



A SERMON SERIES ON  
**PSALM 119**

**A Lamp to My Feet,  
 A Light to My Path:**  
*The Way to the Blessed Life*

**The Pilgrim Life**  
**Psalm 119:17–24**

**Intro:** This is the Gimel, or third section of Psalm 119.

Like every section in this psalm, these verses are saturated with dependence on the Word of God. But here the dominant image is that of a pilgrim, like I mentioned last week from John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Get a free PDF copy of the book [here](#).

In this section, the psalmist views himself as someone passing through this world on the way to another country. That identity shapes everything in the passage and one that keeps the blessed life at the forefront of his mind and heart.

**ILL:** Many people in our congregation enjoy travel. If you know you are only passing through somewhere, and/or are there only temporarily, you live differently than someone who lives somewhere permanently.

- When you travel, you pack lightly and are willing to live out of a suitcase.
- When you travel you ask, “*Do I really need this?*” aware of everything’s size & weight.
- When you travel, you don’t redecorate the hotel room.
- When you travel, you keep checking directions.
- When you travel, delays and inconveniences feel temporary.
- When you travel, you are careful not to become overly attached to temporary comforts because you know you will soon leave them behind. (A mint on your pillow)
- When you travel, you often ask locals for guidance because you know you do not fully understand the culture, language, or customs.

- When you travel, you budget differently than when you are home. You think carefully about what is necessary for the journey and what is excessive.
- When you travel, you remain conscious of time because departures are approaching.
- When you travel, your expectations change. You tolerate discomforts you normally would not because you know you are in transit.
- When you travel internationally, you become more conscious of your citizenship because it identifies where you truly belong.

As Christian pilgrims, we stop asking,

- “*What will make me most comfortable?*” and begin asking,
- “*What will make my trip the most memorable?*”

That is the heartbeat of this stanza. Someone has said,

- A runaway has left home.
- A vagabond has no home.
- A pilgrim is traveling home.

The psalmist understands that he cannot navigate the pilgrim life alone. He needs

- God’s grace to sustain him,
- God’s Word to guide him,
- God’s Spirit to correct him.

**The Big Idea:** A Pilgrim life is a Word-dependent and Word-shaped life;

- dependent on God’s grace,
- guided by God’s truth, and
- sustained by God’s counsel

until we reach home.

**First: We need God’s grace to live and obey. 17**

*“Deal bountifully with your servant, that I may live and keep your word.”*

Notice the order carefully. The psalmist does not say, “*I will obey your Word so that you will bless me.*” He says, “*Deal bountifully with me... that I may obey.*”

- Grace always comes before obedience.
- Grace enables obedience.
- Grace forgives disobedience.

The phrase “*deal bountifully*” carries the idea of generous, gracious dealing. It means to bestow goodness, kindness, generosity.

*All of grace is my story,  
 All the way from earth to glory.  
 Since by grace he lifted me from sin and woe.  
 Living grace he has extended  
 As on him my heart depended  
 And he'll give new grace when it's my time to go.  
 - Tom Hayes*

The psalmist understands that faithful obedience does not originate in human strength. He needs God to act toward him in grace first.

That is one of the great themes of this psalm and the entire Bible.

**2 Timothy 2:7 - Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.**

God never says, “Clean yourself up and then I will show you grace.” God’s grace is always prior to any change in our lives.

- Grace awakens – Eph 2:4-5.
- Grace changes – 1 Cor 15:10.
- Grace sustains – 2 Cor 12:9.
- Grace empowers – 1 Cor 15:10.
- Grace transforms – 2 Cor 3:18.

He knows that spiritual life itself is a gift and even the desire to obey is grace.

**Philippians 2:13 - ...it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.**

What is grace?

**In salvation, it is - God's Righteousness at Christ's Expense.**

**In sanctification, it is - God's Riches as Christ Enables.**

And notice how dependent the psalmist is. *“That I may live and keep your word.”*

That is deeply humbling because we naturally prefer self-sufficiency.

- We want Christianity to be manageable.
- We like formulas.
- We want techniques.
- We appreciate application heavy sermons
- “Just give me something to do,” we cry

But the psalmist begins by admitting his helplessness. He is saying, *“I need God to deal graciously with me or I cannot live rightly.”*

**ILL:** That is not weakness. It is sanity, like the younger prodigal in the far country who finally came to understand he would soon starve to death if he did not return to the Father's house.

The Christian life never graduates beyond dependence. That's the unsaved life.

**First: We need God's grace to live and obey. 17**

**Second: We need God's help to see the wonder of His Word. 18**

*"Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law."*

The psalmist understands something very important: reading the Bible and seeing the glory of God in the Bible are not the same thing.

- A person can understand grammar and still miss glory.
- A person can analyze structure and still miss beauty.
- A person can know the historical context and still miss wonder.
- A person can study theology and still not worship.

Harry Emerson Fosdick (a liberal 20<sup>th</sup> century preacher) said, "...*nobody ever goes to church to find out what happened to the Hittites.*" (Well...some of you do....but most of you don't).

That is why the psalmist prays, "*Open my eyes to behold wondrous things...*"

The word "*wondrous*" refers to things that are extraordinary, marvelous, or astonishing. The psalmist believes there are treasures in God's Word beyond natural sight. And he is right.

**Jeremiah 33:3 - *Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.***

The Bible reveals the

- the character of God,
- the holiness of God,
- the mercy of God,
- the wisdom of God,
- the justice of God,
- the purposes of God, and ultimately
- the glory of Christ Himself.

But we do not naturally see these things.

- Sin blinds us. 2 Cor 4:4
- Worldliness blinds us. Luke 8:14
- Disobedience blinds us. Ephesians 4:17-18
- Pride blinds us. Prov 16:18; Rev 3:17

- Familiarity blinds us. Mark 6:3-6; Matt 13:57
- Worldliness blinds us. Luke 8:14

Which most affects your Bible insight right now?

Which means every time we open the Bible, we should do so prayerfully, saying,

- “*Lord, help me see.*” Not merely:
- “*Help me understand facts.*” But:
- “*Help me behold wonder.*”

A word from a new book about C. S. Lewis’ vision of Hell –

*For Lewis, Hell was not merely a doctrine to be acknowledged or believed, but a reality to be imagined, in part, because the actuality of Hell’s nature is beyond our mortal minds. He understood that rationality or logic alone could not comprehend eschatology or the doctrine of final judgment. The moral gravity and existential urgency of forever must be felt. This complexity is what gives it the meaning it deserves and provides the weight we need to experience it appropriately. And that feeling, for Lewis, was kindled through imagination. By placing Hell in his stories, letters, and apologetic writings, he was not merely warning readers; he was inviting them to envision the awful cost of the eternal refusal of the divine invitation.*

*Lewis was acutely aware that abstract theology can dull the soul. He tolerated this problem throughout his life, particularly during his early years. The childhood sermons he endured made Christianity boring and God distant. In that world, doctrines become equations; Heaven becomes a reward, and Hell becomes a penalty. But the worth and weight of it all are lost in a presentation that underserves the people who desperately need to be stirred by both realities. Human beings do not live in equations anyway. Ask a person who they are, and their answer will tell you that people live in stories. They feel their way into truth before they argue their way toward it. Feeling his way to Heaven is how he came to believe in Hell and how he expressed it through his fiction writings. It is also why Lewis’s depictions of Hell, from the bureaucratic grey town of *The Great Divorce* to the devouring possessiveness of *Screwtape*, aim for moral clarity and not just logical consistency.*

*To imagine Hell is, in a very real sense, to prepare for Heaven in the best way. It is to glimpse, with trembling, what it means to say “No” forever. And so, Lewis employed images such as shrinking souls, silent doors, dragoned children and gnawing pride, just to name an obvious few, to evoke ethical urgency in his readers. He did not use this imaginative function simply to entertain or only to frighten, but to form the conscience. On at least one occasion, critics criticized Lewis for frightening children. But he understood that imaginative engagement with Hell does not paralyze us; it teaches and purifies us. A child does not fear fire because they understand combustion, but because they sense danger. Nor should the soul fear the trajectory of sin simply as theological data, but as existential peril. So, Lewis does not ask us merely to think about damnation. He does us the greatest favor by enabling us to see it and to feel it with every part of our being.*

**ILL:** This is what the history of the Bible is meant to do.

- The Bible does not merely define holiness. It shows it.
- The Bible does not merely explain judgment. It dramatizes it.
- The Bible does not merely assert grace. It embodies it in scenes, persons, sacrifices, tears, meals, storms, crosses, wildernesses, exiles, and resurrections.

That is why the Bible is so full of narrative, poetry, symbol, prophecy, image, lament, apocalypse, and parable. God does not merely lecture humanity; *He shepherds the imagination toward truth.*

Here are examples where the Bible helps us *see* and *feel* the realities of God in the stories it tells

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- Isaiah 6 - Isaiah doesn't just tell us God is holy. He sees the Lord high and lifted up in a heavenly throne room with a train so glorious that it fills the temple while hearing the seraphim – burning angels - crying “*Holy, holy, holy,*” and watching the thresholds of the throne room shake and feeling the foundations around him quake until he feels undone and cries, “*Woe is me!*” In this way, holiness becomes experiential terror and awe-ful wonder.
- Exodus 19–20 - Sinai is not abstract lawgiving. The movement from Land of Goshen in Egypt to Mount Sinai is not only geographical but theological and experiential. Israel moves from fertile, flat lowlands and settled life into harsh, dry, lifeless wilderness and towering mountain terrain where they encounter the God who plagued Egypt and split the Red Sea. Around the mountain there is thunder, smoke, trumpet blasts, trembling earth, consuming fire, boundaries, fear, and distance. Israel sees the majesty of God and feels the unbearable weight of God's divine majesty.
- Leviticus 10 – Nadab and Abihu don't die in some dark pagan temple but in the very presence of the glory of God, standing near holy fire and still wearing their priestly garments. The tabernacle has just been consecrated. The smoke of worship is still rising. The presence of God has fallen among the people in blazing glory. Then, in a moment that must have stunned the entire camp into horrified silence, the two priests offer worship on their own terms rather than God's, and fire suddenly comes out from before the Lord and consumes them where they stand. One moment they are alive ministering before God. The next, their bodies lie motionless before the sanctuary while Aaron stands speechless. Glory is no longer an abstract idea to discuss over Sabbath lunch. It has become a terrifying reality that gives life and takes it away.
- Second Samuel 6 – Uzzah's story unfolds in the middle of a celebration. Music fills the air. Instruments are playing. David is dancing before the Lord. The ark of God, the symbol of His holy presence, is finally being brought toward Jerusalem. Then the oxen stumble. Instinctively, Uzzah reaches out his hand to steady the ark, and instantly he falls dead beside it. The celebration collapses into fear. The music stops. Nobody moves for fear of offending God. What seemed harmless, even helpful, suddenly becomes terrifying because Israel realizes they have treated the presence of God casually. The story shatters

every sentimental assumption that God exists merely to be managed, domesticated, or approached on human terms.

- Job 38–42 – After chapters of suffering, grief, questions, arguments, and silence, God finally answers Job, but not with the explanations Job expected. Instead, a storm begins to gather. The voice of God comes out of the whirlwind, and suddenly Job is confronted with overwhelming divine majesty and not with the neat philosophical answers he was expecting. God speaks of stars being hung in space, oceans restrained behind doors, lightning obeying commands, mountain goats giving birth unseen in the wilderness, wild creatures beyond human control, and enormous beasts no man can tame. The effect is not merely intellectual correction but emotional collapse. Job feels his smallness beneath the weight of infinite wisdom and almighty power until he finally places his hand over his mouth and confesses that he has spoken about things too marvelous for him to comprehend.
- Jonah - Jonah is not merely a story about the senselessness of running from an omnipresent God. It is about the frightening depth of the human heart in rebellion against God, of a prophet who would rather drown than obey and who would rather die than see his enemies forgiven. And it's all set against the backdrop of foreign sailors, crashing seas, violent storms, descending depths, and the living grave of the great fish that swallows the errant prophet and then spits him up exactly where God wanted him.
- Hosea – Hosea is not merely a book about unfaithfulness explained doctrinally. It's the story of a prophet commanded to love a wife who repeatedly betrays him, humiliates him publicly, and gives herself to other lovers while he remains faithful. The heartbreak becomes even more painful – and inexplicable - when God tells Hosea to pursue her and buy her back even after she has descended into degradation and slavery. Through that story, God makes Israel feel the horror of its own spiritual adultery and the astonishing persistence of His covenantal love.
- Luke 15 – The prodigal son is not merely a lesson about forgiveness. Jesus makes us feel the insanity of sin and the shock of grace. We watch a son demand his inheritance like his father is already dead. We follow him into reckless living, empty pockets, and a pigsty where hunger becomes so deep that pig food starts looking desirable. Then we hear the broken rehearsal speech on the long walk home, only to watch the father do something unimaginable in that culture. He runs and embraces the filthy boy before a word of confession is finished, and then throws a feast while the older brother stands outside angry that mercy could be this free and love could be this prodigal.
- Mark 4 – The calming of the storm is not merely a miracle story about divine power. Jesus leads his exhausted disciples into the darkness of a violent sea while He sleeps through waves that are crashing over the boat. Experienced fishermen panic, convinced they are dying, while the Son of God rests undisturbed beside them. In response to their prayers, Jesus stands and rebukes the wind as if scolding a disorderly child, and suddenly the sea becomes scarily still. But the strangest part of the story is that the disciples

become more terrified after the calm than during the storm because they suddenly realize they are trapped in a boat with someone creation itself obeys.

- John 11 – Lazarus’s tomb is not merely about resurrection doctrine. It is a story filled with delay, disappointment, confusion, and grief. Jesus intentionally waits while His friend dies. Martha struggles between faith and frustration. Mary collapses weeping at Jesus’ feet. Mourners fill the air with sorrow. Then God incarnate begins to weep outside a sealed grave that should already smell of death. And standing before the impossible finality of the tomb, Jesus cries out for Lazarus to come out, turning a funeral into a trembling glimpse of resurrection hope for everyone standing nearby. I mean, if Jesus can do this, what is there to fear?
- Matthew 27 – The crucifixion isn’t merely the explanation of substitutionary atonement. It is meant to overwhelm us with the horror of sin and the cost of redemption. The innocent Son of God is mocked, stripped, beaten, spat upon, nailed to wood, and lifted up for public shame while crowds jeer beneath Him. A midnight darkness falls suddenly across the land in the middle of the day as creation itself seems to recoil in horror at what has been done. Then comes the terrifying cry: “*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*” The earth shakes, rocks split, graves open, and the curtain of the temple tears apart because at the center of that ordinary wooden cross stands the unimaginable reality of the promised Messiah bearing judgment for the very sinners who crucified him.
- Revelation 4–6 – Revelation doesn’t merely describe heaven and judgment propositionally. It engulfs the imagination with majesty and terror. John is caught up into a throne room blazing with lightning, thunder, fire, crowns, crystal seas, living creatures covered with eyes, and endless worship circling the throne of God. Then the Lamb takes the scroll, and history itself begins to unravel. Horses thunder across the earth bringing conquest, war, famine, and death. Martyrs cry out beneath the altar for justice while kings and generals hide in caves begging mountains to crush them rather than face the wrath of the Lamb. Glory and judgment collide in scenes too immense for ordinary language because eternity itself is breaking into the world with a Niagara Falls weight of mercy and judgement.

The Bible repeatedly incarnates truth into scenes like these because human beings are not merely brains collecting data. We are born to be worshipers, lovers, fearers, hoppers, imaginers, mourners, and even storytellers.

Again, this is why the psalmist’s statement in verse 18 is so important:

- He cries, “*Open my eyes.*”
- Not merely: “*Help me decode information.*”
- But, “*Help me behold wonder.*”
- Or even: “*Help me feel the weight of reality.*”

One evidence of spiritual maturity is a constant amazement at the things of God. And the more you know about the God of the Bible, the more amazed you are.

- The mature believer is not bored with God.
- He/she is increasingly astonished by Him.

**CG Leaders/Teachers/Preachers:** Consider reading *Preaching and Teaching with Imagination: The Quest for Biblical Ministry* by Warren Wiersbe.

**First: We need God’s grace to live and obey. 17**

**Second: We need God’s help to see the wonder of His Word. 18**

**Third: We need God’s Word because we are pilgrims. 19**

*“I am a sojourner on the earth; hide not your commandments from me!”*

**ILL:** You can often tell tourists because they’re the ones standing on a street corner looking at the map on their phones.

A sojourner is a stranger, an exile, a temporary resident. Someone living in a place that is not ultimately home. A person in need of directions. That is how the psalmist sees himself.

And throughout the Bible, that is how you and I are described.

- Abraham lived as a stranger in tents looking for a better country – Hb 11:9-10.
- Moses considered the reproach of Christ greater riches than Egypt. – Hb 11:13-16.
- Peter calls Christians “sojourners and exiles” – 1 Peter 1:1 & 2:11.
- Paul says our citizenship is in heaven – Phil 3:20.

The Bible consistently reminds us that we are all tenant-farmers, working the soil that belongs to someone else and this world is not our final home.

- That does not mean creation is evil.
- It does not mean we withdraw from society.
- It does not mean we stop loving our neighbors or serving our communities.
- It means we refuse to build our identity upon a passing world.

**1 John 2:17 - ... the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.**

Pilgrims travel lightly because they know they are going somewhere.

**Hebrews 12:1 – ...let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,**

And because we are pilgrims,

- a) we need guidance.

Notice the connection: *“I am a sojourner... hide not your commandments from me.”*

The psalmist knows he cannot navigate this world merely by instinct, emotion, culture, politics, entertainment, trends, or public opinion. *All of those things are changing maps amidst unchanging terrain.* So,

b) we need revelation.

We need God’s permanent, unchanging commandments because we are traveling through a land filled with confusion, temptation, distortion, counterfeit promises, and false directions.

**ILL:** The Ten Commandments were given so Israel would live differently than their pagan neighbors. The Sermon on the Mount is given so the church will live uniquely in a fallen world. And if we forget we are pilgrims, we begin settling down in a world that cannot sustain our souls and will, in fact, devour them.

**ILL:** In *The Screwtape Letters*, demons feed on souls for their own survival.

#### **Fourth: (This Means) We need God to reshape our longings. 20**

*“My soul is consumed with longing for your rules at all times.”*

If Heaven is what the Bible says it is, and Hell is what the Bible says it is, I need someone to remake me fit for one and unfit for the other, and to help me on my way to Heaven.

The psalmist is well aware of this need and uses the word “*consumed*,” which is powerful. It literally carries the idea of being crushed, exhausted, overcome by intense desire.

The psalmist is saying: *“My soul aches for your Word.”*

These are not the same words but have the same pathos.

**Psalms 42:1 - *As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God.***

**Psalms 63:1 - *My soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you...***

**Psalms 84:2 - *My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the LORD...***

**Song of Solomon 5:8 - *I am sick with love.***

That is important because the Bible is not meant merely to transfer information into our minds.

God intends His Word to reshape our desires.

- Christian maturity is not merely, not only, knowing more truth.

- It is loving the right things – loving God - more deeply.

This happening to you every day. The world is constantly discipling our affections.

- Advertisements train us to crave comfort.
- Social media trains us to crave approval.
- Politics trains us to crave power.
- Consumerism trains us to crave possessions.
- Pride trains us to crave self-exaltation.

But God’s Word retrains the heart for God because only He can do what only He can do.

The psalmist’s longing reveals this transformed appetite.

And what we are consumed by is one of the clearest pieces of evidence of spiritual formation:

The Spirit of God creates new desires in the people of God.

- Not perfectly.
- Not instantly.
- But genuinely.

The believer begins to long for holiness, truth, worship, wisdom, communion with God, and the presence of Christ.

**Note:** I recommend this book on desiring God: <https://www.desiringgod.org/books/desiring-god>

### **Fifth: We need God’s correction and strength under pressure. 21-23**

Verses 21–23 shift into opposition and suffering.

*“You rebuke the insolent, accursed ones, who wander from your commandments. Take away from me scorn and contempt, for I have kept your testimonies. Even though princes sit plotting against me, your servant will meditate on your statutes.”*

The psalmist turns his attention to proud people, wandering people, reproach, contempt, and opposition from rulers.

Following God does not remove pressure from life. In many ways, it increases it.

Pilgrims are often misunderstood because they live according to a different kingdom. The world is convicted by your presence. Here are some examples -

Genesis 39 - Joseph’s refusal to sin with Potiphar’s wife exposes her heartfelt corruption. His holiness becomes a form of judgment on her desires. Rather than repent, she retaliates and falsely accuses him, illustrating how light often provokes hostility because it exposes darkness.

Exodus 1-14 - Moses repeatedly confronts Egypt with a higher authority: “*Thus says the LORD.*” Pharaoh’s resistance is not merely political. The presence of God’s kingdom through Moses threatens the entire false order of Egypt.

1 Samuel 18 - David’s integrity, courage, and favor with God increasingly torment Saul. David’s very presence becomes convicting because Saul knows David is the righteous king while he himself is spiritually deteriorating.

1 Kings 18 - Ahab says to Elijah: “*Is it you, you troubler of Israel?*” But Elijah responds that Ahab himself is the real troubler. It is Ahab who has abandoned God’s commandments. The prophet’s presence exposes Ahab’s national rebellion.

Daniel 1–6 - Daniel’s refusal to compromise convicts the pagan officials around him. His integrity becomes so threatening that enemies manipulate the king into persecuting him. This shows us how pilgrims living faithfully inside worldly systems often expose the corruption of those systems simply by refusing to bow.

John 3:19–20 - Jesus explains the principle directly, saying, “*People loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light...*” Holiness exposes what darkness wants hidden.

Mark 6 - Herod fears John because John keeps telling the truth about Herod’s sinful marriage. John’s righteousness troubles Herod’s conscience even while Herod continues resisting repentance.

Acts 16 - Paul in Philippi - Paul casts a demon out of a slave girl, and suddenly the city turns hostile because the gospel disrupts its economic and spiritual darkness. The kingdom of God threatens their worldly system built on exploitation.

Acts 24 - Paul before Felix - When Paul reasons about “*righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment,*” Felix becomes alarmed as the truth applied personally unsettles him.

1 Peter 4:3–4 - Peter says unbelievers are surprised, writing, “*...when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you.*”

The world is comfortable with a Christianity that stays private, sentimental, and harmless. But once believers begin living under the authority of God’s Word, conflict emerges.

And notice the contrast in the passage.

- The proud wander from God’s commandments.
- The servant meditates on God’s statutes.

That is the dividing line.

- One drifts from God’s Word.

- The other returns to it repeatedly.

**IMP:** The psalmist does not survive pressure by becoming harder, angrier, or more cynical. He survives by meditating on the Word of God.

That is profoundly important in our cultural moment. You become what shapes your mind most consistently.

- Fear shapes some people.
- Acceptance shapes others.
- News cycles shape others.
- Political outrage shapes others.
- Entertainment shapes others.

Why do we crave these things? Because sin offers some promise of the blessed life. But that pleasure is fleeting, shallow, false and downward, not upward.

So how do we get free from returning to these false gods over and over again? By enjoying a pleasure greater than sin. In Psalm 119, that pleasure is the God Who is known through the Bible.

The pilgrim life requires continual return to the Word of God because only God's truth gives the soul its necessary balance of relating to God, self and the world.

### **Sixth: We need God's Word as our delight and counselor. 24**

*"Your testimonies are my delight; they are my counselors."*

This is where the stanza settles into a deep, regular rhythm of life.

The word "delight" speaks of deep joy, pleasure, satisfaction. The psalmist does not merely submit to God's Word reluctantly. He treasures it.

Nor does he approach God's Word like a criminal approaches a law code, but like a starving man approaches food, like a pilgrim approaches home, like a thirsty soul approaches water."

And then he says: *"They are my counselors."*

That is a remarkable statement. Most people seek counsel primarily from the surrounding culture. We ask:

- What is normal?
- What is acceptable?
- What is successful?
- What will make me happy?

But the psalmist says: *“God’s testimonies counsel me.”*

God’s Word interprets reality for him. It shapes his decisions, values, desires, fears, priorities, relationships, and direction.

Who are your counselors?

For many people, their counselors are social media feeds, political parties, entertainment, cultural trends, friend groups, podcasts, celebrities, anger, fear, ambition, or personal feelings.

Some people are being disciplined every day by cable news. Others are being disciplined by Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, or outrage. Others are counseled almost entirely by the desire for comfort, success, approval, or self-protection.

But the psalmist says, *‘God’s testimonies are my counselors.’* God’s Word has the final interpretive authority in his life.

- It corrects him when his emotions lie to him.
- It steadies him when culture confuses him.
- It confronts him when sin deceives him.
- It guides him when the future becomes unclear.

And God has not left His people wandering aimlessly.

- He speaks.
- He guides.
- He counsels.
- He steadies.

### **Seventh: This is where the gospel meets us.**

Ultimately, this entire stanza points beyond the psalmist to Christ Himself. Jesus is the true and faithful Pilgrim.

- He entered a hostile world yet never wandered from the Father’s will.
- He perfectly obeyed the Word of God.
- He resisted every temptation to detour away from fidelity to the Father.
- He endured reproach, contempt, rejection, and opposition without abandoning trust in His Father.
- And then He went to the cross for wandering people like us.

Because the truth is:

- we are not naturally faithful pilgrims.
- We wander.
- We settle down spiritually.

- We love the world too much.
- We fear the wrong things
- We seek approval too easily.
- We drift from dependence upon God.

But Christ came not only to forgive wandering sinners, but to lead them home. Through His death and resurrection, He gives us a new identity, a new heart, a new direction, and His own Spirit.

And now, by His Spirit, He opens our eyes, reshapes our desires, steadies our hearts, and guides us through His Word until we finally arrive home.

**IMP:** The Christian life is not merely imitation of Jesus. It is the John 15 vine-life, union with Jesus.

The same Christ who saved us now shepherds us with his staff and rod.

### **Conclusion:**

Where have you strayed from the path of following Jesus? What functional god has misled you?

Psalm 119:17–24 paints the portrait of the pilgrim life. The psalmist knows he cannot guide, sustain, or transform himself. He needs:

- God's grace to live,
- God's Word to guide him,
- God's correction to keep him, and
- God's counsel to steady him along the way.
- And so he constantly returns to Scripture.

This world is not his home, so he refuses to build his identity upon its values, its approval, or its direction.

Again and again, he returns to the Word of God because he knows it alone leads to the blessed life here and the blessed life forever.

And that is still true for us today.

The more we forget we are pilgrims, the more this world shapes us.

But the more we remember where our true home is, the more we cling to the Word that leads us there.