

The Blessed Life
is
A Bible-Shaped Life
Psalm 119

Preaching Texts and Dates

Using the 22 stanzas of Psalm 119 (each with 8 verses), as natural sermon breaks, my plan is to preach 23 sermons through Psalm 119. This is the proposed preaching plan.

May

1. Psalm 119 and the Discipleship Wheel / 10th
2. Aleph (א) — Psalm 119:1–8 / 17th
3. Beth (ב) — Psalm 119:9–16 / 24th
4. Gimel (ג) — Psalm 119:17–24 / 31st

June

5. Daleth (ד) — Psalm 119:25–32 / 7th
6. He (ה) — Psalm 119:33–40 / 14th
7. Waw / Vav (ו) — Psalm 119:41–48 / 21st
8. Zayin (ז) — Psalm 119:49–56 / 28th

July

9. Heth (ח) — Psalm 119:57–64 / 5th
10. Teth (ט) — Psalm 119:65–72 / 12th
11. Yodh (י) — Psalm 119:73–80 / 19th
12. Kaph (כ) — Psalm 119:81–88 / 26th

August

13. Lamedh (ל) — Psalm 119:89–96 / 2nd
14. Mem (מ) — Psalm 119:97–104 / 9th
15. Nun (נ) — Psalm 119:105–112 / 16th
16. Samekh (ס) — Psalm 119:113–120 / 23rd
17. Ayin (ע) — Psalm 119:121–128 / 30th

September

18. Pe (פ) — Psalm 119:129–136 / 6th
19. Tsadhe / Tsade (צ) — Psalm 119:137–144 / 13th
20. Qoph (ק) — Psalm 119:145–152 / 20th
21. Resh (ר) — Psalm 119:153–160 / 27th

October

22. Shin (ש) — Psalm 119:161–168 / 4th
23. Taw / Tav (ת) — Psalm 119:169–176 / 11th

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Preaching Texts and Themes

1. Introduction – *Finding the Discipleship Wheel in Psalm 119*
2. Aleph (1–8) - Blessing belongs to those whose lives are ordered by wholehearted obedience to God's Word.
3. Beth (9–16) - Purity is preserved not by willpower but by treasuring and internalizing God's Word.
4. Gimel (17–24) - The pilgrim's life depends on God opening his eyes to behold and cling to His Word amid opposition.
5. Daleth (25–32) - When the soul clings to the dust, God revives and enlarges the heart through His Word.
6. He (33–40) - True obedience flows from a heart taught, inclined, and sustained by God Himself.
7. Waw / Vav (41–48) - Confidence before the world arises from trusting, loving, and speaking God's Word without shame.
8. Zayin (49–56) - Hope in affliction is anchored in remembering God's promises and character.
9. Heth (57–64) - A life reordered around God's Word produces repentance, fellowship, and gratitude.
10. Teth (65–72) - Affliction becomes a means of grace that drives the believer deeper into the goodness of God's Word.
11. Yodh (73–80) - The God who formed us uses suffering and community to establish us in faithful obedience.
12. Kaph (81–88) - When strength fails, the soul waits for salvation, sustained only by God's steadfast Word.
13. Lamedh (89–96) - God's Word stands eternally fixed, giving stability in a world of limits and endings.

14. Mem (97–104) - Love for God's Word produces wisdom that surpasses teachers, enemies, and personal experience.
15. Nun (105–112) - God's Word is a guiding light that leads the believer through danger into steadfast endurance.
16. Samekh (113–120) - A divided heart is rejected as the believer clings to God in reverent fear and wholehearted allegiance.
17. Ayin (121–128) - The righteous appeal to God's justice while committing themselves to obey His righteous decrees.
18. Pe (129–136) - The unfolding of God's Word gives light, producing longing, humility, and grief over sin.
19. Tsadhe (137–144) - God's righteousness defines His Word, and His Word sustains the believer in distress.
20. Qoph (145–152) - Persistent prayer is anchored in the nearness and faithfulness of God's enduring Word.
21. Resh (153–160) - Deliverance flows from God's steadfast love and the truthfulness of His Word.
22. Shin (161–168) - Peace and stability belong to those who love God's law, even when opposed without cause.
23. Taw / Tav (169–176) - The faithful life ends in humble dependence, seeking understanding, deliverance, and restoration like a wandering sheep.

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Preaching Texts and The Discipleship Wheel

Like every ministry of Heritage, this preaching series should demonstrate how it supports and connects to *The Discipleship Wheel*. When connected to Psalm 119, the Wheel comes alive in practical ways. This is how we will see the 8 disciplines in Psalm 119 -

- The disciple is formed by the Bible.
- That formation expresses itself in prayer
- Which gathers into corporate worship
- And deepens in community groups.
- It then produces service
- Which becomes evangelism
- And reorders life through giving
- While multiplying itself through mentoring

We see *The Discipleship Wheel* in eight separate spokes, but because they are all connected to a life shaped by Trinity, who is at the core of the Wheel, the spokes are not really separate at all, but actually eight characteristics of a one, cruciformed life.

You can see the Discipleship Wheel like this in Psalm 119:

1. The Bible (The Center and Source of Everything; hence “*A Word-Centered Life*” as the title of the series - *Aleph, Beth, Lamedh, Mem*

- a) Aleph (1–8) — A blessed life is ordered by obedience to the Bible.
- b) Beth (9–16) — Purity comes from storing the Bible in the heart.
- c) Lamedh (89–96) — The Bible stands forever, anchoring life.
- d) Mem (97–104) — Loving the Bible produces wisdom and discernment.

Summary: The Bible spoke sets the stage for all the other spokes.

2. Prayer (Dependence on God Through the Bible) - *Gimel, Kaph, Qoph, Taw*

- a) Gimel (17–24) — “Open my eyes” — prayer for understanding the Bible.
- b) Kaph (81–88) — Waiting in weakness becomes prayerful dependence.
- c) Qoph (145–152) — Persistent, early, Scripture-shaped prayer.
- d) Taw (169–176) — A life that ends in humble, seeking prayer.

Summary: The Bible teaches us how to pray, and prayer keeps the disciple clinging to the Bible.

3. Sunday Morning Gathering (Corporate Worship Under the Bible) - *Waw, Shin*

- a) Waw (41–48) — Public delight in the Bible without shame.
- b) Shin (161–168) — Peace and praise flow from loving God’s Word together.

Summary: We gather as a church and are shaped together by the Bible.

4. Community Groups (Shared Life Around the Bible) - *Heth, Yodh*

- a) Heth (57–64) — Life reordered with others who fear God.
- b) Yodh (73–80) — The faithful gather and are strengthened together.

Summary: The Bible creates and calls us to live as a community of mutual encouragers.

5. Service (Obedience Expressed in Action) - *He, Ayin*

- a) He (33–40) — God teaches and inclines the heart to walk in His ways.
- b) Ayin (121–128) — Commitment to act justly and obey God’s commands.

Summary: Service is a life moving outward in obedience as defined by the Bible.

6. Evangelism (Witness Flowing from the Bible) - *Zayin, Pe*

- a) Zayin (49–56) — Hope in suffering becomes visible before others.
- b) Pe (129–136) — The light of the Bible shines outward; grief over sin deepens witness.

Summary: The Bible produces a life that speaks, shines, and testifies.

7. Giving (Stewardship of Life Under the Bible) - *Teth, Nun*

- a) Teth (65–72) — Even affliction is received and stewarded as good.
- b) Nun (105–112) — The Bible guides daily decisions and lifelong commitments.

Summary: Giving is more than money. It is the surrender of life under the direction of the Bible.

8. Mentoring (Formation and Reproduction Through the Bible) - *Daleth, Samekh, Tsadhe, Resh*

- a) Daleth (25–32) — God revives and enlarges the heart for growth.
- b) Samekh (113–120) — Rejecting divided loyalties shapes mature disciples.
- c) Tsadhe (137–144) — God’s righteousness forms stable, enduring lives.
- d) Resh (153–160) — Ongoing deliverance and truth anchor transformation.

Summary: The Bible forms disciples and gives us the words to help form others.

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A Path to Life
(Some thoughts on the series)

First: This is not just a study of Psalm 119 comprised of 23 isolated sermons. The verses are not randomly placed in the psalm. They present life as a journey lived under the Word.

I hope to frame the entire series like this:

- a) Weeks 1–3: We delight in the Word
- b) Weeks 4–8: We struggle with the Word
- c) Weeks 9–14: We depend on the Word
- d) Weeks 15–18: We suffer under the Word
- e) Weeks 19–22: We are devoted to the Word

In this way, the congregation will feel that they are being carried somewhere, not just studying Hebrew poetry, the Hebrew alphabet, or 22 unrelated sermons (minus the *Introduction*).

Second: I don't intend to preach "About the Bible." Instead, I want to preach what the Bible does to a person, how it transforms our lives.

So, every section answers at least one question:

- a) What does the Word do for my desires?
- b) What does it do for my suffering?
- c) What does it do for my shame?
- d) What does it do for my endurance?
- e) What does it do when God feels absent?

Each sermon will say, "*Here is what life looks like when the Word is the center of your life.*"

Third: There's a lot of repetition in this Psalm. I hope to make it work for us, not against us.

For instance, it repeats synonyms for the Bible intentionally. (You can read more about that in the *Foreword* and *Introduction* material). This is because the same Word does so much for us. It comforts us in one stanza. It confronts us in another. It directs us in another. It sustains us in another. All of these different names for God's word actually enriches the psalm and the series.

Fourth: As in past series, I hope to build a weekly rhythm Heritage can live

- a) Sunday: preach the section
- b) Sunday CGs: O-I-C-A discussion questions rooted in the text
- c) Monday–Friday: TRAP devotionals based on each verse of the text and entire Psalm.

Hopefully, the people will feel like they are living in Psalm 119, and it is living in and out of them.

Fifth: Every sermon will point to Jesus

Remember that, at the end of Luke, Jesus said, “*everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled*” (Luke 24:44). Jesus is in this Psalm.

For instance, Psalm 119 is about the Word, but the Word finds its fulfillment in Jesus.

- a) Jesus is the embodiment of the Word
- b) Jesus is the perfect keeper of the Word
- c) Jesus is our model for living the Word
- d) Jesus is the one who writes the Word on our hearts
- e) Jesus is the one who lives his Word through us

Sixth: So, I’m aiming not aiming for weekly brilliance in any one sermon, but a calculated momentum. There won’t be 23 unforgettable sermons. There will be a slow, deep accumulation of the presence and power of the Word for our people.

By the end of the series, Heritage should speak the language of Psalm 119, feel conviction about their relationship to the Word, instinctively turn to the Word for all their needs and see obedience to Scripture, as a great joy, not a burden. By the end of the series, I hope they will all say, “*I want to live a Word-centered life. It is indeed the blessed life*”

Seventh: The 176 Daily Devotions will reinforce the sermons and God’s work through His Word

Because it is the accumulative nature of Psalm 119 that has the greatest effect in a person’s life, I am writing 176 daily devotions; one for each verse in the psalm. My hope is that our people will read these devotions for 176 days, one week beyond the sermon series.

By that time, hopefully, the Bible will have so thrilled their hearts, and they will have seen such real life change that they will commit to living Word-centered lives for the rest of their lives and doing so, inherit the blessed life.

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A Foreword and Introduction to the Daily Devotions

Foreword

The Bible, given sufficient time, will transform your life. If you are a Christian and will give the Bible your sustained attention, the Holy Spirit will, over time, take the black ink off of the white page and produce the Christian life within you. One of our greatest problems is that we rarely give God the time necessary to reform the life of Jesus in us. We read the Bible occasionally or casually, perhaps transactionally, misunderstanding its value and purpose. It simply does not bear the weight such a divine Word deserves in our lives. We approach it as though it were primarily about us, and when it does not produce the immediate results we expect, we become discouraged and begin to drift away from the potential of the blessed life. That response reveals more than frustration. It reveals that we have been trying to use God rather than submit to Him. We live self-centered, rather than God-centered, Word-centered, Spirit-empowered lives.

But what if the Bible is not all about you? And what if the transformation it brings requires more time than you are presently investing or even willing to give at this time in your life? Perhaps we are too busy to be disciples of Jesus. The Scripture testifies that it is not intended for quick consumption and this chapter proves it. Instead, the Bible is designed to spiritually form you over the course of a lifetime. It takes a moment to become a Christian. But it takes a lifetime to be one. Reading Scripture, memorizing it, meditating on it and applying it to one's life builds the spiritual muscle memory and reflexes of the soul, shaping the mind and heart until the life of Christ begins to take form within you. If you give the Word of God that kind of time, the Holy Spirit will take what you read and recreate this supernatural life in you. Over time, as you begin to think, emote, act and respond in synch with it, you will look back and rejoice that you began giving the Bible the serious attention it deserves. And you will love the life God grants you in the process.

The 176 verses of Psalm 119 present you with the perfect opportunity to begin this kind of serious, daily devotion to God's Word. That may sound like a significant undertaking, but setting such a grand goal underscores the purpose of the Bible which is to saturate and direct our lives toward God, who is alone worthy of our ultimate love. By the way, when God commands us to love him wholeheartedly, he is not doing so because he is egotistical. He does so because he is loving. God knows the joy of what a life centered on Him and his Word looks like. He also knows the tragedy what a self-centered life becomes. And in love, he calls us to build our lives on his Word in Psalm 119.

The 176 daily devotions I have written follow the *TRAP* (Think, Reflect, Apply, Pray) blueprint I created for spending time in Scripture. *TRAP* is not merely a method for studying the Bible; it is a pathway for being shaped by it, slowing you down so that the Word of God in you

moves from understanding to application and transformation. Each devotion follows a deliberate movement. In *Think*, you engage the text carefully so that you actually hear what God has said, not what you assume it says. In *Reflect*, that truth turns on you, exposing the deeper passions and conflicts of your heart. In *Apply*, the Word presses into real life, calling for specific, concrete obedience rather than simply vague agreement. And in *Pray*, everything returns to God, addressing the Father, asking for the Spirit's enabling power, and resting in the finished work of Jesus Christ.

All creation is the overflow of Trinitarian love, and your Christian life is the same. Using this model, each devotion reflects a gospel-shaped vision of the Christian life, which is begun by the Father, accomplished by the Son, applied by the Spirit, and worked out over time in a life of growing obedience, spiritual formation, and faithful witness in the world. The hope is to keep your responses from collapsing into moralism, and instead, anchoring your responses in Christ and his grace rather than in human effort.

These devotions are not meant to be read quickly or casually, but to be entered into, wrestled with, and lived out. If you stay with them, you will begin to see clearly, feel deeply, and respond faithfully as God shapes your life through His Word. My prayer is that over these 176 days, God will transform your life and make you a passionate witness to the beauty and power of His Word.

Introduction

Psalms 119 has long been regarded as the heart of the Psalter. In its breadth and depth, it may even stand alongside Isaiah 53 as one of the most profound Old Testament windows into the gospel. The psalm is composed of 176 verses making it, by far, the longest chapter in the Bible. Psalm 78 with 72 verses is the second longest. But Psalm 119 is longer than all of the Minor Prophets except Hosea and Zephaniah as well as seventeen books of the New Testament. By contrast, the shortest chapter in the Bible is the two verses of Psalm 117.

The 176 verses of this psalm are arranged in twenty-two stanzas corresponding to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Each stanza contains eight verses, and each verse within a stanza begins with the same Hebrew letter. For instance, the first word in each of verses 1-8 begins with the Hebrew letter, *Aleph*. The first word of verses 9-16 each start with the Hebrew letter, *Bet*, and so on. This carefully ordered structure forms an *Aleph-Tav* pattern, suggesting that the Word of God speaks compressively to our lives. In an A-Z to sense, that means it speaks to our lives our lives from beginning to end.

The psalm is a sustained meditation on the Word of God. Its contents move along several lines at once: praise for God's Word, exhortations to read and live under it, prayers for its shaping influence, and honest grief over those who reject it. God is mentioned in every verse and there are 70 prayer requests. The psalmist refers to himself 325 times and mentions suffering in 66 verses. every verse contains some reference to God's Word, with only two exceptions (vs 122 and 132). The psalmist employs about eight different synonyms to express the full range of God's Word and its application to our lives: terms like, *law*, *testimonies*, *precepts*, *statutes*, *commandments*, *rules*, *word*, and *promise*. While these terms overlap in our thinking, they are not creating meaninglessly repetitive. In fact, each highlights a different facet of God's revealed will and a particular application, allowing the psalm to explore the totality of a believer's relationship to the Word from multiple angles.

Here is a look at those 8 different words:

- Law (תּוֹרָה, torah) – God's instruction, teaching, revealed will
- Testimonies (עֲדוֹת, 'edot) – God's witness about Himself and His truth
- Precepts (פְּקֻדִים, piqqudim) – Detailed instructions, carefully appointed commands
- Statutes (חֻקִּים, chuqqim) – Fixed decrees, something engraved or established
- Commandments (מִצְוֹת, mitzvot) – Authoritative orders from God
- Rules / Judgments (מִשְׁפָּטִים, mishpatim) – Legal decisions, God's righteous standards
- Word (דָּבָר, davar) – God's spoken word, often emphasizing power and action
- Promise / Word (אִמְרָה, imrah) – God's spoken promise, often emphasizing assurance

How often does each term occur?

- Law (תּוֹרָה, tôrah) - 25 times
- Word (דָּבָר, dābār) - 24 times
- Testimonies (עֲדוֹת, 'ēdôt) - 23 times
- Rules / Judgments (מִשְׁפָּטִים, mišpāṭîm) 23 times

- Commandments (מִצְוֹת, mišwōt) - 22 times
- Statutes (חֻקִּים, ḥuqqîm) - 22 times
- Precepts (פְּקוּדֵי־מִצְוֹת, piqqûdîm) - 21 times
- Promise / Word (אִמְרָה, 'imrāh) - 19 times

No single term dominates the others. The psalm is remarkably balanced in its use of each. This reinforces that the Bible must be embraced in its fullness, not selectively. Again, the psalm is intentionally comprehensive. The repetition is not a matter of redundancy but saturation. The psalmist is employing God's Word to create a balanced, whole, undivided life...blessed life.

The author of Psalm 119 is not named, so we cannot speak with certainty about that. Many people have suggested king David wrote it because of the psalm's deep love for God's Word and its personal tone under pressure, which fits very well with his life experience. Others argue for a later writer, possibly during or after the exile, since the psalm reflects a mature, reflective engagement with the law and the life of the community shaped by it. In addition, neither the temple nor ritual law is mentioned, emphasizing the essential nature of a personal relationship with God's Word. What can be said is that the psalm was written by someone whose life had been profoundly formed by Scripture and who experienced both the weight of opposition to God's Word, the sustaining power of it in the midst of life's trials and the blessing of obeying it wholeheartedly.

Unlike many psalms, this one is not tied to a specific historical event. It appears instead to have been written as a kind of spiritual guide, a collection of pious reflections meant to form the life of the believer. Its carefully arranged structure, twenty-two stanzas corresponding to the Hebrew alphabet, each with eight verses, was probably designed to aid memorization and meditation, enhancing its application to everyday life. What we have, then, is not simply a poem, but a deliberate spiritually forming tool. The Psalm is meant to be read, learned, repeated, and lived, shaping the mind, the heart to create a Word-centered life.

This is one reason why Psalm 119 is long. Its length intentional and not coincidental. As the lives of many Bible characters reveal, Jacob, Joseph and David, for example, it takes a lifetime to become the Christian God intends us to be. There are, of course, memorable verses in this psalm. But it is the cumulative effect of reading, meditating on, memorizing and applying the 176 verses about God's Word that give the psalm its power. Isaiah once used the phrase "here a little, there a little" to expose and mock those who treated God's Word lightly, as though it were trivial and repetitive (Isaiah 28:10 & 13). Psalm 119 takes that very idea of repetitive monotony and magnificently redeems it. Here, "a little" is not dismissed but embraced. Line upon line, verse upon verse, God patiently presses His life-giving truth into our lives until, over time, it becomes soul shaping.

We live in an instant society, but God's supernatural, soul-forming work cannot be rushed. It unfolds according to His timetable, not ours. And God works with eternity in view. So, a life that is meant to live forever outside of time requires time to create it. The transformed life is one that gives sustained attention to the truth that creates it. The longest chapter in the Bible is devoted to that very reality. As the Apostle Paul writes, it is through the Scripture that the people of God are made "complete" (2 Timothy 3:17), whole and fully formed. Psalm 119 lingers over

176 verses because that kind of transformation does not happen in a hurry. And if God is willing to spend that much time pressing His Word into our lives, we should learn to give it the time it deserves and needs to remake us into a holy people.

There is meaning in the monotony of this psalm so don't get bored in 176 verses. Revel in the repetition. Respect the rationale for the various synonyms. Reverence the recurring themes. Think carefully about what the psalmist is saying. And apply each verse daily to your life. These devotions are an invitation into a spiritually forming process that will grant you the life only God can give. My prayer attends you and them, and I look forward to hearing of God's cruciforming kindness as you make your way through Psalm 119.