

To Hunger and Thirst for God

Lyall Johnston—April 1, 2023

David was a man who loved the Word of God; he loved the Law of God. Let's have look at what David had to say about God's Word. This is very instructive for us, particularly at this time as the whole world seems to be closing in around the saints. Satan is pulling out every stop in order to attack the people of God. He does that in so many ways as we frequently hear about.

Psa. 119 is the big Psalm, the great Psalm. David has something very interesting to say about the Word of God and how he approached the Word of God.

Psalm 119:9: "**With what shall a young man cleanse his way?...**"

Personally, because of what David says there, I like to think of myself as a young man, because this applies to me and to you, doesn't matter what age you are. It's a lesson that we probably ought to have learned when we were young.

But God is very gracious and merciful and is giving us precious time to learn the lessons that David learned. Hopefully, we've learned a lot over the years that we've been called by God the Father and Jesus Christ.

"**With what shall a young man cleanse his way?...**" A very good question for young people, middle aged and elderly! When we're old we should have already learned this lesson. So, what does he say:

"**...By taking heed according to Your Word**" (v 9).

What Word did David have? *He had all the Pentateuch, the first five books of Moses!* He would have had Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and that was it. Yet, even though he just had that, look at what he said: "**...By taking heed according to Your Word**"!

There was for David in just those first books of the Scriptures, the Old Testament, that he was able to learn what he learned. *He submitted his life to God!*

- Did he have any problems?
- Was his life a bed of roses?

No way! When you read about David, his life in one sense was a bit like that of Christ's and Paul's and all that they suffered in their lifetime.

Verse 10: "**With all my heart...**"

We heard a message recently where the heart in the Hebrew text means:

- everything about us
- everything that we are
- everything we have

This is talking about David! "**With all my heart...**"—*no reservations!*

Do we have reservations? *If we do, if we're constantly in contact with God the Father in prayer and study and occasionally fasting, what's going to happen is that this world becomes case or a fact in point.*

"...I have sought You... [he makes this plea]: **...O let me not wander from Your commandments**" (v 10). *They were so important to David!*

God says that David is a man after My own heart!

Verse 11: "Your Word I have laid up in my heart... [How do we do that? Why did He hide God's Word in his heart?] ...so that I might not sin against You. Blessed are You, O LORD; teach me Your statutes" (vs 11-12).

How is God going to teach him His statutes if David was not one who was a student of the Word of God that had been given to him?

Remember that the king had to write his own copy of the Scriptures that were available at the time. We have it made as far as we're concerned. We, in our households, may not just have one copy of the Scriptures, but we may have several.

- Are we using them?
- Are we making good use of them?
- Are we studying them daily?

It's interesting, the more we study the Word of God, the more we 'eat it.'

- What did Jesus say? *We are to eat His body and drink His blood!*
- How do we eat the body of Christ?

He was criticized and condemned because He said that, and many of His disciples didn't understand it. And because He said it, they left Him.

Will we? *No, because we understand what this means!* Of course, at Passover time these things are always brought forth for our recall, for our memory. The more we study the Word of God, the more we digest it, *the more we eat the body of Christ!*

- Isn't Jesus Christ the Word of God?

- Are we not to be devouring the Word of God?

One of the prophets was given in vision the writings and was told to ‘eat that book.’

Are we devouring the Word of God? *The more we devour it, the more will take place, as Jesus said:*

Matthew 5:6: “**Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness...** [and all the words of God are righteousness] **...for they shall be filled.**”

That means filled to the brim! But we have to ***hunger for the Word of God, we have to hunger for righteousness!*** This is declared in the Word of God.

Are we hungering and thirsting for it? ***The more we:***

- read it
- devour it
- eat the manna that God has provided from heaven

the more the Word of God becomes a part of our very being through the Word of God and the Spirit of God, which is not only getting into our heart and mind, but, as Paul said, God is inscribing it indelibly in our heart. ***That is our steadfastness:***

- the anchor of our being
- the anchor of our soul
- the anchor of who we are

It's the Word of God, which is Jesus Christ

Hebrews 4:12: “For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword...”

It directly says that Jesus is the Word of God, and it shows quite clearly that He is the Word of God and we know that from John's writings.

Because David had studied the Word of God, he was able to say and declare this:

Palm 119:13: “With my lips **I have declared all the judgments of Your mouth.**”

Do we know all the judgments of God? All of those are buried there in the books that he had available to him, from Genesis-Samuel.

Verse 14: “I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies as much as in all riches.... [See what was important to David? *The Word of God!*] ...I will meditate upon Your precepts and have respect to Your ways. I will delight myself in Your statutes... [Where was he going to find the statues, judgments and the rest of God's Word] **...I will not forget Your Word**” (vs 14-16).

He had a copy! I might say that David had memorized a lot that Word. Because of what he had memorize, and because of what he understood about the Word of God, look what God was able to deliver to us through David's lip and mouth! Many of the Psalms are the history of his life, as an example for us.

The deeper we get into the Word of God, the more we study it and ***the more we hunger and thirst (Matt. 5) after that righteousness*** we find in the Word of God, we find that the Spirit of God begins:

- to enlighten our mind
- to give us understanding
- to help us to understand the mind of God, the thinking of God

We don't do our thinking through theological reason, we do our thinking through the Word of God, exactly as David did, exactly as all the prophets and apostles did.

The Word of God is so valuable. We know what Paul said to Timothy about the Word of God.

Philippians 2:5: “**Let this mind be in you,** which *was* also in Christ Jesus.”

In Col. 3:16 Paul talks about the Word of God!

- Who is the Word of God?
- What is the Word of God?
 - Jesus Christ is the Word of God!
 - The words that came out of His mouth were the words given to Him by God the Father!

This is more important for you and me!

In fact, what is said here is more important than the entirety of the physical creation. The physical creation is going to be renewed; it's going to pass away in that respect. Burnt up and renewed. The Word of God remains forever! Nothing on the face of this earth or in heaven above can do away with the Word of God.

When you think about the heavens, I used this illustration recently, how that we look through the beautiful, wonderful videos—I download these quite frequently—of the James Webb telescope, and how wonderful and great it is.

But the James Webb telescope only takes in one minute part of the universe. Recently I heard a man who was talking about the telescope and the cosmos of the creation, say, ‘What we can see through the James Webb telescope even in open sky, because the sky that you're seeing is just such a small part of what is available out there for man to

see. We just can't see it all in one go, but he gave this example that I thought was beautiful:

You can take a grain sand between your thumb and forefinger to understand how much we see through the telescope and hold it out at arms length, and that's all we can see.

How much more is the creation for the countless billions upon billion, large galaxies, large clusters of galaxies, small clusters all put together and apparently, from where God is if you look at it, it's like looking at a honeycomb, all beautifully designed like a bee designs.

- Who put the design in the mind of the bee?
- The ability?
- Wasn't it God?

As He does with every living creature no matter how great and no matter how small. They function and operate on the laws that God has created for each one of them.

Colossians 3:16: "**Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly** in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another..."

If the Word of God is dwelling within us richly, we can be teaching one another. We don't just need the elders to teach us. But as we talk in love and fellowship we can be teaching each other the things that we learn. When we come Sabbath services or we meet at other times, we can discuss the Word, and that is pleasing in God's eye, because He sees that we love each other; we're tightly knit together as the Body of Christ! We're helping and assisting each other to come to the fullness of the maturity of Christ.

Yes, God put the elders, the ministry in the Church to help bring us to the fullness of the maturity of Christ. But as we, each one of us, as we come to maturity and understand God's Word as we love God's Word it begins to expand our mind, and we can't just get enough of it. We simply continue to hunger and thirst and want to get back into the Word of God. We aren't happy about the fact that we can't spend as much time in it. We see that as we imbibe it, drink it, devour it—like eating the book that the prophet did—what happens is that the Spirit of God is working within us; it's dwelling within us. It's filling us with:

- the hope
- the faith
- the love of God
- the joy

We just want to be in there and learn more, so that we can be there to help others as God has declared to be our brother's helpers, to serve them. Something

that Cain refused to do; he turned away! In fact, we know what he did, he slew his brother! But his brother is going to be in the first resurrection!

"...teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (v 16).

We quoted from him, Psa, 119. 'Oh, how I love I Your Law...' David didn't say 'I kind of love Your Law.' That's wasn't David's approach or attitude. He was wholehearted! He said, 'O God, how I love I Your Law, it's always with me!'

We sing these hymns, "**...psalms and hymns and spiritual songs...**" (v 16). The Bible is filled with all that teaching!

We can teach ourselves from the Word of God, and we can help teach others. What happens when new brethren come along? They have so many questions. If we are filled with the Word of God, if it's at the top of our mind, then it's just going to come out and we're going to be able to teach with patience and love. We're going to be able to answer the questions:

What happens if God would just open of the floodgates? With the way that prophecy is going, the way the world is going and with the prophecy of Matthew 24, the Gospel is going to be preached in all the world as a witness. We've known that for ages. What we don't know is how God is going to do that.

What we do? *In the meantime we do what Jesus did!* He parents asked Him, 'Why didn't you come with us going home from the Passover. It was two or three days before they discovered Him before they were traveling with quite a large group. He said, 'Didn't you know that I must be about My Father's business?'

Can we say that? *We want to say that!* We really do, and God is the One Who makes that possible!

"...singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (v 16). *All the glory goes to God!*

Why? *Because He's the One Who has done all of this for us! He's the One Who is working in our lives!* We are the work of His hands; we're an unfinished work, but we are a work in progress! We have many difficulties and problems, but we're going to overcome those.

I would like to end with Heb. 4, and leave this thought with you. Of course, the whole book of Hebrews is so important. The reason that Paul wrote this was to explain the role of Jesus Christ as High Priest after the order of Melchisedec for all eternity.

As we know, Jesus as High Priest was represented by the High Priest in Israel from the time of Aaron. But we also know that the animals that were offered in sacrifice, particularly the lamb, at the Passover that represented Jesus Christ. The One Who was giving the lamb is also representing Jesus Christ, because Jesus Christ is the One Who offered Himself as that perfect sacrifice.

After His death and resurrection He was able to appear before God the Father and take His blood in that sense to the Father and the Father must have been so pleased with Jesus Christ. I wonder what that was like? We may get to see a preview of that in the future. Jesus bringing His sacrifice before the Father.

- What do you think the Father said to Jesus?
- Do you not think He said, ‘Well done, My faithful Son, the Son of My love. You have carried out every word that I have give You’?

Hebrews is a marvelous book and has so much to say about Jesus. Read Heb. 5 & 6 where it tells us that we better be making the most of the Word that God has given to us. Many of the Hebrews whom Paul is addressing were not growing. They had the Word of God, but they were still rummaging around amongst basic doctrines, which were the foundation.

They were not building the mind of Christ, the attitude and love of God. They were not building on that foundation of the basic doctrines. Just all the time just studying the physical thing. Those things are very necessary, **but they were never advancing or progressing!**

Hebrews 4:12: “For the Word of God *is* living...”

Not just the written word, the Scripture, but the written Word is living, because the written Word is Jesus Christ Himself!

“...and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of both soul and spirit...” (v 12).

It gets right into our very core, the center of our being. **“...dividing asunder of both soul and spirit...”**

There’s not one particle of our being that the Word of God cannot penetrate to. It can get right into those strongholds of the mind and revel them to us so we can repent of them, as Paul says to the Corinthians. It’s help us with repentance so that we know the sin that lies within us that we have not yet recognized.

“...and of both *the* joints and *the* marrow,

and *is* able to discern *the* thoughts and intents of *the* heart. And there is not a created thing that is not manifest in His sight; but all things *are* naked and laid bare before the eyes of Him to Whom we must give account. Having, therefore, a great High Priest, *Who* has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God...” (vs 12-14).

He remained there; didn’t have to come back and offer His sacrifice again; one sacrifice was sufficient for all the sins of every man and woman who has ever lived.

“...Jesus the Son of God we should hold fast the confession *of our faith*” (v 14)—*which we made at baptism when we buried the old man under the water!* We were crucifying ourselves with Christ! And we want the old man within us to remain crucified!

Verse 15: “For we do not have a High Priest Who cannot empathize with our weaknesses, but *One Who* was tempted in all things according to *the* likeness of *our own temptations*; yet, *He* was without sin.”

But He understands the sin, and is why He’s the merciful High Priest, so He can explain these things to the Father and take our needs before Him!

Verse 16: “Therefore, **we should come with boldness to the Throne of Grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.**”

When you come before the Throne of God to confess your sins, to praise Him, to love Him, we can do it in boldness! Why? *Because Jesus Christ is the Word!*

Verse 12: “For the Word of God *is* living and powerful...” And if it’s in us when we die, the Word of God—which is the mind and spirit of Jesus Christ—doesn’t die, because He rests with the Father.

Verse 13: “And there is not a created thing that is not manifest in His sight...”

The Word of God is given, and that is Jesus Christ! Because of that we are able to come before God’s Throne with great boldness as His children!

Scriptural References:

- 1) Psalm 119:9-12
- 2) Matthew 5:6
- 3) Hebrews 4:12
- 4) Psalm 119:13-16
- 5) Philippians 2:5
- 6) Colossians 3:16
- 7) Hebrews 4:12-16, 12-13

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 24
- Hebrews 5; 6

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