

Delighting in the Word

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Preacher: Jim Burke

- [0 : 0 0] It's so amazing to be here. There's so many things I'd like to just talk about and talk with you about and to hear more of your story and to know a good bit of the story that's steadfast.
- I've loved you guys from afar for a while. Can you hear me at all or you just need to talk in my grown-up voice?
- Okay. You doing good? Alright. Yeah, so there's all kinds of things I would love to chase rabbits on and just tell you little wimpy things that would be helpful.
- But I just want you to know that you probably have me in my weakness because I don't see myself as a preacher.
- Again, I'm a counselor. I'm a talker. But I can often say I can speak for 20 minutes on any topic as long as facts don't get into your voice.
- [1 : 1 4] And so just know that about me. I've also, we left our home on Wednesday with my wife, Donald, with her mother.
- And we went Wednesday night to a wedding reception or a rehearsal dinner for our youngest. We got married to our lovely daughter-in-law, Chelle, on Thursday.
- And on Friday, we stopped at Buc-ee's. How many people know about Buc-ee's in Texas? Yeah. We stopped at Buc-ee's, guy care package. Yeah, for the Martinsons.
- And then we go to Council Bluffs. Yeah. And then we did the short trip from Council Bluffs to here yesterday.
- So, yeah. So we're going to be talking about a lot of different things this morning. I'll go through my teaching. But one thing I've been reading Psalm 119 and talking about it, and often think about Psalm 119 is kind of a marathon of psalms.
- [2 : 2 2] You know, it's 176 verses. Kind of reframe that now. It's kind of, Psalm 119 is now the drive to the market of the psalms.
- And so you think you're here to the end, and then there's another six hours. But we're so glad to be here. We're so just happy to just learn more about your home, your church, your surroundings, your city.
- And we've loved Bargo from Buc-ee's Buc-ee's Buc-ee's Buc-ee's Buc-ee. So I'll just jump in. And, yeah, it's so good to be here.
- It's just an honor. Really, I feel like you invite me into your home. You invite me on your home. So, yeah. I said my name is Jim Burke, and I'm a congregational elder at Austin Stone Community Church in Austin, Texas.
- I'm also a medical counselor. And so that's how I meet a lot of people around the country, you know, internationally and that sort of thing. And then my wife is Donna.
- [3 : 3 7] She's here. And so she has been dealing with all the hotel challenges along the way. And she has more challenges than I do about. So they'll understand that sort of thing.
- So we actually blended a family in 2000. We have five boys and a girl. And at the time they ranged in age from 19 to 12.

So when we got married, we came home to 60-years. Luckily they're all adults now and professed to be. And we have, we now have 11 grandchildren.

And they raised from the age of, oh, let's turn four. And then the oldest is 19 to 12. So that's pretty amazing. Yeah. So, you know, let me jump in.

I'll tell you a little bit about myself. I'll get into a story and I really do a long jump in a song when I'm not just going to end and roll a teaching on that. I actually grew up in a very small town in South Louisiana called St. Martinville, Louisiana.

[4 : 42] It's referred to as kind of the bayou country of Louisiana. That's known for its great cooking, its unique music, the Cajun and Zydeco music. A lot of great outdoor hunting and fishing.

And it was once like on the license plate it was called the Sportsman's Paradise that went on. And so we grew up there and the culture was wannabe. It was the love of life.

We didn't have a period in work ethic where I grew up. It was a lot of ease. And so, you know, it's all about delighting in all this food and the culture and the music.

Unfortunately, it was completely unredeemed. There really wasn't a culture of doctrine or culture. I just didn't learn any of that growing up.

And so, it was unredeemed but at the same time it was delightful. And so recently, Donna and I have had the ability to go back there and meet some of my neighborhood friends and see the culture.

[5 : 41] Donna grew up in Austin and so it's very different. It's just six hours down the road but it's very, very different culturally. And so, it's just a delight too for me to remember and go back.

So I think that is something important that we need to think about. Having said all that, there is something in common for all of us. We all seem to be delighted. We're looking for delight in something.

And we all do find delight in something. We're all seeking a joy of living of some kind. A joy of life in something. However, this side of heaven, it seems like temporary joy is all that we have.

You know, eventually, we have to leave South Louisiana and drive back to Texas. On Wednesday, we have to leave Fargo in these great temperatures and drive back to Texas. And we're expecting 100 and something to get there.

So, everything on this side of eternity seems fleeting from us. My childhood, my memories, faith, and we want other delight.

[6 : 44] God knows this. The good news is that God does want us to have delight. And that's why he tells us to find delight in his word.

So, I'm here to talk about God's word today and specifically how can you delight in it, in his word. And again, I'll focus on Psalm 119. The ways this psalm challenges us is to meditate on God's word and to delight in it.

And then, I hope to be able to illustrate how the psalmist, the other wrote Psalm 119, provides four ways of how to delight in God's words.

So, not only delight in it, but how to do that. So, before I start, let's just remember the gospel. And the worship team has done a good job of this. But let's just remember the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

He died for our sins and rose for him. And he's eternally trying our best for all of his enemies. So, that now there's no condemnation for those who believe.

[7 : 54] But only everlasting joy. So, this is the gospel we want to remember today. So, I'll pray and then we'll jump in. Heavenly Father, we come to you on this Sunday Sunday.

We kind of exhale. We have a weekend. We have a busyness here with me. We have a busyness here with the weekend.

We serve you by working well. And we also serve you by progressing well. So, we delight in our work and we delight in our rest.

We pray that for our time here, we turn off the motors of our restless busyness. And our restless amusement. And we delight in the things that you find that we're important.

The fruits that you just love. Alright, so, just some basics about the Bible, God's word. We just will remember that there are 66 different books of the Bible.

[9 : 01] There's 40 different human writers that contributed to the Bible. Which took over 1500 years to write. But, we just need to remember that there's really only one author of the Bible.

And that's God himself. 2 Timothy 3.16 says that the Bible is God breathed. It was breathed out by God.

The Bible is the word of God. Not words about God. It was 100% man written. And 100% God authored. It's God who reads.

It's also, the Bible is not going back to heaven. God reveals himself through this word. The gift of God's word is that we get to read it and get more account.

You cannot worship the Bible. You love the Bible. Because God reveals himself through the Bible. We get more of God through reading and meditating on the Bible.

[10 : 00] So, then some specifics about Psalm 119. I don't know how many of you guys have ever really go into Psalm 119. But, it is the longest chapter of the Bible.

It's here in the very middle of the Bible. It has 176 verses. It was originally written as an acrostic poem. But, we lose that in our English translation. But, the parents of the Hebrew children will teach the Hebrew alphabet.

Using the acrostic format of Psalm 119. So, the first eight stanzas will be the letter half. The next eight stanzas will be the letter half.

The next eight stanzas will be the letter half. Beta. And then we go on to the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. And that's how they teach the children. So, if they're teaching children these truths, it must be pretty important.

But, I think we lose that in our translation. So, the writer of Psalm 119 is not known. One writer possibly could be Ezra the priest.

[11 : 00] Right at the time of the temple being rebuilt. Others say King David may have written it. And then others say Daniel may have written it. So, the overall message of Psalm 119 focuses on the truth of God's word.

And, you'll see a lot of descriptive words like commands, precepts, laws, ways, decrees, wisdom, rules. And, you know, all of Psalm 119.

However, David Powlison points out that even more than mentioning descriptions of God's word. That there's far and away the most common words used in Psalm 119 are first and second person singular pronouns.

So, we'll see again throughout Psalm 119 there'll be a lot of I, me, my, mine, or you, your, yours. And so, Powlison would say Psalm 119 has the most extensive I/you conversation in the Bible.

And, you think about that, it really, it really is. It's fascinating once you start reading and seeing it through the closets. So, think about this for a second. The most extensive I/you conversation in the Bible is now in Psalm 119.

[12 : 15] And, this may be a new insight. But, also, it begs the question, what does it look like to talk to God? How often would say, see Psalm 119.

So, we look, here, I'll just give you a small example. I'll take the last four verses of Psalm 119, verses 173 through 176. And, here's how, these are these four verses.

It says, let your hand be ready to help me, for I have chosen your precepts. I long for your salvation, O Lord, and your law is my delight.

Let my soul live and praise you, and let your rules help me. I have gone astray like a lost sheep. Seek your servant, for I do not forget your commandments.

So, you see that there are four short, these four short verses, there are four references to precepts, laws, rules, and commandments. However, as Pallison points out, there are 16 examples of first person and second person pronouns, four times the number of references to God's word.

[13 : 22] So, it truly is, in Psalm 119, an I to you conversation. So, with that foundation kind of set and kind of set the scene, let me start with a personal story.

I'll just, a bit, and then we'll come back to Psalm 119. So, in 19, this is a personal story about myself. In 1995, I found myself, in my mid-30s, divorced, a single parent, near bankruptcy, no assets to speak of, living in a one-room apartment, which was actually a single car garage turned into an apartment with four kids.

As a single parent, elementary, and middle school aged children, I'd have my children every first third and fifth weekend of the month, every other holiday, and for an extended time in the summer.

And this is really difficult for a single parent. Some parents don't even have this much. And so, it's very difficult being a single parent. So, to say the least, this was a very low point in my life. And life was hard.

So, one evening, I was sitting in my so-called apartment. And in my mind's eye, I pictured a scaphoron. I realized that something was terribly wrong about how I had built my life.

[14 : 52] I thought, something about this gap must be false. Thinking through my situation, I asked God to remove everything that might be faulty in my life, and replace it with whatever He wanted to replace it with.

And remember, I didn't grow up with any doctrine. All I grew up was just, you ought to be better. So, that's what surrender looked like for me in that moment. And it had become obvious that my very best, absolute best thinking, my best decision making had landed here, and I needed another plan.

I knew I needed a better plan, and I knew God's plan would be better than anything I could produce. So, I prayed that God would do the things in my life that I could do for myself.

And in my own way, I surrendered to God's plan of my life. And I surrendered to His plan of my life. And so, in Hebrews 13, 5, it says, God is faithful.

That's my testimony. God is faithful. Not that Jim Burke is faithful, but God is faithful. And so, He is faithful. With Him being faithful, He began to rebuild my life using His Word.

[16 : 06] I didn't even know that at the time when I prayed. I did not even know enough about God's Word. That's what I did. So, starting my first Bible study, God began to reveal to me who He is and how He changes people.

Next, He led me to a financial Bible study, and I began to learn about what God said about money, finances, and stewardship. Then, I was led to a Bible preaching church, and began hearing the sermons of Song of Solomon.

God revealed to me, really, a biblical definition of relationship to marriage. Later, God showed me how family should work, and how the Bible, what the Bible said about parenting. And then, even later, I began attending a biblical recovery program, where I began to take the ministry of my struggles with sin, and anger, and shame, and lack of self-control.

During all this time, God was faithful to repair and rebuild my sin-ridden mother. So, how did the Bible change me from a desperate man to a man delighting in God's Word?

As you heard, in the Bible study, God was faithful and revealed himself to me in the Word. He revealed himself to me from reading Scripture to study the Bible with others.

[17 : 24] And since that time, I've made it a practice to read my Bible daily. So, I have to say that I'm not always in a particular discipline over the years, but more recently, I've been able to learn a standard rhythm of being a daily Bible reading.

And part of that rhythm started a few years back, when I discovered Psalm 119. Now, you'll actually hear pastors say this, that no pastor will preach a sermon on Psalm 119.

And that intrigued me when I heard that. The reason is, because there's no dev's and flows, there's no climax and resolve. And it's just verse after verse, verse 176.

So, once I learned some basic things about Psalm 119, I fell in love with it. And then I could see if I... So, I'll try and unpack it, but I'll try and communicate with you how I began to delight in reading my Bible and reading Psalm 119.

So, like the real delight, you can really get home with me in Psalm 119, when I discovered verse 92. Psalm 119, verse 92, speaks directly to my story that I just shared with you.

[18 : 35] Here's what it says. It says, I would have perished in my affliction if your word had helped in my life. I would have perished. My afflictions were real.

My past was full of grief and loss. The present situation was one of disbelief. I just believed that someone had taken apart my world right in front of me.

My future was clouded with anger and bitterness and hopelessness. For God's faithful. Verse 92, from Psalm 119, was like, Who took the water to my soul?

And it amazed us all the rest of it. Something I like to remind myself of, David, is just the word Emmanuel, God with us. Just remembering that God remembers us.

He remembers me specifically. He sees my situation. He hears my cries. God knows my pain. I can't resist all of this just summarizing this verse 92.

[19 : 42] I would have perished in my affliction if your word had not been my God. This verse was so clear and concise and comforting to me. You know that God knows me and He loves me enough to speak to my specific situation.

Think about this with me for a moment. In centuries past, back in the days that the psalmist wrote Psalm 19, God had him write these words for verse 92.

So that he could reveal it. He could reveal himself. In my specific circumstance, in 1995, I was perishing in my affliction.

God had already known and had written down so that he could reveal himself through the psalmist. I got more of him.

It may sound silly or a silly way of putting this, but it was like getting a Hallmark card. Have you ever had this happen and a particular life event is occurring and inside the printed card is the exact situation that you're going through?

[20 : 47] It's like, how did they know? How did they know? It's like an amazing company feeling that you get. So there's more. But that's how Psalm 19 went.

So as I continued to read Psalm 19, I found more verses that I could hold onto that brought healing to my situation as God worked in my life.

I found more ways to delight in this world. Verse 14 says, In the way of your testimonies, I delight as much as all riches. So he speaks to my financial problems and give me perspective.

Psalm 16 says, I will delight in your satisfaction. I will not forget your word. It is trusting that you meditate upon the Lord. My testimonies or your testimonies are my delight.

They are my counselors. It reminds me that I found the ultimate counselor in general. And then I've already read this one.

[21 : 48] Verse 17 from the Lord. I long for your salvation, O Lord, and your law, who is my delight. You rely on me that ultimately, he will make all things right.

Not today, but ultimately, a new heaven and a new life are coming. And we can set our hope in that.

So when learning to delight in God's word, each of these verses can be uniquely. This is similar. Now, let's delve a little further into kind of the teaching around Psalm 119.

Because it does tell us how to delight in God's word. So it distracts us to delight in God's word, but then it also distracts us how to.

So let's go through those. There's four meanings I'll talk about. So this comes from a Journal of Biblical Counseling article written by David Allison.

[22 : 53] It's entitled Suffering in Psalm 19. So we're just going to unpack it. The article talks about four meanings. And the first one is, the psalmist says to God, the first means, the psalmist says to God, you are, you say, you do.

The second means is, the psalmist says to God, I'm facing struggle with. Thirdly, the psalmist says to God, I need you too. And finally, the psalmist says to God, I'm committed to.

There's just four meanings, and then we'll just look at examples of each. Now, remember what we discussed earlier, Allison called Psalm 119 the most extensive ITV conversation in the Bible.

So let's see how that works out. So with the first, with these four meanings, we'll begin to see what Allison is talking about. And for the sake of time, I'm just going to use a few small examples.

I won't try to do everything. So, but you can, I'll challenge you to go to Psalm 119 and find more of these on your own. So, the psalmist says to God, you are, you say, you do.

[24 : 06] The psalmist used short truths to communicate this. He says things like, the earth is full of your loving kindness. Your faithfulness continues throughout all generations.

Your hands made, meet, and fashioned. The psalmist reminds us that the Lord speaks wonders. Your law is true. Your word is very pure.

The word stands firm in the heavens forever. The psalmist reminds us that God destroys evil. You refuse the arrogant. You reject all those who wander from your stature.

You remove all the wicked of the earth by troughs. And then the psalmist reminds us that yet again, the Lord is merciful. You are good and do good.

You are good and do good. You are good and do good. You are good and do good. Your mercies are great. So, we choose to delight by speaking to God and to say to him, say who he is.

[25 : 06] Secondly, the psalmist goes to God admitting the struggles he's facing. The psalmist admits his struggles are too cold. First, the psalmist says, I face terrible things inside myself.

There is something inside of me that is terrible at all. The psalmist owns sinfulness. And his own sinfulness is an affront to an all-perfect God. The psalmist knows that the sin is dissonance.

His own heart. Secondly, the psalmist faces something terrible coming at him from the outside. The sins of others and all life's troubles for him to destroy the psalmist. So, the psalmist is quick to admit that there is something wrong with me.

And there is something wrong with what happens to me. In both ways, whether sin or hurt, the psalmist suffers threats of pain, destruction, shame, or death.

So, the psalmist speaks candidly to God about this double affliction. He says things like this in Psalm 119. My soul cleaves to the dust. My soul weeps because of grief.

[26 : 12] My eyes fail, windward and comfort me. The psalmist continues to lay his road back to God. The third means the psalmist approaches God as an apostrophe of needlessness.

This is something that's really hard for us. I actually think that we are need. We need to go to God in the posture of needlessness. So, what does the psalmist say back to God in the behind himself in his tender, needless posture?

He says things like, do not forsake me utterly. Seek your servant. In other words, don't give up on me. The psalmist is bold to ask for help. He knows how hard it is to love.

To love. He says, don't let me wander from the commandments. The psalmist gets preoccupied with wrong things and is bent the wrong ways. And he says, incline my heart to your testimonies.

The psalmist realizes that his Bible can get routine at times. And he can rest. You can read the words but not rest on one. You can read them but miss the Lord.

[27 : 19] So, he says things like, open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things from your law. Help me. Rescue me. Read my taste. Look upon my devotion.

And then finally, the fourth means in which the psalmist chooses to rely on God for it. It's just remembering who he has submitted to. So, the psalmist says things like, I have promised to keep your word.

I treasure your word in my heart. Your servant meditates on your statutes. Forty times, the psalmist rejoices, delights, loves, gives, thanks, marvels, sings praise.

The word of the Lord heals and says things like, my heart stands in awe at everything you say. I love what you say exceedingly, passionately, above all things.

I love your commandments more than your words to the whole. So, we've seen now the four means of delighting us all in our minds. And we've seen the psalmist shows us how to practice delighting us in God's word.

[28 : 28] So, we go to God and repeat to him who he is, what he says, what he's done. Specifically telling him in our struggles. The hard posture of meaning is expecting God to act on our behalf.

Reminding us, reminding ourselves that we are his. That he bought us at a price and expensive price. The dad of his son.

And that we want to delight in him. So, again, it is important to delight in God's word. It's important because it is through his word that God reveals himself to us.

Through his word, we get more of him. The more we read and delight in God's word, we learn that our heavenly Father is like. We learn that God is the perfect book. Jesus is the perfect book of the invitation of the Father.

And we are conformed to the physical side. By delighting in God's word, we learn the true gospel of Jesus Christ.

[29 : 32] So, wherever you find yourself as one. I'm so glad you're here. I'm so glad that it is God's desire. It takes a word, alive, and respect.

So, I just leave you with this kind of call to action or this challenge. I would just encourage you to start reading Psalm 119. It gets too nervous, so I'm just thinking of that drive from Austin.

You can read just eight verses a day. That's just one of the 22 stanzas. And you will complete all of the songs in less than a month.

And then just start over. Then this rhythm will begin to change the way you talk to God. The way you talk to yourself. Start reading a real Bible. I just do cover to cover.

That's what's simple for me. I just read cover to cover. And if you read three or four chapters a day, you will make it a new Bible in about a year. But there are other great reading plans out there, so I'd encourage you to pick one.

[30 : 31] Just start in the day. G.K. Chesterton has a quote that says it's worth doing. It's worth doing badly. So I just say, start. Yeah. Be more intentional.

Get coffee with someone. Go to lunch. Write someone to breakfast. Talk about Psalm 119. So my prayer will be that through these things, God will increase your intentionality.

And in his faithfulness, you are a people I do. So I'll leave you with one more story. About George Mueller, who was born in Germany.

One of my heroes was born in Germany. But he moved to Bristol, England in 1836. George Mueller began to work with orphans. Over his lifetime, George Mueller took care of 10,000 orphan children.

It's amazing. There's so many stories that I'd love to share with you about George Mueller. But here's the point I want to bring you to the next. George Mueller lived to be 92 years old. And in his old age, he said something that blew me away.

[31 : 39] I read his autobiography. And this day it blew me away. He said that he had read his Bible hundreds of times. Think about that.

92 years old, and he had read his Bible hundreds of times. And something just struck a nerve of me. I'm not that smart. But if I read something hundreds of times, I'm probably going to know something.

Maybe. You know? It's just amazing. So I realized that that's kind of the person, that's what I would like to be.

That's what I would like to learn how to do. So the reality is God is not, it's not God's will for me to be like George Mueller or compare myself to George Mueller.

As a believer, God's standard for my life is Jesus. And God is faithful to reveal himself in his word. And God delights in his son. And so he delights in his son and he's pointing me to Jesus through his word.

[32 : 43] And so I had to look at a personal confession time for myself. I was like, I've only read the Bible for six times in my life.

And I'm 64 years old. So, mathematically, I'm 56 years behind. Or more. Realistically, I don't know how many times I'll ever be able to read my Bible between now and the time that I die.

And likely it will not exceed 50 times. You know? Nowhere near hundreds of hearts. But, the remaining years that I have, if I can make God's word my ultimate delight, that is the delight I want to know.

As I pray that you will join me to intentionally delight in God's word. I'll tell you today. So, let us pray. Father, we all fall short.

We all sin. We tend to either forget you completely in our busyness. Or are obsessed upon legalism.

[33 : 56] Because we are controlling our lives. We are good. We are good. We are good. We are chosen to love us even when we are unloving and unlovely.

We really do want to love you. We are like those tree children that rescue us and don't us. You say you are mine.

You ask us to take our time. We just promise to walk with you. We are committed by faith.

Through the Holy Spirit. When you promise to the truth. That you are within the God of us. We present all of us to you. Your glory. Your glory. Your glory.

Amen. Amen.