

Forever Settled in Heaven

Psalm 119:89

Introduction

For the last several years of my life, I have been making frequent trips to New Orleans for school. Though most of my trips have been brief, I have taken some time while in the city to drive around and explore. Of the many unique things that one can see in New Orleans, I believe it was the sight of construction zones in residential areas. Before the homes were built, large wooden piles were driven into the soil. When I asked someone in New Orleans about the piles, they explained to me that being below sea level caused the water table to only be a few feet under the ground. So, when a construction crew wanted to build a structure, they had to establish a deep foundation that was often 30 to 50 feet below the surface. The soupy surface foundation was not strong enough to support the new construction. Something deeper, more stable was needed.

In a sense, the city of New Orleans illustrates what we hear from Jesus in Matthew 7:24-27, when He says

²⁴ “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. ²⁶ And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

A strong, unshifting foundation is necessary for a stable and secure life. And, as we will see in this morning’s passage, the Word of God is the strong, unshifting foundation that we need to build our lives on. Today’s passage introduces a section of verses in Psalm 119 that focus on the endure, everlasting nature of God’s Word in contrast to the temporal, perishing nature of the things of the world. The main point that I want you to leave with this morning is simply this: **Because the Word of God is unchanging, we ought to build our lives on it.**

Psalm 119:89

⁸⁹ Forever, O LORD, your word
is firmly fixed in the heavens.

Exposition

We build our lives on the Word of God when we...

I. Believe God’s Word

To believe God’s Word is to give more than mental ascent to it. To believe God’s Word is to trust His Word above all other words. To believe God’s Word is to hear the Word as God’s own Word to us and to trust it.

Regarding belief in God's Word as it is stressed in Psalm 119:89, Warren Wiersbe wrote,

Ever since Satan asked Eve, "Indeed, has God said ...?" (Gen. 3:1), the enemy has been attacking the Word of God. Atheists, agnostics, philosophers, scientists, and garden-variety sinners of all kinds have ignored the Bible, laughed at it, and tried to do away with it, but it still stands. Though born in eternity, God's Word is rooted in history and speaks to every generation that will listen. The Word is "founded forever" (v. 152) and will endure forever (v. 162).

We must resist the temptation to doubt or to question the truthfulness of God's Word. We must resolve to "not be wise in our own eyes, but to fear the Lord, and turn away from evil" (Proverbs 3:7). We must reject the foolishness that would say, "There is no God." For, as Psalm 14 tells us, such people are "corrupt, they do abominable deeds."

And yet, at times, we might be inclined to believe that we know better than God. That we are entitled to question Him for His dealings with us. And when we do, we need to hear God's Word to us in Job 38, where God addresses Job for questioning the goodness of God. God says to Job, "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me. Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding?"

O' how arrogant we can be at times when we venture into questioning the wisdom of God as He has revealed it in His unshakeable, unchanging, forever settled Word! Who do we think that we are to question God? Has not Daniel 4:35 made it plain to us? That in comparison to God, "all the inhabitant of the earth are accounted as nothing, and God does according to His will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand or say to him, 'What have you done?'"

Now, to be sure, I am not suggesting that there is no place for a person to seek God for understanding a situation. There is a place for those who are hurting or confused to seek God in humility and ask Him, "Why are things the way that they are?" There is a place for seeking God for a perspective. But there is no place for believing that we know better than God or that we would have done a better job if we were in control of all things, and God's Word works to equip to believe in those difficult times and circumstances. Specifically, Psalm 119:89 beckons the reader to believe God's Word, even when our circumstances tempt us to despair and disbelieve. Belief in God's Word means holding on to His promises (Hebrews 6:12). As C. H. Spurgeon put it

After tossing about on a sea of trouble the Psalmist here leaps to shore and stands upon a rock. Jehovah's word is not fickle nor uncertain; it is settled, determined, fixed, sure, immovable. Man's teachings change so often that there is never time for them to be settled; but the Lord's word is from of old the same and will remain unchanged eternally.

When everything around us is giving way, we need the unchanging truth of God's Word to guide us and strengthen us. The teachings of this world will only leave us empty and in despair.

T.S. – One of the best ways for a Christian to foster belief in God’s Word is to study God’s Word...

II. Study God’s Word

I love how Psalm 119:15 puts it, “I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways.” Psalm 119:23 states it like this, “Even though princes sit plotting against me, your servant will meditate on your statutes.” Or Psalm 119:148, which says, “My eyes are awake before the watches of the night, that I may meditate on your promise.”

I realize that the word “study” might evoke horror for some of you. You hear the word, “study,” and you think, “I don’t want to have anything to do with that.” But, we all study something. It might be our favorite sports team, our favorite hunting activity, our favorite television series, our favorite Instagram account, or a whole host of other things. Just recently I discovered that the latest version of software in the iPhone will track your screen time. In other words, it will tell you how much time you spend on a given day doing certain task. It will tell you how you are using your email, social media, different productivity applications, and anything else on your phone. In fact, its pretty sobering, especially in a day and age when people act like they are too busy to “study God’s Word.” I believe John Piper is exactly right when he says, “One of the great uses of Twitter and Facebook will be to prove at the Last Day that prayerlessness was not from lack of time.” I believe this is equally true of our study of God’s Word. I believe that one day we will stand before God and give an account of how we used the time that He gave us in this world. And I do not believe we will be able to say, “You know, Lord, I just never really had time to study Your Word.” Instead, we will have to confess, “Lord, I just felt like other things were more important.”

God forbid that this be the case of any in this room today. May we, like David, fix our eyes on and meditate on the precepts of God’s Word!

T.S. – And why would we believe and study God’s Word? That we might obey God’s word, which is the next point. We build our lives on the Word of God when we...

III. Obey God’s Word

Earlier in Psalm 119, we read in verses 9-11, “How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to Your Word. With my whole heart I seek You; let me not wander from Your commandments! I have stored up Your Word in my heart, that I might not sin against You.” In other words, we have studied, we have meditated on God’s Word that we might not sin against Him. The opposite of sinning against God is obeying God. And in order to obey God, we must know what God requires of us as His covenant people.

Now, to be sure, we must remember that we do not become a part of God’s people through obedience. Obedience to God is the result of God’s grace in our life. We live to God because God has given us new life. We are incapable of pleasing God apart from the faith that He has worked in us. So, when you hear that we need to obey God’s Word, make sure that you do not put the cart before the horse. Make sure that you understanding that obedience is what His people do in response to His grace. We will never be able to obey or work our way into His favor.

Our acceptance before God is rooted in the grace of God. Only after we have received the blessing of God's grace can we actually live in a manner that is pleasing to Him, which brings us to the final point regarding how we build our lives on the forever settled Word of God.

T.S. – We must...

IV. Embrace God's Word

God's Word is telling a grand story from creation to new creation of His redemption of sinners through the work of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. To embrace God's Word is to embrace the point of God's Word, which is to point us to Jesus Christ.

When Jesus encountered some of His disciples on the road to Emmaus after the resurrection, we are told that He explained the whole of the Old Testament in relationship to Himself. Luke 24:25-27 tell us this: And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

If you would believe God's Word, study God's Word, and obey God's Word, then you must recognize what God's Word is all about. It is all about Christ and His work to redeem sinners from their sin and reconcile us to God! As 2 Corinthians 1:20 tells us, "For all the promises of God find their Yes in Christ. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory." 1 Peter 1:10-12 makes a similar claim, stating, "Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look."

Therefore, to embrace God's Word is to embrace Christ. To understand that the revelation of God in His Word is pointing us to Jesus to be believed, studied, and obeyed for His glory and our good!

Conclusion

As we end this year and prepare for a New Year, I challenge you by the grace of God to make time to believe, study, obey, and embrace God's Word, which points us to Jesus Christ!

The Word of God is a firm foundation upon which you can and must build your life! No other foundation will do!