

Comprehensive Blessing

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Last week we opened a series on Psalm 19 and I'm excited to go back to this. It's really a foundational series for our entire church, for the future of the next many, many years of our fellowship and ultimately what will become our church. These verses from Psalm 19 are going to define for us exactly the trajectory of what our ministry is going to be about. Last week we looked at the authority of Scripture from Psalm 19 verses 7 and 9 and we saw that there is a complete authority in the nature of Scripture. The Bible is God's revelation to man. It is inerrant. It is without error. And because of that, everything that the Bible affirms to be true, that's what we believe and that's what we teach. We don't pick and choose from different parts of Scripture. It's all God's word and so we want to honor all of it and teach the full counsel of God in the days and months and years to come.

The fact that the Bible is true, the fact that it is without error, that in itself would be enough to cause a thinking man to want to search it out; to cause a thinking man to want to understand what the Bible says and to search it out. But there's so much more to it than that and if I were going to ask a strategic question at this point, I would ask this: what can we expect to happen to us that are going to be a part of Truth Community Fellowship going forward in the months and years to come? What is it that we can anticipate to happen in our lives? Well, I can tell you on the authority of the word of God that we have blessing ahead of us. Blessing that is enough to cause me to want to move across country with my family in order to be a part of it with you. Blessing enough for you to go through the transition from some of the ministries and relationships you've had in past churches and other opportunities in order to be a part of the coming together of this body of believers because right at the heart of our fellowship is going to be the word of God. Right at the heart of everything that we do and everything that we stand for for years to come is going to be the Bible and the question is: what is the result of that going to be? What is the result going to be that we're not worried about the trends that come and go in other churches? What's the result going to be that we are not worried about entertaining people when we get together on a Sunday but we just want to simply teach and learn and obey the Bible? What's the result of that going to be in our lives? Well, I tell you on the authority of the word of God that it is going to be a blessing and it is going to be a multicolored, multifaceted blessing to all of us that's going to permeate every aspect of our lives and it's going to spill over into every relationship that we have all the way to the point that the Lord brings us home to heaven when he's done with us in this earthly life.

There is blessing that God reserves exclusively, exclusively for those who love his word, for those who obey it, for those who give their lives to it. And for those of us that are going to be giving our lives to Truth Community Fellowship, that's what lies ahead here.

Turn in your Bibles to Psalm 19 which is where we find these important promises from God's word. Psalm 19, we're going to be looking at verses 7 through 11 here this morning and I'll just read them. We looked at some of these last time, of course, but David wrote, beginning in verse 7,

7 The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. 8 The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether. 10 They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.

That's our passage for this morning. That's the passage that inbedded in that passage in these verses that I just read are the promises that God makes, the reward that the Bible brings to everyone who believes it and pursues it, those that know Christ; those that have repented of their sin and turn to Christ in saving faith; been born again from above and have the indwelling Holy Spirit within them. For those of us that are true Christians, in other words. And we begin to apply ourselves to the Bible. What we have here in this passage is God's promises of blessing to those that honor his word.

This morning we're going to see 5 rewards that are promised in Psalm 19 to those who honor the Scriptures, to those who pursue the Bible with all of their hearts. And while it speaks in terms of individuals perhaps, we can easily expand that and see that these are the blessings that God bestows upon a church that honors his word and the blessing that he spills onto the church is going to be the blessing that we know individually as we look ahead. This is what lies ahead for our fellowship. These blessings that we're going to see today, this is what lies ahead based on the infallible, perfect word of God. These are the blessings that are going to belong to us in the days to come.

You see, the Bible doesn't simply carry authority. It's not an abstract authority that is divorced from the way that life works out for those who honor the Scripture. You see, God uses the authority of the Scripture in order to convey blessing to his people. In fact, that's really God's pattern for the way that authority is supposed to work in every realm of life. God establishes authority so that those who have authority, those who have leadership responsibilities would be conduits of his blessing to those that are under their authority or those that are under their leadership whether it's in the home or in a business or in government. That is God's design. Authority is given so that it can convey blessing.

Well, it's the same way with the ultimate authority in the world which is the authority of Scripture. What we are going to see today is that God uses the authority of Scripture to convey blessing to those that follow the Scriptures and there are 5 of them that we're

going to see in this passage. The first one that we want to look at today if you're going to take notes, there are 5 points here today, the first point is this: the Bible brings joy. The Bible brings joy. Look at verses 7 and 8 with me. In verse 7 David says, "The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple." Verse 8, "The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart." We're going to look at the beginning of verse 7 and the beginning of verse 8 together here. The Bible is perfect, restoring the soul and it rejoices the heart. I'm going to take those thoughts a little bit out of sequence. First the beginning of verse 7 and the beginning of verse 8, take them a little bit out of sequence just so that we can group similar thoughts together here this morning.

As we think about the idea of the Bible bringing joy, restoring the soul, rejoicing the heart, do I need to review the spiritual challenges that come from living in this fallen world? On a broad scale, economic uncertainty, war and political change always carry the possibility of changing life as we know it. On a personal scale and you and I know this from difficult personal experience: pressures in our family, work, school, or church situations may discourage us. People abuse their authority and violate the trust that we have put into them. Illness steals our health. Financial reversal changes the plans that we've been making for years. Death steals our loved ones before we're ready to say goodbye. Then on a spiritual level, on a spiritual scale: false teachers confuse some people with their doctrine and with their criminal lifestyles. Sin weighs down others with guilt. Some of you, no doubt, feeling the weight of sin and a guilty conscience and wondering what to do, where to go to get that burden on your heart relieved. For others, doubt undermines their assurance of salvation and, in some cases, people simply say, "I know I'm not a true Christian but I don't know where to turn. I've heard it all before but I know that I am not right with God."

In the midst of all of those things, on the broad, national, macro scale, on the personal scale in our individual lives and then in the internal struggles of our own heart with anxiety and all of those other issues, here's the question that I always have when it comes down to talking about those issues, thinking about what it means to be a believer in Jesus Christ, to be a follower of the Son of God, the eternal Son of God who gave his life for the salvation of my soul, who shed his blood for the forgiveness of your sins. And if you know him by faith, if you've put your personal faith in Christ and you are a true Christian, here's the question that I have when we think about all of those multiplied threats to the well-being of our soul. Here's the question: are we simply condemned to slog our way through those things as best as we can? Do we simply go through life cringing, waiting for the next wave to wash over us that we think may carry us out to sea? Is it just a matter of trying to hang on until Jesus returns? Or simply to hang on until we get to heaven while we're battered and bruised and discouraged throughout it all? God forbid. I say that reverently but God forbid. That is not the nature of the Christian life. That is not the nature of what God has given us in this gift that we know as the 66 books of the Bible. Is it a matter of cringing through those things or is there a means of overcoming it all even if life goes against all of our desires? Even if our plans fail and crumble in our hands? Are we left to discouragement or is there a way to know joy even in the midst of it?

Well, what we see in this passage, beloved, is the Bible is a source that gives us and promises us joy that is independent of external circumstances. The Bible is a rock of refuge in a heaving sea of uncertainty. Look at verse 7 with me again. Look at the text with your own eyes as you have the Bible opened there on your own lap because you need to see this for yourself. Verse 7, "The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul." This phrase "restoring the soul" could be used of furniture being restored to its original condition; something that is damaged and bruised and broken. A craftsman comes and restores it to its original condition so it's as good as new again. Well, what God is saying here in this particular passage of Scripture is that the Scriptures have that effect on the believing heart. In the midst of the discouragements, in the midst of the spiritual threats to our well-being, we find that the Scripture has the ability to bring a spiritual restoration to us when we devote ourselves to it in a believing way over time.

The Bible does that for the believer. It restores the soul. The soul, of course, is a reference to the inner man: our thoughts, our desires, our emotions, our will. The Bible purifies and cleanses and fixes those broken spots in our broken hearts so that we are able to manifest a confident joy despite the external circumstances in which we find ourselves. You see, beloved, what I really want you to understand is one who has become associated in some manner or another with our fellowship, what I want you to understand is that the Christian life is more than barely keeping your head above water hoping that you won't drown with the next wave that comes by. God's truth, the truth of Scripture, allows you to settle long-standing issues and questions in your mind with a sense of finality, with a sense of certainty, that gives you the ability to rest in the assurance of God's ultimate goodness and his ultimate favor upon your life.

The Bible says that. This is God's word that's speaking to us and what I want you to see is this: even if you have been carrying around difficult unresolved issues in your mind for a matter of years and I've been there myself, things that I just could not get my mind around for a period of years, what I want you to understand is that there is an invitation here in the Scripture to seek God in his word and to seek him until you find that sense of settled assurance that gives you joy in the midst of that conflict and gives you a sense where that no longer dominates your thinking. It no longer troubles your heart in the way that it used to do because the Bible restores the soul. God knows how to use his word to mend a broken heart and if you've been burdened like that, this is an invitation from God himself to come to his word and to seek it out and to devote your mind to it more thoroughly than you ever have before, confident in and trusting him for that promised joy and restoration that we see here mentioned in Psalm 19 because the Bible is able to bring cheer and refreshment, cheer and refreshment to the believer who meditates upon it.

You see, we can tolerate the outward trials if our hearts are at rest. Proverbs 18:14 says, "A man can endure his sickness but a broken spirit, who can endure." You know, you can even go through physical affliction if your heart is at rest but if your heart is not at rest, then nothing else matters. Physical health doesn't help when your heart is troubled. What we see here in Psalm 19 is the promise that the word of God brings joy and satisfaction to the human heart and that sets a cornerstone upon which you can build your entire life. That's one reason among many in addition to the great authority of the Scripture, this is

one reason among many that we are always going to be devoted to the teaching of the word of God in our fellowship is because we know and we understand that the blessing that it will bring to people who will hear and respond as God teaches them through his word.

Now, with that said, notice the other phrase at the beginning of verse 8, "The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart." It just echoes and re-emphasizes the fact that the Bible brings gladness and eases the burden of heavy care. It brings joy that is rooted in living righteously. Not going to church on Sunday and then forgetting about it until the next following Sunday, what God is describing here in his word is an entire lifestyle that is oriented toward his word. A mind that is captivated to the word of God. A conscience that is captivated to obedience to the word of God. That's what it's talking about. It's not talking about a superficial approach that says, "Oh, if I read 5 or 6 verses a day in the morning then everything is going to go well for me." It's not that kind of superficial thought process that's involved here. What God is calling for here is a mind that is totally submitted to the authority of the word of God. A mind and a will that is committed to obedience in our imperfection and in our dependence on Christ, we are committed, there is a core commitment in our individual lives that we would follow Christ and honor his word and where the word speaks into our life, we would respond and obey it. Where the word speaks into our fellowship, we as leaders and we as people would respond and obey and change and conform ourselves so that we might be a reflection of what the Scriptures say.

That is the kind of mindset. That is the kind of person to whom these blessings are reserved. People like that know joy. People like that know what it means to be restored and, you know, it is independent of sorrow in some ways. The prophet Jeremiah was known as the prophet of tears, the weeping prophet, and he spoke in his writings of weeping day and night over the sins of the nation, Judah. He saw them going off into sin and that judgment was coming down upon them and he wept over it because it so grieved him to see them rebelling against their God. He wept over it and yet that same prophet, Jeremiah, could say in Jeremiah 15:16, he said, "Your words were found and I ate them, And Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; For I have been called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts," Jeremiah 15:16. So in the midst of that spiritual struggle that he was facing, in the midst of a difficult and fruitless ministry by external appearances, Jeremiah could say, "Your word has brought joy to my heart."

Beloved, I want to tell you without fear of contradiction, without fear of violating the word of God with what I'm about to say: that same kind of internal, sustained joy can be mine and it can be yours as we give our minds over to the truth of Scripture. As we own this book as our authority, as we own this book as the love of our hearts, as we give ourselves over to the one who wrote this book and honor his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, that kind of joy is not only ours by promise, it becomes ours by experience. It is the birthright, it is the privilege, it is the opportunity for every true believer in Christ to know that kind of joy. That's why we teach the Bible at Truth Community Fellowship, it's because we want our people to know that kind of joy. I, as the pastor, want you to know

that kind of joy and that's the commitment that I bring as I come as your pastor is that I'm going to give you the word of God so that you can know this kind of joy.

Well, if some of us are honest, we'd realize that we need to be reminded of this. We need to have our hearts refreshed in this. You go through life and events come and schedules get difficult and you start to drift away from it, well look, I want to show you and I hope that this reminder of joy you take is your opportunity to repent and to come back to his word because God is waiting to bless you as you seek him in his word like this.

So search the word until you find it rejoicing your heart. That's our first point for this morning: the Bible brings joy. Now, there's a second aspect of the blessing that the Bible brings that is found in this passage. I like this one, point 2 this morning is that the Bible brings wisdom. The Bible brings wisdom. Look at the end of verse 7 with me and we'll look at the end of verse 7 and verse 8 together. The Scriptures says that, "The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple," and at the end of verse 8 it says, "The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes." As we saw last week, there is no question of eternal significance that can be answered apart from the Bible. Where did man come from? What is the nature of sin? What must I do to be saved? How do we know that Christ is going to return? What happens after I die? There are no human books that can give you definitive answers to those kinds of questions but in the Scriptures, you find the answers given to you with clarity, with certainty and with an assurance that bears the authority of its own intrinsic worth. God testifies in the Scriptures to these matters of eternal significance. The Scriptures give wisdom to the humblest believer.

The Scriptures give wisdom to the humblest believer so that he can live a life that pleases God and so that he can have spiritual understanding. Let me give you a brief definition of wisdom here. Wisdom, when we talk about wisdom, what we're saying is that wisdom is the skill of being able to understand and apply God's word in your life so that you live in the midst of his will and his blessing. The Bible gives you the skill to be able to live a life that pleases God; a life that knows the blessing of God. And I want to tell you something really important here at this point: notice what it says in verse 7 about who this wisdom is available to, who is it that can have that kind of blessing, the confidence of knowing that I'm living in the midst of God's blessing, the assurance that I have truly found the forgiveness of my sins and the confidence that his goodness will abide on my life until I go home to be with him in heaven. Where do I find the wisdom to live like that? Well, look at the end of verse 7 with me again because it says it right there, "The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple." You see, it's not reserved for theologians to know this kind of blessing; to know wisdom as the Bible defines it. It's not reserved to scholars who have lots of expensive books to root around in. It's not limited to pastors who have the time to do this. No, no, no, no, 1,000 times no. The Scripture says that this kind of wisdom, this kind of blessing is available to the simple. It's available to the pure in heart. Look at verse 7, it says that the Bible makes wise the simple. It enlightens everyone. Everyone who pursues it with a believing heart. Even the inexperienced can find wisdom.

If you've ever been around a new Christian who has been reading the Scriptures, sometimes it will astonish you the depth of insight that they can bring into a spiritual issue even though they've only known Christ for a short period of time. They'll say something of profound insight about a spiritual passage and you say, "Where did that come from? Where did you get that kind of insight? I've been a pastor for 20 years and I've never even thought of that." Well, it's because the Bible is able to give wisdom to the simple. It gives wisdom to those who are humble in heart and who read it and that is the kind of blessing that God gives to the people who read his word. And I want you to understand this: a simple believer who faithfully meditates on God's word will have discernment and spiritual confidence to live precisely as God would have him to live in ways that go beyond his years and training and that even goes beyond those who have chronologically been Christians longer than he has but hasn't devoted the same kind of wholehearted devotion to Scripture as the young believer has. You say, "Are you sure about that, that a young person could know more than the aged that have been around at church for a long time?" Oh, absolutely. The Bible is absolutely clear on that. Psalm 119:99 and 100, listen to what it says here, "I have more insight than all my teachers, Because Your testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the aged, Because I have observed Your precepts."

How great is the Bible? Well, here's one measure: a young man, I'm thinking of some of you young people that are in the audience right now just at the start of your life. Listen, I hope this would just grab your heart and so form and shape your convictions about what you are going to allow to form your deepest convictions and the deepest motivations of your heart, realize that right now in your teens and in your early 20s, that God's word is laying out before you the promise of wisdom that would allow you to know the blessing of his hand upon your life. And take this opportunity now, I beg you, you young people, you young teenagers, I beg you to take this opportunity and settle it in your heart. Drive it down as a fundamental conviction from which you will never be shaken that this word, God's word, is what is going to shape my thinking and I'm going to give my life to it in order to know it and to understand it because if you do that, you're going to have wisdom. You're going to have the skill that enables you to live in the midst of God's blessing. That's what the Scriptures say.

A young man who applies himself to the Bible will have more wisdom than an old man who neglects it. After all, wasn't it David, the youngest son of Jesse, who actually went out and slew Goliath while all of his older brothers were part of the army and cowering in fear when Goliath thundered across the valley at them? It was David, the youngest one, who spent his young formative years meditating on the word of God as he shepherded sheep in those hills in Palestine. David said, "I know God well enough to know how this comes out. I'm going to go and I'll face that giant on my own," and he showed the courage and the wisdom and the skill that enabled him to do that because he had a confidence, a supernatural confidence that was born from meditating on God's word.

So if you want joy, if you want wisdom, devote your life to this word. Devote your life to the Scriptures. And I thank God for you. You need to know this. I know that so many of you are here, so many of you have been attracted to this fellowship because that is

exactly what you want. You want the word of God in your life. That's the only reason you'd be here. It's not because we've got a bunch of great programs going on. We don't have any, at least not yet but what we do have is a common, shared commitment to the word of God. And what I want you to know and what I want you to rest your hope and confidence in based on the testimony of Scripture right here is that God will not be your debtor in that commitment because God is going to pour over into your life joy and wisdom that will so frame and shape the future of your life with spiritual truth and spiritual joy and spiritual blessing that you're never going to regret it. You're never going to look back because God blesses his word. The Bible brings joy, the Bible brings wisdom and that's what's ahead of us for those of us that seek his word.

As you do that, there is even more benefit to it than what we've said so far. This passage goes on and on and on in describing the multifaceted blessings of God's word. Point 3 here this morning is that the Bible brings eternal perspective. The Bible brings eternal perspective. Look at verse 9 with me. It says, "The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether." When the Bible uses this term "fear" to talk about the fear of the Lord, it's a fear that recognizes the God of the Bible as the holy, majestic, sovereign God of the universe and trembles in his presence. We without a doubt in our modern church life, speaking broadly, speaking about what constitutes the church in America today, you don't have to look very far to realize that there is far too easy a familiarity with God. People who presume to know him intimately but their lives show no evidence of having any respect for his word, any care for his character, any sense of obligation to conform their lives to the reality of holiness. It's because they don't really know the fear of the Lord at all and that's what makes people able to go in and be so flippant week after week. Going even further, that's what allows pastors to be so flippant in the midst of their leadership and their preaching. That's what allows them to tell stories and jokes and never get around to seriously teaching the word of God. It's because they do not have the fear of God animating their heart attitudes and their heart beliefs because if they feared the Lord, there would be a different sense; there would be a reverence that they bring to bear upon their leadership and upon the way that they teach. Men who can joke and men who can be profane in a pulpit which hopefully you haven't been exposed to but trust me it's out there, profanity in the pulpit, all indicating that these people do not have the fear of the Lord truly within them.

Well here, what David is talking about here in Psalm 19 is that the true fear of the Lord is someone who recognizes that he is an unworthy, sinful creature in the sight of the God of the universe. The Bible says, Proverbs 1:7, that "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom." You don't even start to have wisdom, you're not even a Christian if you don't fear the Lord in some way or another because that's the very beginning. That's where it starts. Amazing Grace, "It was grace that taught my heart to fear and grace my fears relieved." You see, God's grace teaches you to fear him. It teaches you to revere him and to see him for who he really is.

Now, what David is saying here in Psalm 19 is that that kind of fear brings to you an eternal perspective that shapes the way that you live. Even the mundane things of life are lifted to a new level when you fear the Lord. When you understand that all of your life

Sunday morning through Saturday night is lived out in the presence of a holy God. When you love Christ, when you're so mindful that this great Savior shed his blood in order to secure the forgiveness of your sins, that he keeps you in his hand, that he says that nothing will pluck you out of his hand because he and the Father are one and that he is committed to your eternal well-being, that his blood secured the eternal salvation of your soul. When those things that come from studying the Bible start to permeate your attitudes, permeating your mind, then the whole nature of life is transformed because you start to realize something really important. It means that you are living out day to day life, the simple mundane things of life, in the presence of this God who saved you; this God who appointed you for salvation; this God who is bringing you along the process of sanctification, your spiritual journey, if you will, that leads you to heaven. That God is the God who you are living out daily life in the presence of and that gives you eternal perspective on the way that you approach life. 1 Corinthians 10:31 says this, "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

You see, when you understand the Scriptures, you start to understand the characteristics, the attributes of God and what it means to be a Christian and to have the Holy Spirit dwelling within you. You start to realize that your entire life is tinged with matters of eternal perspective, that the simplest of acts that are done out of a conscious devotion to Christ are acts of worship unto him. Jesus said, "You can give a little one a cup of water in my name and you will not lose your reward." Well, all of life is like that, beloved. All of life is elevated to a whole other perspective when you understand the Scriptures and when you're a Christian and you're living out life in the presence of God and you're living out life in the pursuit of his word, you realize that all that you do can be presented at the feet of Christ as an act of worship to him.

So the Bible transforms your daily routine into something of eternal significance and devotion to God. Doing the laundry. Going to work. Calculating the spreadsheets. All of that stuff that seems so mundane, seems so ordinary, is lifted into an act of worship of eternal significance in the eyes of God; done to his glory because the Bible has informed your perspective on all of life. That's what the Scriptures do for us, it gives us an eternal perspective that gives us reason to live day by day even in the mundane elements of life and that eternal perspective will bring joy and wisdom to you.

Those are rich benefits. That's why David says in verse 10, look at verse 10 with me again as we just go through verse by verse. In light of all of these blessings, this joy, this wisdom, this eternal perspective, this hope, that's why David says in verse 10, "They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb." Gold was a luxury back then just like it is now and honey was one of the sweetest enjoyments of life to that time period and what David is saying here is that the word of God is more valuable than gold and it is sweeter than honey in the reward that it offers to the believing heart. When you've come to treasure the word of God, you understand this. When you come to love the word of God, you wouldn't trade this book for a bar of 5 pounds of gold. You wouldn't trade it for 100 pounds of the sweetest confections that you can get from the most expensive candy store in Cincinnati or in Los Angeles, for that matter, where it's even more expensive.

When you come to love the word of God, you treasure it above all else and I want to tell you something directly to every one of you and some of you need to examine your hearts for this to see if you're even in the faith or not: there is no one who is a true Christian who does not love the word of God. Anyone who claims to be a Christian but is indifferent to this book, anyone who claims to be a Christian but can ignore it month after month after month with no pang of conscience is someone who is not a Christian. You're not a Christian if you don't love the word of God because one of the things that God most certainly does is he plants deep within the hearts of everyone he saves a love for his word. You see, he places within us a desire and a hunger for his word because that's what he uses to draw us closer to himself. We learn to love the word and we read the word and it changes us and it draws us closer to Christ and so God gives us a desire that gives us a natural affinity for his Scriptures and as we are drawn to them, we read them and we come to know him. That's what God does to ensure that there is a cord in our heart that is ever drawing us closer and closer to our Savior.

If you don't know anything about that, no matter how long you've claimed to be a Christian, I beg you to examine yourself to see if you're in the faith because your life does not show the marks of someone who has truly been born again. By contrast, by encouraging contrast, even though you've been tossed and turned and thrown this way and that by the events of life over the past week, the past few weeks, the past few months, the past few years, if you can look at your life over time and say, "Do you know what? There is an abiding love and commitment to the word of God in my life. Oh, I know I don't fully honor it as I should but in my heart, in the desires of my heart, if I could just cast aside everything, you would find me loving God's word and being in his word and I love the reading and the teaching of God's word." Listen, that is the mark of someone who has truly been born again and whatever else is happening in your life, you can have a confidence and a certainty that whatever else is true, you are rightly related to God. You belong to his family. You are a child of God. You have been born again by faith in Christ and the future for you is bright no matter what the past has looked like. That's the benefit of the eternal perspective that God's word brings.

Well, there's a fourth benefit from the Bible that we need to talk about quickly as time has started to get away from me here. The fourth benefit is this and this might not sound like a benefit at all at one level but it is. The fourth point is this: the Bible brings warning. The Bible brings warning. Look at verse 11 with me. David says, "Moreover, by them," by the Scriptures, by the law of the Lord, the commandment of the Lord, "Moreover, by them Your servant is warned." You see, the Bible warns us about various dangers. It warns us about the danger of eternal judgment for those who don't repent and believe in Christ. In a practical level, it warns us about dangers as we go through this life. It warns us about temptation and the consequences of sin. It warns of the eternal judgment that sinners face and cause them to repent and put their faith in Christ for the forgiveness of our sins.

What I want you to see is that even when it is giving warnings like that, the Bible is bringing blessing to us. It is showing us about dangers so that we can avoid them and not

experience the brunt and the consequences of proceeding into the face of dangers that we otherwise could have avoided. God graciously gave us the Bible to warn us of the dangers to our soul. You can see that in a passage, for example, like Proverbs 7. That's the passage that warns young men about the dangers of immoral women and it shows them how to see through the temptation that seductive women bring so that they can understand the deadly consequences of sexual immorality. Proverbs 7 does that. It exposes it. It makes it clear so that when the weight and the power of temptation comes on, you can look through that and say, "No, I need to look beyond the temptation to see the ugly consequences of it and because the Scriptures have opened my mind to that, I am going to pass by that temptation rather than surrender to it," and as a result of that, the word of God brings protection to young men who yield their minds to the Scriptures. You see, that perspective keeps a man from following his desires wherever his desires would lead him and keeps him on a narrow path that leads to the blessing of God over time.

What we too often forget, I think, is that the Bible warns us against sin for our own protection. God warns us against sin for our own good. He is always designing our good and so when he warns us against the consequences of sin and temptation, he's doing it so that he can bless us. You see, what you should see from this passage in the Scriptures is simply the reflection of the greater desire that God our heavenly Father has that he wants to bless his children. We are far too quick to ascribe to God attitudes that are not worthy of him as if he were somehow stingy with his blessing or that he was somehow unwilling to show his goodness to us. That's an entirely wrong view of God.

We see in the Scriptures our heavenly Father is a good God who designs always to bless his children and so we can live in confidence, going forward in life that he is going to show that goodness to us. Part of that goodness is that he warns against sin for our own protection. As we go through this environment of our world that is filled with the lust of the eyes, the boastful pride of life, we need that. We need that perspective so that we can get beyond what would otherwise attract us so that we could live in the midst of the blessing of God.

Joy. Wisdom. Eternal perspective. This spiritual warning. David sums it all up with one final point, point number 5 here this morning and it's this: the Bible brings great reward. The Bible brings great reward. Look at verse 11 with me again. He says, "Moreover, by them Your servant is warned," that's what we just looked at, he says, "In keeping them there is great reward." The one who cultivates the word of God in his life will find that God is no man's debtor. Isaiah 66:2 says, "To this one I will look, To him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word." God looks with favor on those who tremble at his word. Those who love his word, who fear it. Those who would rather die than violate the word of God. Those who would rather die than compromise the word of God. Those are people that God looks on with special providential favor and blessing in his plan and in his outworking of his purposes.

I want to be one of those people, don't you? I want to be one of those people that love God's word. I want this church to be one of those increasingly rare churches that loves God's word and proclaims it without compromise, that proclaims it without apology, that

proclaims it joyfully, proclaims it lovingly because not so much because of what it does for those who hear but so that we might give honor to the God who disclosed his word to us and who saved our souls from sin. You see, when you have a right view of God, when you have a right view of Christ, it's going to motivate you to honor his word and when you start to see that working out in your life, what God says here in his word is that there is a reward that comes back to you and I'm excited that we're going to know that kind of reward and see the unfolding of it in our fellowship in the months and years to come.

God puts his personal blessing on anyone who would submit his life to the authority of his word. It might come in the form of personal blessings, personal earthly blessings. Maybe, maybe not. You know, some people go through sorrows and difficulties but at the core in their spiritual lives in the midst of their poverty, they know joy. If you travel overseas and talk with believers in places where they have no resources at all, if you've ever had opportunity to do that, it's very convicting to see how out of an abundance of poverty so much joy can come because they simply love Christ and want to honor his word. So it may or may not be in earthly blessings but God will certainly bestow spiritual blessings in this life and it will even more certainly be true that the great reward will come when we are in heaven and we see Christ face-to-face. No one is going to be questioning the value of honoring God's word in heaven. No one is going to be questioning the value of honoring Christ when we're with him face-to-face. It's all going to be so evident and so abundantly great and glorious and good. What you and I need to do is to simply fix our eyes on the promise of God's word, fix our eyes on the glory to be revealed to us and then loving his word and honoring his word is going to be a joy and a delight to our heart as well just like it was to the prophet Jeremiah. You see, the Bible is the source of all of those blessings and 10,000 beside. The Bible gives you all that you need to reap great reward for your faithfulness to the Scriptures.

My friends, those of you who do not know Christ, you're just convicted because you know these things aren't true in your own heart even if you've been in a church for a long time. I invite you to come to the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation here this morning. I invite you to repent, to genuinely mourn over sin and declare spiritual bankruptcy before Christ and ask him to save you because I know he will. That's his promise. He said, "The one who comes to me, I will certainly not cast out," but you have to come to him with a humble repentant heart, not one that treats it flippantly as though there is a simple prayer to pray and then you go on with life with nothing changed.

But to the rest of you, those of you who do know Christ, I just encourage you to thank God for this precious word. Thank him and seek him and love this word and read it and teach it to your family. Live it out in your life and as you do, God will shower upon us joy and wisdom and eternal perspective. He'll keep us from sin and we'll know the great reward of being faithful to his word.

Bow with me in prayer.

Father, we thank you for your great word and we ask that we would be faithful to you, faithful to Christ and faithful to this word so that the blessings we've discussed here

today would be ours by way of personal experience both in our individual lives and in the outworking of your future purposes in this fellowship. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.