

# PSALM 119.137-144

psalm  
God's Word 119

T. M. AND SUSIE MOORE

*A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe*

Psalm 119.137-144

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## Introduction to Psalm 119.137-144

The righteousness of God is unaffected by changing moral fashion. It cannot be controlled for political purposes or corporate advantage. Armies cannot vanquish it. It carries no “best by” date, nor does it have an atomic half-life. It cannot be voted out. The righteousness of God is everlasting because God is everlasting, and He is righteous.

Righteousness entails spiritual purity and moral perfection. Where righteousness obtains truth abounds, love flows, justice prevails, and life flourishes. Psalm 119.137-144 appropriately celebrates the righteousness of God in its opening, middle, and closing verses because righteousness is what everyone needs, and righteousness is what comes from submitting to the Law of God and all His Word.

If you find these studies, or any of our other resources, helpful, we hope you will consider making a contribution to help support our work. You can do so by using the donate button at the website or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 360 Zephyr Road, Williston, VT 05495.

We hope you find this study of Psalm 119 instructive and helpful to equip you for your walk with and work for the Lord. Thank you for joining us.

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## 1 God Does What He Is

*Pray Psalm 119.137, 138.*

Righteous are You, O LORD,  
And upright are Your judgments.  
Your testimonies, which You have commanded,  
Are righteous and very faithful.

*Sing Psalm 119.137, 138.*

(Divinum Mysterium: *Of the Father's Love Begotten*)  
Righteous are You, O my Lord! Upright are Your judgments, too!  
All the words You have commanded us we will surely keep and do!  
For Your testimonies all are righteous, Lord;  
all Your faithful Word is true:  
We rejoice, O Lord, in You!

*Read Psalm 119.137-144; meditate on verses 137, 138.*

*Preparation*

1. How does the psalmist describe God?
2. How does he describe His judgments and testimonies?

*Meditation*

We would expect the **א** (*tsadhe*) stanza to have lots of “righteous” and “righteousness” in it, since **א** begins these Hebrew words. And we won’t be disappointed. The psalmist says that God is righteous, and it naturally follows that His judgments are righteousness. God does what God is. Ditto with His testimonies and commandments: They, because they are from Him, are righteous and very faithful.

Our psalmist will again employ a parallelism in these two verses, beginning with one idea, then another, then adding to and extending each of those:

“Righteous are You, O LORD...”

A “upright”

B “judgments”

B “testimonies” B<sup>1</sup> “which you have commanded”

A “righteous” A<sup>1</sup> “very faithful”

You’ll also notice that the psalmist “rhymes” this idea at the end of this stanza, with yet another extension to stretch out the meaning, and in verse 142, a double dose of righteousness (for emphasis, of course).

God is righteous. God’s judgments, testimonies, and commandments are righteous. God does what God is. The more Jesus the Righteous One is formed in us by the Law and Spirit of God, the more it will be true of us as well that He will show Himself through us in all our words and deeds (2 Cor. 3.12-18).

*Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162.*

God is righteous; therefore, everything He does is good, noble, pure, and worthy.

God is upright so everything He does is honest and honorable.

God’s judgments are perfect, and He judges us fairly and righteously.

God’s Word is faithful because He is dependable, honest, trustworthy—faithful.

God commanded all this to be; and Jesus, righteous, upright, and faithful, did it all for us.

Moses said, “For I proclaim the name of the LORD: Ascribe greatness to our God. He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He” (Deut. 32.3, 4). Moses understood the qualities of God.

Nehemiah recorded that the Levites, during a time of worship and confession, cried out with a loud voice to the LORD their God. And said, “Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and awesome God, who keeps covenant and mercy: Do not let all the trouble seem small before You that has come upon us, our kings and our princes, our priests and our prophets, our fathers and on all Your people, from the days of the kings of Assyria until this day. However You are just in all that has befallen us; for You have dealt faithfully, but we have done wickedly” (Neh. 9.32, 33). The people understood the qualities of God.

Elihu said to Job: “Surely God will never do wickedly, nor will the Almighty pervert justice” (Job 34.12). Elihu understood the qualities of God.

David wrote: “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether” (Ps. 19.7-9). David understood the qualities of God.

God and His Word are “More to be desired...than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them [we] are warned, and in keeping them there is great reward” (Ps. 19.10, 11). Do we understand God and these qualities of His Word, and the importance of obedience to Him?

When we do, we are invited to sing along with all those who have overcome evil in this lifetime, by following God’s faithful Word faithfully. Trying, with the power given us through His Holy Spirit, to be pleasing to Him. Let’s sing along with Moses, Nehemiah, Elihu, David, and all the saints:

“Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty!  
Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!  
Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name?  
For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You,  
For Your judgments have been manifested” (Rev. 15.3, 4).

“He does what He is”, and we are warned and blessed.

*For reflection*

1. How can we become more like what God is?
2. Why should we be both comforted and emboldened by the fact that God does what He is?
3. How can you know more of God at work within you, willing and doing of His good pleasure (Phil. 2.12, 13)?

*All men indeed grant that God is righteous; but the Prophet has expressed more than the common sort of men, yea than the whole world, perceive in reference to this subject; for in designating God righteous, he means, that as soon as we depart from Him, we will not find a particle of righteousness anywhere else. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Psalm 119.137, 138*

*Psalm 119.137-144*

*Pray Psalm 119.136.*

Be sure to pray for the lost people in your Personal Mission Field, especially those you expect to see today. Ask the Lord to give you an opportunity to share something of His Word and love with them.

*Sing Psalm 119.143, 144.*

(Divinum Mysterium: *Of the Father's Love Begotten*)

All Your statutes, all Your judgments, Lord, have become my great delight,  
and Your testimonies, ever sure, ever true, and ever right!

Help me understand that I may live, O Lord,  
in Your strength and by Your sight,  
for Your Word is my delight.

## 2 Time for Outrage

*Pray Psalm 119.139.*

My zeal has consumed me,  
Because my enemies have forgotten Your words.

*Sing Psalm 119.139-141.*

(Divinum Mysterium: *Of the Father's Love Begotten*)

Zeal consumes me for Your Word, O Lord, for my foes forsake Your ways.  
Yet Your Word is very, very pure, and I keep it all my days.  
I am small and I am much despised, O Lord,  
yet Your holy Name I praise,  
and Your precepts guide my ways.

*Read Psalm 119.137-144; meditate on verse 139.*

*Preparation*

1. How had the psalmist's zeal affected him?
2. Why?

*Meditation*

We recall that the psalmist previously wept tears of sorrow over those who rejected the Law of God (v. 136). And that's entirely appropriate. Lost and rebellious people need our love and patience.

But there comes a time when sadness and forbearance must give way to outrage at the insult people offer to God when they scorn His Law. Jesus understood this. So great was His zeal for the things of the Lord that He exploded in a rage against those who turned God's house of prayer into a latte bar/bookstore/concert venue...

Oh, wait – moneychangers and sacrifice-sellers (sorry).

The zeal for the things of God overboiled in controlled rage as Jesus beat and drove the violators out of the temple, scattering their wares and wealth in all directions (cf. Jn. 2.13-17). This is what it looks like to hate sin (Ps. 97.10). And that appears to be what our psalmist was experiencing as well. His zeal for God and His Law caused him to reach his wits' end. He was fuming with outrage, and it was probably a good thing no Lawbreakers were strolling by at the moment.

Does it trouble us when people hurl insults at our Father? At our Savior? We may not resort to violence, but we surely will reach the boiling-point within our soul at the outrage wickedness offers to our righteous Lord. Then we can come before the Lord and pour our outrage out to Him. And it's good we do, because if we're all eaten up with rage against wickedness, that might help to keep us from dallying in it.

*Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

To forget something, it must have been known at one time.

The psalmist was zealous against those who knew God's words but had now forgotten them. And when God's laws are forgotten, everyone suffers.

The writer of Hebrews, in his zeal for God, wrote some terrifying words to church-goers: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become

partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame” (Heb. 6.4-6). That is a fearful state for anyone to be in. So, knowing this, our zeal for God’s Word should lead us to strenuously share the good and bad news of the Kingdom with the people in our Personal Mission Field. And take it to heart ourselves.

Zeal encompassed with love is our aim. And even though we are blooming with love, we still may be rejected by folks who are convicted of their sin. God didn’t want the people of Israel to be ruled by a king; He wanted to rule them by prophets, priests, and judges. But they wanted a king, and it didn’t take them long to fall through the temptation to be like everyone else and smack into sin. The prophet Samuel was zealous for the things of God and disheartened by the people’s request for a king. God said to him, “...they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them” (1 Sam. 8.7). Those are a people who forgot what they knew.

Paul wrote to church brethren who were in the process of forgetting God’s law: “Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit” (1 Thess. 4.8). Better to remember.

Paul wrote to another forgetful church with these words: “If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. O Lord, come!” (1 Cor. 16.22). Love for God begets zeal for God.

Are we a people who have forgotten what we know? Or worse yet, rejected God?  
We will do well to remember the Word of God with all the zeal we can muster.  
Because forgetting isn’t really a good option. Not for us. Not for others.

“Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead...” (2 Tim. 2.8).  
“...who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works” (Titus 2.14).

*For reflection*

1. What could cause you to “forget” God’s Law?
2. What are some things you could do to help make sure you will not forget God’s Law, or any of His Word?
3. How can believers encourage one another to cling to the Word of God and not forget it?

*But if we are animated with the zeal that inspired the Prophet it will carry us away to another kind of sorrow, which will take entire possession of our souls.* John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Psalm 119.139*

*Pray Psalm 119.142, 143.*

Call on the Lord to light your path with His truth today, and to keep you from being overcome by the sins of the world.

*Sing Psalm 119.142, 143.*

(Divinum Mysterium: *Of the Father’s Love Begotten*)

For Your righteousness, O God my Lord, ever after will endure;  
and Your Law is truth, like all Your Word – righteous, holy, just, and pure!  
Trouble overtakes me for Your Name, O Lord,  
yet Your Word is ever sure  
and Your grace my soul will cure.



### 3 Why We Should Love God's Word

*Pray Psalm 119.140.*

Your word *is* very pure;  
Therefore Your servant loves it.

*Sing Psalm 119.140, 141.*

*Read Psalm 119.137-144; meditate on verse 140.*

*Preparation*

1. How did the psalmist describe God's Word? What does that mean?
2. What was his own attitude toward the Word?

*Meditation*

The word "pure" here is metallurgical: "refined." Psalm 12 uses the same image concerning the Word of God, saying it is refined as in a furnace seven times, that is, perfectly (Ps. 12.6). Pure metal is without flaws or faults, having no impurities and therefore of the highest value. It is stable and solid. Reliable. True.

Apply this image to the Scriptures, then add "exceedingly". The Scriptures have been prepared by God to be perfect, true, unbreakable, utterly and completely reliable, and therefore valuable above all things (cf. Ps. 119.72). But the only way to appreciate and benefit from the perfection of God's Word is to love it. Skeptics and unbelievers dismiss the Bible as full of contradictions and nonsense statements. They don't love the Word and so they not only *cannot* they *will not* see its many perfections and wonders. Don't expect them to unless the Spirit of God bursts into their hearts and minds for a full-soul makeover.

But do not allow yourself to be discouraged or deflected from the perfections of the Word by the dismissive and scornful views of those who neither know nor love it. Receive the Word for what it is. Receive it every day. Marvel at its scope and majesty. Wonder at its mysteries. Praise the Giver of the Word and Him Who dwells in your heart to teach it to you. Rejoice to see Jesus glinting out of every facet of the gem of Scripture. Receive the perfectly refined Word of God by faith and your love for it will increase. Then, as love for the Word increases, you will find the Word increasing in you, as your soul and life take on more of the likeness of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 3.12-18).

The Word is pure, very pure. Love it as God's servant, and live in the freedom, power, and joy the living Word provides.

*Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

Pure. God's Word is pure. I love it. And so do you, no doubt. And why wouldn't we love something of that quality? Something pure is not mixed or adulterated with any other substance or material; it is without any extraneous and unnecessary elements; it is free of contamination. Thus says the Oxford dictionary. God's sixty-six books are altogether pure, and righteous, and good. And Jesus, The Word, is purity embodied. Without Jesus, and His purity covering our sin, God could never look at us. "You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on wickedness" (Hab. 1.13). But He does. How amazing.

Everything about God is pure. His Word, His love, His wisdom. "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure..." (Jms. 3.17). His holiness exhibits itself in purity that is "like silver tried in a furnace...purified seven times" (Ps. 12.6).

And we have been instructed by Paul to meditate on God's holiness. We are to think about whatever things are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praiseworthy. This is the beauty of our King

and He, in His purity, is worthy of our minds being set on Him. Loving Him. Obeying Him. Worshiping Him. Forever, to the very end (Ps. 119.112).

And in all His purity He has given us hope that we can live each day in the guidance of this pure Word. And that one day, we will not only see Him in His pure Word, but we will see Him: “Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure” (1 Jn. 3.2, 3). Pure and purifying hope!

And that is “Why We Should Love God’s Word”!

*For reflection*

1. The Word of God is pure, as God is pure; but we are not. What are the implications of this for us?
2. Why would we want to purify ourselves as He is pure? What role does the Word of God play in this?
3. How would it be evident to others that we love God’s Word?

*The more effectually to repress the foolish rashness with which we are chargeable whenever we imagine that there is any fault in God's word, he declares that in commending it he gives utterance to the unfeigned feeling of his heart, having experienced a blissful pleasure in that purity of which he speaks.* John Calvin (1506-1564), *Commentary on Psalm 119.140*

*Pray Psalm 119.137, 138.*

Praise God for His upright and righteous Word. Commit yourself in all your ways to following His pathway.

*Sing Psalm 119.137, 138.*

(Divinum Mysterium: *Of the Father’s Love Begotten*)

Righteous are You, O my Lord! Upright are Your judgments, too!  
All the words You have commanded us we will surely keep and do!  
For Your testimonies all are righteous, Lord;  
all Your faithful Word is true:  
We rejoice, O Lord, in You!

## 4 No Small People

Pray Psalm 119.141, 142.

I *am* small and despised,  
Yet I do not forget Your precepts.  
Your righteousness *is* an everlasting righteousness,  
And Your law *is* truth.

Sing Psalm 119.139-141.

(Divinum Mysterium: *Of the Father's Love Begotten*)

Zeal consumes me for Your Word, O Lord, for my foes forsake Your ways.  
Yet Your Word is very, very pure, and I keep it all my days.  
I am small and I am much despised, O Lord,  
yet Your holy Name I praise,  
and Your precepts guide my ways.

Read Psalm 119.137-144; meditate on verses 141, 142.

*Preparation*

1. What did the psalmist say about God's Law?

2. How was he regarded by others?

*Meditation*

The psalmist set his smallness (v. 141) within the eternal righteousness of the Lord and His truth (v. 142). His sense of "smallness" refers, I believe, to his humility as well as to how some others perceived him. He was "despised" in his smallness, but he held fast to the precepts of God, which are truth.

Small, despised; eternal, true. We can accept our condition in life, however small it may be, if we remain securely tethered – by the exercise of our mind and the obedience of faith – to that which is eternally righteous and true. Among those who fear the Lord there are no "small" people. Everyone counts. Everyone matters. Everyone has been endowed with the gift of salvation, the indwelling Presence of the Holy Spirit, and the unfathomable and inexhaustible riches of God's Word. Everyone who believes in Jesus and loves His Word is set in the world as a spigot of living water (Jn. 7.37-39) to bring the refreshment of grace to others.

We are not defined by how others see us, nor even how we see ourselves. We are defined by the company we keep. And when that company is eternally righteous and true – even our Lord Jesus Christ Himself – then we understand that we have a heavenly calling, a Kingdom appointment, a disciple-making mandate, and the promise that we can do all things through Christ Who strengthens us.

Nothin' small about that.

*Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

"And the Syrians had gone out on raids, and had brought back captive a young girl from the land of Israel. She waited on Naaman's wife." Naaman, who was plagued with the disease of leprosy, was the commander of the army of the king of Syria. This young girl, we would have to assume, could have perceived herself as small and despised. However, her faith was intact, and regardless of her circumstances she was working her Personal Mission Field boldly. "Then she said to her mistress, 'If only my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria! For he would heal him of his leprosy.'" And because of what this young girl told them, Naaman asked for permission to go to Samaria and be healed by the prophet Elisha (2 Kgs. 5.2, 3). She knew that God's righteousness is an everlasting righteousness and that His Law is truth (Ps. 119.142). She did not let her situation overshadow her belief in the power of the God she served.

We never learn her name. But from her we most assuredly learn how to live courageously and helpfully in unfriendly territory for God and His truth. She lived within God's Kingdom, not in the hierarchy of this one.

Moses, Paul, and Peter all had reasons from their past to feel small and despised, but they did not let yesterday's shortcomings determine today's work that God had called them to do. They did not forget God's precepts, and they remembered that the God they served was holy, righteous, true, and forgiving.

The Bible is full of the stories of those who were overcomers. But it is also strangely comforting when we are allowed to see that some did struggle with problems and doubts, like our psalmist. What a blessing it is when they instruct us in how to be overcomers and show us how to do it: "But I am poor and needy; make haste to me, O God! You are my deliverer; O LORD, do not delay" (Ps. 70.5). "Bow down Your ear, O LORD, hear me; for I am poor and needy. Preserve my life, for I am holy; You are my God; save Your servant who trusts in You!" (Ps. 86.1, 2)

The truths that encourage us to be overcomers are these: Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (Jn. 14.6). He is the everlasting righteousness and the law of truth; and bears witness to the truth. "Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice" (Jn. 18.37). We hear His voice and follow Him.

So no matter if we are small and despised, or just feeling that way, we needn't let it affect our work. We have Jesus' promise that "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matt. 19.26). His Holy Spirit living within us crowds out our muddled and defeated thoughts and replaces them with the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2.16), full of potential and power.

We know about the servant girl for a good reason. In God's purview there really are "No Small People"! "For God has not given us a spirit of fear", or of being small and despised, but He has given us a spirit of "power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1.7).

*For reflection*

1. In what sense is it proper to think of ourselves as "small"? In what sense is it not?
2. When we feel despised by the world, how should we respond?
3. Whom will you encourage today in their walk with the Lord?

*Men's real excellencies always makes them low in their own eyes. When we are small and despised, we have the more need to remember God's precepts, that we may have them to support us. The law of God is the truth, the standard of holiness, the rule of happiness; but the obedience of Christ alone justifies the believer. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Psalm 119.141, 142*

*Pray Psalm 119.143.*

What "trouble and anguish" are you facing today? Give it to the Lord and call on Him for mercy and grace to help in your time of need.

*Sing Psalm 119.142, 143.*

*(Divinum Mysterium: Of the Father's Love Begotten)*

For Your righteousness, O God my Lord, ever after will endure;  
and Your Law is truth, like all Your Word – righteous, holy, just, and pure!  
Trouble overtakes me for Your Name, O Lord,  
yet Your Word is ever sure  
and Your grace my soul will cure.

## 5 Staying on Top

*Pray Psalm 119.143.*

Trouble and anguish have overtaken me,  
Yet Your commandments are my delights.

*Sing Psalm 119.142, 143.*

*(Divinum Mysterium: Of the Father's Love Begotten)*

For Your righteousness, O God my Lord, ever after will endure;  
and Your Law is truth, like all Your Word – righteous, holy, just, and pure!  
Trouble overtakes me for Your Name, O Lord,  
yet Your Word is ever sure  
and Your grace my soul will cure.

*Read Psalm 119.137-144; meditate on verse 143.*

*Preparation*

1. What was the psalmist experiencing?
2. How did he respond?

*Meditation*

We cannot avoid adversity, difficulty, disappointment, setbacks, injuries, or trials. Indeed, we are promised that we shall know plenty of this in our journey with the Lord (Jn. 16.33) and as we seek deeper immersion in His Kingdom (Acts 14.22).

We must not put our trust in agreeable conditions or pleasant circumstances. Looking to these for peace, happiness, and contentment will always lead to disappointment. Instead, we can find delight in the commandments of God and in all His Word (Ps. 119.92).

How do the commandments of God bring delight?

First, because they are from God, and therefore we can know they are sure, unfailing, right, and just, and that they are intended for our good, that we may live full and abundant lives (Lev. 18.4, 5).

Second, and perhaps even more important, because God's commandments are His Word, He speaks through them to us. We hear the very voice of God in all His Word and are thus assured of His Presence with us. He is sovereign and loves us. He does all things well and works all things according to the counsel of His holy and perfect will. And He makes all things work together for our good.

Thus, when trouble and anguish threaten, set your delight on God and His commandments and not on your circumstances. Remember His Word and promises and rejoice in them and in Him. Like Jesus on the cross, look to the joy set down before you in the Word of God, give thanks, seek the beauty of the Lord in His Word, and delight with rejoicing in Him.

*Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

Trouble and anguish are more easily coped with when we acknowledge that God's thoughts are not our thoughts, nor are our ways His ways (Is. 55.8). In His divine plan, these difficult opportunities are a means for us to do His will, and to trust Him even during terrible trials. We also believe they can be used for good, by those of us who love Him (Rom. 8.28). This is sometimes hard to fathom even though it is true. But to delight in Him and His Word is a first step toward the realization of staying on top of our troubles.

Habakkuk realized the truth of this and wrote beautifully describing it:  
“Though the fig tree may not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines;  
though the labor of the olive may fail, and the fields yield no food;  
though the flock may be cut off from the fold, and  
there be no herd in the stalls—yet I will rejoice in the LORD,  
I will joy in the God of my salvation” (Hab. 3.17, 18).

Habakkuk knew how to stay on top of his troubles.  
Rejoicing in God and His Word was the key to his victory.

“Trouble and anguish have overtaken me, *yet* Your commandments *are* my delights” (Ps. 119.143).  
“His delight *is* in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night” (Ps. 1.2).  
“I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law *is* within my heart” (Ps. 40.8).  
“Make me walk in the path of Your commandments, for I delight in it” (Ps. 119.35).  
“I will delight myself in Your commandments, which I love” (Ps. 119.47).  
“I long for Your salvation, O LORD, and Your law *is* my delight” (Ps. 119.174).  
“For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man” (Rom. 7.22).

The easy way out is to succumb to the turmoil; but God has a better plan for us: “For I know the plans I have for you’, declares the LORD, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jer. 29.11 NIV).

When we embrace and delight in that Word, it shines a new light, a Jesus-with-us Light, on trouble and anguish.

*For reflection*

1. How would you counsel a new believer to begin delighting in God’s Word?
2. How does delighting in God’s Word help us stay on top when troubles and trials come?
3. What should you do, when troubles or trials beset, to make sure you keep your focus on Jesus and the Word of God?

*... when distressed and tormented, he affirms that he finds in the law of God the most soothing delight, which mitigates all griefs, and not only tempers their bitterness, but also seasons them with a certain sweetness.* John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Psalm 119.143*

*Pray Psalm 119.139-141.*

Spread your day out before the Lord in prayer. Commit each activity or task to His glory, and call on Him to prepare the way for you by His Word.

*Sing Psalm 119.139-141.*

*(Divinum Mysterium: Of the Father’s Love Begotten)*

Zeal consumes me for Your Word, O Lord, for my foes forsake Your ways.  
Yet Your Word is very, very pure, and I keep it all my days.  
I am small and I am much despised, O Lord,  
yet Your holy Name I praise,  
and Your precepts guide my ways.

## 6 Full Circle

*Pray Psalm 119.144.*

The righteousness of Your testimonies is everlasting;  
Give me understanding, and I shall live.

*Sing Psalm 119.143, 144.*

(Divinum Mysterium: *Of the Father's Love Begotten*)

All Your statutes, all Your judgments, Lord, have become my great delight,  
and Your testimonies, ever sure, ever true, and ever right!  
Help me understand that I may live, O Lord,  
in Your strength and by Your sight,  
for Your Word is my delight.

*Read Psalm 119.137-144; meditate on verse 144.*

*Preparation*

1. What did the psalmist say was everlasting?
2. What did he seek that he might live?

*Meditation*

We have come full circle back to where this stanza began, with the righteousness of God's Law and the promise of life that comes through obedience.

The Law of God, Paul reminded us, is holy and righteous and good (Rom. 7.12). We are truly living as we enter more fully the abundant life God has for us in Jesus (Jn. 10.10). God has sent His Spirit into our heart, adopting us as His own children (Gal. 4.4). The Spirit's work within us is to teach us the Law of God and to move and empower us to obey it (Ezek. 36.26, 27; Phil. 2.13). Because it is as we look into the Law of God and the glory God reveals there that the Spirit makes us more like Jesus, Who is holy and righteous and good (2 Cor. 3.12-18).

If we understand this, and if we apply ourselves diligently to understanding God's Law – and all His Word – we will see Jesus with increasing clarity. The testimonies, statutes, precepts, judgments, and rules of God's Law reveal the righteousness that Jesus perfectly fulfilled and which He calls us to seek (Matt. 5.17-19; 6.33). Look to God to help you understand His Word. Understanding His Word, delight in it. Delighting in it, obey it. And then you will know life as God intends it – the life of Jesus increasing in you and overflowing from you for the glory of God the Father.

And as you do, God will bring you full circle to increasing fullness of Himself (Eph. 3.14-19).

*Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

Since acting in accord with divine or moral law and being free from guilt or sin is the definition of the word righteous, we can see that God obviously is righteous; and everything about Him is righteous. Jesus Christ is the perfect fulfillment of righteousness, and the Holy Spirit exudes righteousness into the world and into us. Solomon expounded: "He who follows righteousness and mercy finds life, righteousness, and honor (Prov. 21.21).

Salvation is all about the need for righteousness and our inability to produce it. But God stepped in and made life possible for us through His perfect Son Jesus. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (Jn. 3.16) "The

righteousness of Your testimonies is everlasting” (Ps. 119.144). The Word of God is everlasting. And through Him we find life, righteousness, and honor.

To know this, we must ask God for understanding (Ps. 119.144). Only through faith will we be able to comprehend this gift. As Paul wrote: “...that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height; to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God” (Eph. 3.17-19).

There is indeed “the promise of life that comes through obedience” to God’s Law. But obedience takes work on our part, and total dependence upon God’s gracious leading. In God’s Word we find the means to this end: “Teach me to do Your will,

for You are my God; Your Spirit is good.

Lead me in the land of uprightness.

Revive me, O LORD, for Your name’s sake!

For Your righteousness’ sake bring my soul out of trouble” (Ps. 143.10, 11).

Righteous!

*For reflection*

1. What is righteousness? Why does God insist on our being righteous?

2. How does God form us into the righteousness of Jesus? What is our part in this?

3. What can keep you from growing in righteousness?

*This is life eternal, to know God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent, John 17:3. May we live the life of faith and grace here, and be removed to the life of glory hereafter. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Psalm 119.144*

*Pray Psalm 119.137, 138.*

Praise the Lord for His righteousness. Call on Him to strengthen you for obedience today, that you might be transformed increasingly into the likeness of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 3.12-18).

*Sing Psalm 119.137, 138.*

(Divinum Mysterium: *Of the Father’s Love Begotten*)

Righteous are You, O my Lord! Upright are Your judgments, too!

All the words You have commanded us we will surely keep and do!

For Your testimonies all are righteous, Lord;

all Your faithful Word is true:

We rejoice, O Lord, in You!



## 7 Everlasting Righteousness

*Pray Psalm 119.142.*

Your righteousness *is* an everlasting righteousness,  
And Your law *is* truth.

*Sing Psalm 119.142, 143.*

(Divinum Mysterium: *Of the Father's Love Begotten*)

For Your righteousness, O God my Lord, ever after will endure;  
and Your Law is truth, like all Your Word – righteous, holy, just, and pure!  
Trouble overtakes me for Your Name, O Lord,  
yet Your Word is ever sure  
and Your grace my soul will cure.

*Read Psalm 119.137-144; meditate on verses 142.*

*Preparation*

1. How durable is the righteousness of God?
2. Where can you expect to find truth?

*Meditation*

The righteousness of God is unaffected by changing moral fashion. It cannot be controlled for political purposes or corporate advantage. Armies cannot vanquish it. It carries no “best by” date, nor does it have an atomic half-life. It cannot be voted out. The righteousness of God is everlasting because God is everlasting, and He is righteous.

Righteousness entails spiritual purity and moral perfection. Where righteousness obtains truth abounds, love flows, justice prevails, and life flourishes. Psalm 119.137-144 appropriately celebrates the righteousness of God in its opening, middle, and closing verses because righteousness is what everyone needs, and righteousness is what comes from submitting to the Law of God and all His Word.

When Jesus instructed us to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, He meant for us to turn to the Law of God (Matt. 6.33; cf. Matt. 5.17-19). The Law of God is truth and, faithfully learned and lived, it has power to sanctify us for righteousness (Jn. 17.17). God's Word is pure; it will never fail (Ps. 119.140, 138). The world may scorn and deride us for our commitment to righteousness, causing us trouble and anguish (vv. 141, 143). But if we delight in God's Word (v. 143), love it sincerely (v. 140), remember and obey it always (v. 141), and seek ever-deeper levels of understanding in it (v. 144), then we will know full and abundant life as God intends (v. 144).

And that will look like righteousness. It will look like Jesus. And it will look like peace, joy, and hope in the Holy Spirit of God. Because the righteousness of God is everlasting, and His Word is truth.

*Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

The antithesis of righteousness and truth falls into the category of things that anger God, as Paul explains: “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened” (Rom. 1.18-21). This is an all-inclusive wrath. We've all known it.

What then?

“Who *is* wise? Let him understand these things.

*Who* is prudent? Let him know them.

For the ways of the LORD *are* right;

the righteous walk in them,

but transgressors stumble in them” (Hos. 14.9).

If we diligently walk in the Law of God, we know the gift of the Holy Spirit and His work of imparting truth to those who are filled with Him. Jesus said, “...when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you” (Jn. 16.13, 14). He takes the truth of God’s Word and forms us into the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

We have God’s promise, explained by Paul, that if we embrace the truth and righteousness of Jesus, we can be used in our Personal Mission Field, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to help others go from misunderstanding to understanding; from darkened hearts to enlightened ones, and to experience the love of God rather than His wrath. Here’s how: “in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and *that* they may come to their senses *and escape* the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will” (2 Tim. 2.25, 26).

Lord, use us by the power of the Holy Spirit, to tell of Your righteousness and truth, that “Jesus Christ,” everlasting Righteousness and Truth, “*is* the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb. 13.8).

*For reflection*

1. Why is it important to understand that God’s righteousness is everlasting?
2. How would you explain the relationship between Jesus, righteousness, God’s Word, and our own calling as followers of Christ?
3. Why is the Holy Spirit necessary for us to know the righteousness of Jesus?

*Here the law of God is honored by the additional encomium, that it is everlasting righteousness and truth; as if it had been said, that all other rules of life, with whatever attractions they may appear to be recommended, are but a shadow, which quickly vanishes away.* John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Psalm 119.142*

*Pray Psalm 119.137-141, 143, 144.*

Commit your day to the Lord, to walk the path of His righteousness. What will that look like? Pray about each activity of your day and all the people you’ll encounter. Prepare for your day so that Jesus will come through in all you do.

*Sing Psalm 119.137-141, 143, 144.*

(Divinum Mysterium: *Of the Father’s Love Begotten*)

Righteous are You, O my Lord! Upright are Your judgments, too!

All the words You have commanded us we will surely keep and do!

For Your testimonies all are righteous, Lord;

all Your faithful Word is true:

We rejoice, O Lord, in You!

Zeal consumes me for Your Word, O Lord, for my foes forsake Your ways.

Yet Your Word is very, very pure, and I keep it all my days.

I am small and I am much despised, O Lord,

*Psalm 119.137-144*

yet Your holy Name I praise,  
and Your precepts guide my ways.

All Your statutes, all Your judgments, Lord, have become my great delight,  
and Your testimonies, ever sure, ever true, and ever right!  
Help me understand that I may live, O Lord,  
in Your strength and by Your sight,  
for Your Word is my delight.

*Questions for Reflection or Discussion*

1. What is righteousness? Why do we need to seek the righteousness of God?
2. Should we expect the world to agree with us about the importance of righteousness? Explain.
3. Why is righteousness closely identified with the Kingdom of God (as in Matt. 6.33)? Can we know one of these without the other? Explain.
4. What are the best ways to grow in understanding of God's Law and all His Word?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from this part of our study of Psalm 119?

*For prayer:*

## The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Thank you.