

Psalm 119:17–24

God, by His Word, Our Joy and Counselor

**Tuesday, May 21, 2024 • Read Psalm 119:17–24**

*Questions from the Scripture text: What does the psalmist call himself in v17a? How does he ask God to deal with him? Unto what end (v17b)? What does he need, in order to see what (v18)? What is his status on earth (v19)? So, what does he need revealed to him (v19)? What is the condition of his soul (v20a)? For what does he long so much (v20b)? What does the Lord do to whom (v21)? So that they are in what state? As they do what? But what does the psalmist ask the Lord to do to him (v22a)? In accordance with what (v22b)? How formidable are the psalmist's enemies (v23a)? And what is his own status (v23b)? But Whose servant is he? And upon what does he meditate? What two additional roles do the Lord's testimonies have in his life (v24)?*

**What comfort does a believer have in his troubles?** Psalm 119:17–24 prepares us for the opening portion of public worship on the Lord's Day. In these eight verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **the believer's great comfort is God Himself, especially by means of His Word.**

**God's bounty for our obedience,** v17. Fleshly religion obeys in order to earn reward from its deity. But in the true religion, it is the bounteousness, the generosity, of God that even enables us to obey in the first place.

**God's grace for our understanding,** v18. The Word is more full of wonders than the world. But they are the sort of wonders to which sin more directly blinds us. While our eyes are still darkened, we cannot see them. A child with grace has more access to the wonders of Scripture than a PhD without it.

**God's instruction for our help,** v19. As evidenced by this verse, the believer has been a stranger on the earth for much longer than since 1 Peter was written. It is by following God's Word that we are able to operate with the whole world against us.

**God's judgments to satisfy our longing,** v20. O that we would so desire to know what God says about things that it felt like our souls would break with longing! How satisfying we would find Him in His Word!

**God's mercies to remove our reproach,** v21–23. The proud of the world (v21), the princes of the world (v23), look down their noses at believers. They believe that they are the successful and powerful and intelligent and good ones. But v21 tells the reality of their situation: they are the cursed ones. They stray from the commandments of God; their days are numbered, and their end is destruction. It is better to be a servant of the Lord (v23b) than a prince who is against Him (v23a). For, to those to whom He gives to keep His testimonies, He will surely take away their reproach (v22).

**God's testimonies to delight and counsel us,** v24. For those who have such a longing for God and His Word (v18, 20), the things of this world just won't do. God's testimonies, however, are the godly one's delight. I wonder, dear reader, are they your delight?

And for believers who have no princes to support them (v23) because they are strangers in the earth (v19), God's testimonies have a special role: they are the "men of my counsel" (v24b). It seems an odd thing to say about words, but they are living words of the living God. He is our great friend and counselor, and the testimonies of His Word are like a multitude of wise counselors, guiding us through life.

How does God's generosity relate to your obedience? To your understanding of the Word? How are the truths of His Word your delight? How are they your counselors?

*Sample prayer: Lord, deal bountifully with Your servants in this place. Make us to live and keep Your Word. Open our eyes, so that we may see wondrous things from Your law. We long for You and Your judgments. Your testimonies are our delight and our counselors. So, help us now, as we read Your Word, pray Your Word, sing Your Word, hear it preached, and have it confirmed to us in the Supper. Grant that by Your Spirit, we would draw near to You and reverence You through Your Son, in Whose Name we ask it; AMEN!*

**Suggested songs: ARP119C "That I May Live and Keep Your Word" or TPH119B "Do Good to Me, and I Will Live"**

**(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via [hopewellarp.org](http://hopewellarp.org))**

Psalm 119 verse 17-24. These are God's words. Deal bountifully with your servant that I may live and keep your word open my eyes. That I may see wondrous things from your law. I am a stranger in the earth, do not hide your Commandments from me.

My soul, breaks with longing for your judgments at all times. You rebuke the proud, the curse to stray from your Commandments. Removed from me reproach and contempt for. I have kept your testimonies Prince is also sit and speak against me. But your servant meditates on your statutes. Your testimonies also are my delight.

And my counselors, Amen. Listens this reading of God's inspired and inerrant word. Uh, in Uh, giml section these eight verses that start with Hebrew letter of Psalm 119. We find especially that. The psalmist.

In some measure of trouble. His life is in question in verse 17. Uh, he is considered a foreigner. In verse 19. Uh, his soul feels crushed with longing. In verse 20. He is under approach and contempt. And even the rulers, the princes. Of the land where he is in verse 23.

Speak against him. And so, this stanza, these eight verses are teaching us. What Comfort does a Believer have in his troubles? And the scriptures have told us that we will have trouble. There's many examples. And many passages that teach. About dealing with trouble but here's one of them. And the great comfort that we have.

In our troubles, as God himself. But, The great instrument by which he communicates himself to us as our comfort. Here is his word. And so we see. Uh, first Uh, God's Bounty for us. That we may live and obey. Is helpful for us, when we feel our need Uh, for Grace in order to obey, when we Uh, see our our sluggishness.

And, Uh, our sinfulness. We don't just need him to be generous with us, and that's what Bountiful means to be generous with us. So that we may keep his word. We need him to be generous with us so that we may live in the first place. That's very encouraging.

Because, Uh, we are alive which means God has already. Started being gracious to us. And should we not then be like Abram? When he's reasoning with God, and God grants one thing, and he's like, okay, I'm gonna be a little Bolder now, and I'm gonna ask for a little more and God, grants that thing, and then he's okay, I'm gonna be a little Bolder.

I'm gonna ask for a little bit more. Well, God has been Bountiful with us. He's been generous with us to give us our life. And that encourages us to be bold to ask him to be bountiful with us. That he would give us. Obedience. So, we look to God for his Bounty, for our obedience.

We look to him. Uh, Make us able. To see the wonders in his law, Verse 18, open my eyes that I may see wondrous things from your law. The difficulty if we can't see. Wonders in God's word is never in the word. There's plenty of evidence. Just like there are those who see the Wonders that are in the world.

Uh, God having revealed himself and the things that are made, but yet what do they do in their unrighteousness and ungodliness, they suppress the truth, in their unrighteousness. And so they neither glorify God nor give him thanks. Well, here we have something in which, there are even more wonders than in the world.

We have his word. We have his law. And it is full of the great wonders of God himself. And his gospel. And his goodness and just wisdom to us. And so there are all these wonderful things to be seen. Wondrous things to be seen. Uh, in his word. But we need his strength to may be made perfect in our weakness, even to give light to our eyes, to open our eyes.

So that we can see the wondrous things. And we might even say open our eyes so that we may Wonder at them that we Um, read his word worshipfully So we need God's Bounty for our obedience. We need his grace for understanding. We need. Instruction for our help. Verse 19.

He says, I am a stranger in the earth, so he's a foreigner in, in the Earth. And this may be both. Um, Because other people are treating him as an outsider. And among others, we always feel ourselves to unbunk unbelievers, we always feel ourselves to be strangers or we ought to Uh, if we are at home with them or among them, Then that is Uh, disturbing.

With respect to. Our character and our nature. But we also are strangers in the earth because it's God's Earth. And because we begin as strangers as those who are hostile to him, And even now after we are joined to Christ and indwelt by the spirit and adopted by the father, we still have that remaining sin in.

Which is. That sinfulness. Is hostile towards God. Now, praise God. It is not our nature anymore but it is it still clings to us? And it is so continually present in us that Romans 7 says, it feels like a law within our members. And so, Uh, we need God to give us to see his Commandments.

So that we will be as it were proper citizens of his kingdom. Knowing his law, knowing his instruction living in his world, his way. Rather than being like strangers. Who don't know the rules and are continually offending. Uh, the king of the land. And so, We need God's instruction, for our help, not to be strangers.

And we want God's judgments therefore to satisfy our longing. Um, verse Corresponds to verse 19. But our new nature. Our love for him. Is a longing and it ought to be a very intense longing. Look at verse 20, my Breaks is.

Trying to remember. What the word is. Um, our English translation. Gives the marginal reading crushed. Um, but I don't think it's crushed by pressing down. I think it's crushed by grinding. Like my soul is ground down with longing. Uh, for your judgments at all times. Would that we would have that longing.

And that God would satisfy. That longing. And then in verses 21 through 23. Uh, there's this Um, This situation, where, There are the proud, the great ones. The princes, the proud in verse 21. Um, Likely to be identified with the princes who are speaking against him. In verse 23.

But the proud and and the the wicked princes are cursed They're the ones who God has sat in a slippery place and who will fall all at once. And so, Uh, this the psalmist. This is confident that God will rebuke them, that they are cursed because they stray from his Commandments.

But, Uh, currently. They are proud and they are in in control. They are princes. And so this almost has much reproach and much contempt. He's in a low position, he's despised he's treated Um, A small and spoken against. Uh, in verse 22 and verse 23. Uh, and so he's looking to God, to remove from him that reproach and that contempt.

And it's better. To be God's servant. To be a servant. Who is with God? Then a prince who is against him. So you see in verse 23, It makes that comparison princes also sit and speak against me. So they're princes in the current Society but your servant. Meditates on your statutes.

It's much better to be God's servant to be lowly. Then to lift ourselves up. Uh God, opposes the proud. Now, for those who have such a longing for God, and for his word, Um, We are not looking to be satisfied with the things of this world. We want to be satisfied with him.

You know, verse 20 the longing for his judgments. Um, but then when we do have his testimonies, We find that they are. Um, in the first place a delight, they are a pleasure. The first half of verse 24, But then in the second part of verse 24, and my counselors Literally the men of my counselor, the men who counsel me.

Uh, and so we might be alone in the world. We might be reproached by many, but if we have God, and especially if we have his word, Uh we have Delight in his word because it's his and his word is full of every sort of instruction and help and encouragement, and covenant.

Comfort and correction. Um, everything that we need. For our life. And so it's like going about in the world with a great crowd of the best counselors wiser than a hetherfell. To to help us in every situation. Uh, and the the believer who is alone and despised and Thought very little of by the world because he has God himself and because God has communicated himself to us, given himself to us especially Um, In his word in this way.

We have delight and we have These men of counsel these wise counselors. Who are with us. So, what Comfort does the believer have? In his troubles. So the believer's great comfort. As God himself, especially by means of his word. And I hope that, You will take advantage of having his word, you More blessed.

Um, The vast majority, even in the history of the church, we have copies of his word. These hard copies we have Um, digital voices, which can have his word on them, but Uh, and also have of course, their shortcomings, But you have his word and family worship and the hope in your own secret worship and Enough different parts of it in the public worship that there's Uh, there are riches that you can take with you.

To snack your heart on all day long to Delight. Uh, and as Learn and meditate and grow over time. Um, you will have more and more of these counselors, the various scriptures. To be your counselors who go with you. Everywhere you go. Um, and help you. Even though you're a stranger.

In this land, don't be a stranger to God. Uh, for truly the Earth as And all that is in it. Let's pray. Our Father in Heaven, we thank you for your word. Because Lord, we thank you for you. And that you have given us yourself in your word. That we might enjoy you.

And you have given us yourself in your word. That we might be instructed by you and helped by you accompanied by you, counseled by you. Oh, how great O Lord is our blessedness? That we go through life with you. Especially your word, having taught us now. How about your son?

In whom you have given yourself for us, even So that you might thus give yourself to us. United us to him through faith and Indwelt us by your spirit, whom he has given. Who is the spirit of your son whom you sent into our hearts? Help us, Lord them to live in fellowship with you.

And enjoying you. And as instructed by you and unto your glory, We ask in Jesus name. Amen.