not be moved. I will stay grounded. I will stay forthright. I will stay," quote, in the context of today's message, "I will stay stable." That's why in Ephesians chapter 6 it talks about all the spiritual warfare. We don't fight against flesh and blood, but against the wiles of the devil, against principality, spirits, powers of

darkness, all those things. It says, when you can do nothing else, stand. Let me tell you what this last verse of this section basically says. It says, "God, I want you to be my refuge. I want you to take care of those that have done me wrong. I want you to bring back home those that have strayed. And God, O God, when I put my head on my pillow tonight, may I not have quit or given up or given in on anything."

Ladies and gentlemen, you wanna talk about a life that is grounded, because the last time I checked, and I do this on a regular basis, if you pray like this, you've put everything in his hands and nothing in yours. Most of our lives are unstable at best, most of our lives are quote unquote shaky at best. Isn't it good to know the Bible's given us the answer. It's given us the formula. If we're already a believer in him, then when we go before him, when we communicate with him, if we'll just do it as the Bible laid out, he will ground us, he'll give us stability, and we won't be wayward or double-minded. Again, the end of the message goes back to the beginning. You claimed, I saw it on your faces, I heard it in your voices, you claimed that you are convicted that God's right and anything that's contrary to him is wrong, which means that he just showed us how to be stable in life, which goes against most of the advice that anybody's ever given us in life. And so we have an important decision to make, are we gonna do it God's way or are we gonna do it ours? History has given us thousands of years of humanity's inability to fix it themselves. Maybe, just maybe, we ought to trust in him.

Let's pray with our heads bowed, our eyes closed. Today, as we come to this time in our service, you know, we began the message with kind of that 30,000 foot view of what it means to believe and be convicted and to render a decision. And maybe today, maybe today the Spirit of God took the word of God and as described in Hebrews chapter 4 as sharper than any two-edged sword, maybe that's what the Bible did today, it showed you, it revealed to you that you're trying to do it on your own, you're trying to measure yourself against others, deeds, works, righteousness, whatever it may be. We went through all those passages in Romans about we've all sinned, the wages of sin is death. Romans chapter 10 verse 13 says, whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. I know our heads are bowed and our eyes are closed. I'm not looking at you, you're not looking at me. But every single one of us here has somebody that has spoken contrary to you. You all know people who say, "Well, unless you're a member of a church, you can't go to heaven. Unless you stop doing that, unless you start doing that." The Bible says whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Maybe today's the day that you need to call out. Maybe today's the day where you quit trying to do it on your own power and your own energy and you say, "You know what? I'm just a sinner who needs to be saved." If that's you today, let me encourage you to do so. It's not about reading a script. It's not about saying the right words in the right order by the right person. It's just a heart's cry. Maybe your heart's cry goes something like this, "God, today, I believe what your word says. God, I've sinned. I have messed up. God, I've been places I should have never been. Participated in things I should never have been a part of. God, I've spoken words and had thoughts that are so contrary to you. And your Bible says the wages, the result of that is death. But God, it also says, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. So God, today I believe. I believe the only answer to my sin problem is what Jesus Christ has already done on my behalf. God, today I believe. I



believe that Jesus Christ loved me so much that he came on my behalf. He lived a sinless life on my behalf. God, today I believe that when he allowed himself to be nailed to his cross, he was bearing the pain, the punishment of my sin. And God, I believe that three days later when he rose from the grave, he and he alone made it possible and feasible for my sin to be forgiven and my soul to be saved. God, today, I don't have the answers to all the struggles and the problems and the issues of life, but I know one thing, Jesus Christ is the only solution to my sin problem. So the best way I know how, I'm asking you to forgive me. I'm asking you to save me. I just want to turn my life over to you."

With our heads still bowed, our eyes still closed, maybe today, whether here in person or online, maybe today's the day that for the first time, you cried out for Jesus to save you. In just a moment, I'm going to pray for us. We're going to stand and sing together. And I want to invite you wherever you are, just to step out and step forward. We want to do, just like I alluded to in Luke 15, we just want to celebrate with you. We want to pray with you. We want to pray for you. Or maybe today you say, "Pastor, I've already got that covered but I saw that young lady in the baptistery today, Lord, that's a place I've never been and I need to go. I'd like to talk to somebody about that." We'd love to have that conversation. Or maybe today you're that person saying, "You know what, this is our home spiritually. This is our church. This is our family of faith. We'd like to talk about what that means." We'd love to have that conversation. Or maybe today you'd be willing to say, "You know what, I'm just going through a rough patch. Things aren't easy. Things are tough. And I'm worn out. It sure would be nice if somebody would just pray with me or pray for me." Whatever the decision, whatever the need, we just want you to know we're here for you.

*Lord Jesus, thank you. God, thank you that as we open up your word and it reveals the very difficult truths of our life, God, thank you that in spite of us, you love us. In spite of us, you desire to forgive us. In spite of us, you're willing to save us. God, I thank you that in spite of us, you are still who you are today. So may we respond to you as we need to. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray, amen.*