

Lamp & Light

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Preacher: Rev. Murdo M Campbell

[0 : 00] Well if we could, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling this evening, if we could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read, the book of Psalms, Psalm 119, and I'd like our focus to be upon verse 105, Psalm 119, at verse 105, where the psalmist writes, Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.

Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path. When it comes to the Bible, and reading the Bible, there are some verses that always stick out for us.

They're well-known verses, they're memorable verses, they're verses that we were taught in Sunday school, maybe even in school, whether it's John 3, 16, for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believes in him will not perish, but shall have eternal life.

Then there's Psalm 23, well known to us, the Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want, he makes me down to lie, in pastures green he leadeth me, the quiet waters by. There's Psalm 40, I waited for the Lord my God, and patiently did bear.

At length to me he did incline my voice, and cry to hear. There's Isaiah 53, who shall believe our report? To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? And all these things.

[1 : 46] He was wounded for our transgressions. We were taught these things in school, and in Sunday school. John 14, Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father, except through me.

There are so many verses in the Bible that stick out for us. And you could say that they're imprinted in our minds, and they're etched in our memories. And even though you might not be a committed Christian here this evening, you know, you ought to be so thankful for your upbringing.

The upbringing that you were given, and the opportunities that you were given to learn God's word and memorise it. Because, you know, it's a privilege that so few in our nation have had.

And it's a privilege that so few in our nation will ever have. But for many of us here this evening, we've had the word of God in our life. And we've had it in our hearing from a very young age.

Though this word has, in many ways, always been part of the fabric of our life. Maybe in our home with family worship or fellowships, people coming into our home and we were sitting among them.

[2 : 58] Many of us went to church all our life. We went to Sunday school, we were taught the word of God there. And now we read it for ourselves, whether we would regard ourselves as a Christian or not.

We read the word of God. We love the word of God. We want to obey the word of God. Why? Because it's our lamp and light. This word is our lamp and light.

And you know, the verse that we're considering this evening, it reminds me of how privileged I was to be brought up under the gospel. I always remember being given a Bible for Christmas by my auntie and my uncle.

And I was about Sarah Ann and Jonathan's age at the time. We all got one. My sisters, my two sisters and I. And at the time, I didn't appreciate the gift. It wasn't a toy.

It wasn't chocolate. I mean, who wants a Bible for Christmas? I had no interest in reading the Bible, even though it was a lovely Bible. But my mother, she made us take our Bibles, our church Bibles to church.

[4 : 06] And we would use them there at least. And it became our Sunday Bible. We would take this Bible to church and we would only open it, well, once a week on a Sunday morning.

But it was a lovely Bible. Because on the inside of the Bible, written in, you could say, Gothic font handwriting, written there was these precious words.

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. And like it was, I'm sure, for many of you, the writing of a text of Scripture written on the inside of a Bible, given to you many, many, many years ago, it meant nothing to you then.

But in the Lord's perfect timing, those words became to you both lamp and light. And now you can confess with the psalmist, your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

But this evening, as we consider this verse together, I want us to ask, what is this lamp for? What is this word that has become so dear to us and so precious to us?

[5 : 14] What is it for? What is this lamp for? And I just want to suggest four simple things that this lamp is for. This lamp is for lighting, leading, learning, and looking.

This lamp is for lighting, leading, learning, and looking. So what is this lamp for? This lamp is for lighting. This lamp is for lighting. The psalmist says, your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Now, as you know, and as you can see, Psalm 119, it's the longest chapter in the Bible. And being the longest chapter in the Bible, it's also the longest psalm in the Psalter with 176 verses.

But, you know, we shouldn't be put off by its length. Instead, we should appreciate the beauty with which this psalm was written. Because Psalm 119, it's an acrostic psalm.

Meaning that the first word of each verse consecutively follows the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. And what's amazing is that there are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet.

[6 : 22] And there are 22 parts to this psalm. And all the parts, all the verses in each part, they begin with the same letter. And it's amazing, there are eight verses in each part.

It's very well organized. And each part, it has a different title to it. You can see these titles. And they're all the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. And they're telling us that each verse in that section begins with that letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

And just to explain what I mean. Verses 105 to 112. They're part of this section called Nun. And in this section, the first word of each verse, verses 105, 106, 107, 108, and so on.

They all begin with the letter Nun. Of course, we can't appreciate this fully because our Bible translation is in English. But if we were able to read the Hebrew Bible and see it for ourselves, or even hear it for ourselves, as the Bible was often read out loud, what it would make us see is that Psalm 119 is a masterpiece.

It's an absolutely beautiful psalm. Because there are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet. And this psalm has 22 parts with every verse in each part, beginning with the same letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

[7 : 44] It's amazing. But you know what I love about Psalm 119? Is that it stresses that we need the Word of God for every area of our life. Because the focus of Psalm 119 is that the Word of God is our lamp and light.

And in every verse of this psalm, except for two, Psalm 119 repeatedly uses terms that describe the Word of God.

Psalm 119 uses terms like laws, testimonies, statutes, commands, ways, precepts, judgments, words, promises, and decrees. And they're all terms that emphasize to us the importance of God's Word.

And throughout this psalm, all these terms, they're used interchangeably. And they're used in order to stress to us that we need the Word of God for every area of our lives.

And that's what the psalmist is confessing here in verse 105. Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. But what is this lamp for?

[8 : 54] Well, as we can see, this lamp is for lighting. Because as you know, the purpose of a lamp is to bring light. The purpose of a lamp is to dispel and to disperse darkness.

And we're seeing that more and more this time of year. The days are getting shorter. The nights are getting longer. We need the light to dispel and disperse the darkness more and more.

But you know what's wonderful? Is that that has been God's prerogative since the very beginning. Since the very beginning of time, God has been dispelling and dispersing the darkness by the Word of His power.

Because at the beginning of creation, you'll remember the opening verses of our Bible. God speaks into the darkness. And He says, let there be light.

And there was light. And since the fall, after Adam plunged mankind, the whole of mankind were plunged into the darkness of sin and misery. Since then, God has been revealing Himself to us.

[10 : 03] And God has been revealing Himself to us. Why? Because God is light. And in Him there is no darkness at all. And this is the wonder of God. That God reveals Himself to us as light.

And throughout the pages of the Bible, the Lord's people, they're continually confessing that the Lord is light. We saw that in all the Psalms we were singing this evening.

In Psalm 36, David said, In that purest light of thine, we clearly light shall see. In Psalm 27, David confessed, In Psalm 18, David acknowledged that there's no one else who can bring light into the darkness of his circumstances.

And David said, My friend, this is the beauty of the Lord.

That He is not only dispelling and dispersing the darkness of this world as our creator. But He is also dispelling and dispersing the darkness of this world as our saviour.

[11 : 15] It's wonderful. And you know, that's what the Apostle John actually picks up on in his Gospel. When you read through John's Gospel, all that's presented to us is this theme of light and dark.

It's running through the Gospel. John opens his Gospel and he says, he introduces us to Jesus. This Word who was in the beginning with God. And he says, In Him was life.

And the life was the light of men. And the light shined in the darkness. And the darkness could not overcome Him. And then John confirms to us that Jesus is the true light.

And He is the one who has come to give light to everyone. John says, Jesus is the light who has come into the world. But sadly, people love the darkness rather than the light.

And John records Jesus' beautiful statement that confirms He is the saviour of sinners who has come into the world to dispel and disperse the darkness of sin. You remember how Jesus said, I am the light of the world.

[12 : 21] He who believes in Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. And then when John brings us finally to Calvary, to the climax and culmination of his Gospel, he brings us to Calvary and he tells us that Calvary is shrouded in darkness.

And Calvary is in darkness. Why? Because the light of the world has taken upon Himself the darkness of our sin. But the wonder of the Gospel is that through the death of the light of the world, He brought sinners from darkness into His marvellous light.

He brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. Oh my friend, what a saviour we have. What a saviour we have because this Jesus, He dispels and disperses the darkness of this world, both as our Creator and our saviour.

It's no wonder Paul says to the Corinthians, God who said, let light shine out of darkness, has shone into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

What a wonderful saviour we have. And so my friend, this lamp is for lighting. Because the lamp of God's Word is able to dispel and disperse the darkness of this world.

[13 : 50] But secondly, this lamp is for leading. This lamp is for leading. So lighting, leading. Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my palm.

And so having had the darkness of his soul dispelled and dispersed by the Word of God, the psalmist confesses that the Word of God is not only a light in darkness, it's also a light to lead him forward.

That's why he says, Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. And as someone who has been brought out of darkness into the marvellous light of the Gospel, the psalmist knows that he's now one of the Lord's people.

And as one of the Lord's people, he's a pilgrim. He's a pilgrim on a journey. He's coming out of the city of destruction. And he's going towards the celestial city.

And you know, that was the experience of Christian. You remember Christian in John Bunyan's classic, The Pilgrim's Progress. If you haven't read The Pilgrim's Progress before, I'd encourage you to do so.

[15 : 06] Next to the Bible, it's one of the best books to read and to enjoy. And it was Spurgeon who often encouraged his congregation to read Pilgrim's Progress at least once a year.

Because in doing so, you would remind yourself of where you have come from, the city of destruction, and where you are going to, the celestial city. And when you read Pilgrim's Progress, the author John Bunyan, he paints this picture of a man, as you know, he paints this picture of a man who came to know the Lord by reading his Bible.

And the whole story is about this man who's on a journey. And what always strikes me about Pilgrim's Progress is that when he meets someone new, and they ask him, what's your name?

He would often say, At first my name was Graceless, but now my name is Christian. I have come from the city of destruction.

I am going to Mount Zion. I am a pilgrim, and I am going towards the celestial city. But you know, when Christian, in the story, just the first couple of chapters, when Christian first leaves, or flees the city of destruction, we're told that he has the word of God in his hand, and he has a burden upon his back.

[16 : 27] And as Christian is fleeing from the wrath to come, he's crying out, What must I do to be saved? And Christian knew, he knew that he had to flee. He knew that what he had to flee from, the city of destruction, but he didn't know where he had to flee.

He needed leading. And it's then that Christian met this man called Evangelist. He has been sent to direct this wandering pilgrim.

And Evangelist asks Christian, Why are you crying? And Christian says, just to quote the book, Sir, I perceive by the book in my hand that I am condemned to die, and after that come to judgment.

And Christian says, And I find that I am not willing to do the first, and not able to do the second. And then Christian asks Evangelist, Where do I go? And you know, Evangelist, this is the point, it's wonderful.

Evangelist pointing to the distance with his finger. He says to Christian, Do you see that light? Do you see that light? Do you see that light? That shining light?

[17 : 37] Keep that light in your eye, and walk directly towards it. Keep that light in your eye, and walk directly towards it.

And you know, what comes to my mind, is what the Apostle John said, If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.

My Christian friend, we need leading, and we need this lamp and light. And you know, I love that the psalmist describes God's word as a lamp to his feet, and a light to his path.

Because when he talks about this lamp, he's talking about the lamp that was in the holy place, of the tabernacle. You remember that in the holy place, of the tabernacle, there were three items of furniture.

There was the table of showbread, there was the altar of incense, and then there was the golden lampstand. And the golden lampstand, it was the only light inside the tabernacle.

[19 : 17] The tabernacle, it was like a large tent, made out of animal skins, and there were no windows in it. And so, without the lampstand burning, the tabernacle would be in darkness.

And so the lampstand was the symbol of the Lord's presence amongst his people. The Lord was the light in darkness. And in order to be reminded of this, the Lord commanded that the lampstand be attended to both morning and evening, so that it would burn continually.

And you know, there's a lesson for us in that. That we would attend to our lampstand, both morning and evening, so that our lampstand will be continually burning.

And my friend, I know that there are so many pressures on us, at home, and with family, and with work. And in the day and age that we live in, everything is in a rush, and everyone's in a hurry, and there are so many constraints upon us, so many demands upon us, with all these pressures, and it leaves us tired, and we're struggling to read our Bible.

I know what it's like. But as you know only too well, there is nothing more important than attending to your lampstand. And you know that when you attend to your lampstand, when you read your Bible, there are treasures of blessings awaiting you there.

[20 : 42] But we have to have this discipline. And I know it's a hard discipline. We have to have this discipline of ensuring that our lampstand is continually burning, both morning and evening.

That's why Jonathan Baxter, he published his daily devotional, Daily Light for the Daily Path. Daily Light for the Daily Path.

Many of you might know it just as Daily Light. Jonathan Baxter was the son of Samuel Baxter. He owned this publishing company in England called Baxter and Sons, and they were established during the late 19th century.

But Jonathan Baxter, he was one of 12 children. And as a Christian, and part of a Christian family, every morning and every evening, the family would gather together to have worship.

And Jonathan Baxter, he would select a passage and read it, and then pray. But after worship, Jonathan would take a verse from the passage, just like this one, Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

[21 : 54] And then together, the family, they would discuss all the verses that they could think of in the Bible that would relate to, say, the theme of light.

And they would do this every morning and every evening for many different verses throughout the Bible. And sometime later, Jonathan Baxter, he decided to compile all these verses and all these discussions into a daily devotional.

And he called it Daily Light for the Daily Path. Daily Light for the Daily Path. And all it is, is a verse of the Bible with many other verses of the Bible beautifully woven together using the same theme.

And you can buy Daily Light. You can buy Daily Light as a devotional book. You can get it free on your phone as an app. You can have it emailed to you both morning and evening.

There are endless ways and means to have the Daily Light for the Daily Path. Just like there are endless ways and means to read the Word of God. My friend, we've never had the Word of God so accessible to us in so many different types of format and media.

[23 : 04] And yet, the Word of God has never been so neglected. But we neglected as individuals, as homes, as families, as villages, as nations.

We neglected at our peril. Because this Word, this lamp, it's not only for lighting and leading, it's also for learning.

it's also for learning. That's what we see thirdly. Lighting, leading, and learning. Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my palm.

When the Word of God brings light into a heart where there was nothing but darkness before, do you know that that person not only begins to be led by God's Word, they also begin to learn from God's Word.

And you know, what I always find amazing listening to people who are newly converted is that when they're brought from darkness into the marvellous light of God's salvation, they realise that first of all, God's Word is light and that God's Word is there to lead them.

[24 : 17] But you know, they also learn how dark the darkness really was. that's what they learn. And they learn what Jesus said, that if the light that is in you be darkness, how great is that darkness.

But you know, it's only when you're brought from that darkness into the marvellous light of the Gospel that you realise how dark it was. And it's with the lamp of God's Word that we have light and we are led and we learn.

And there's a lot to learn. It's endless learning. You'll never finish learning in this world. And you know, I believe that this is what the psalmist is praising God for because he's praising God for learning what he has received.

He's learning that he has received the lamp and light of God's Word. He now realises how dark this world really is. And you know, some have suggested that David wrote this psalm, others have suggested that it was Ezra the priest.

The truth is we don't know who wrote this psalm. It would be wrong of me to speculate. But what we do know is that the psalmist learned about the light of God's Word and the darkness of this world.

[25 : 33] He learned about the light of God's Word and the darkness of this world. Because throughout this psalm, the psalmist describes the darkness of this world. He describes it all as his enemies.

And he speaks about, throughout the psalm, when you read it, he speaks about his many enemies. His enemies who deride him, they encircle him, they choke him, they lie against him, they subvert him, they slander him, they set a snare for him, and they wait to destroy him.

When the psalmist learned about the light of God's Word, he discovered the great darkness of this world. And now as a Christian, the psalmist knows that he needs the light of God's Word to keep dispelling and to keep dispersing the darkness of this world.

And you know, the psalmist, he believed so much in the Word of God and the importance of learning the Word of God that he sought to memorise parts of it. He sought to memorise the Word of God.

He confesses, as we read earlier in verse 11, I have hidden God's Word within my heart that I may not sin against you. He confesses that he's memorising God's Word so that he will not sin against Him.

[26 : 49] And even how the psalmist, how he concluded the psalm in verse 176, he says that when he received the Lord's lamp and light, he learned how lost he had been.

He says, I like a lost sheep went astray. Thy servant seek and find. For thy commands I suffered not to slip out of my mind. The psalmist learned that he was lost and in darkness.

But he confesses to the Lord, you became to me both lamp and light. But you know, as the psalmist continued to walk in the light, being led by the light and learning from the light, it was all part of his discipleship.

That's what the word disciple means. It means that you're a learner. A disciple is just a learner. And so when you commit your life to Jesus Christ, when you confess your sin, when you confess that you're a Christian, you haven't made it.

You haven't reached the goal. The goal is perfection. The goal is glory. You don't know it all. You're still a learner. Every Christian here tonight still has their L plates on.

[28 : 05] We all have our L plates on. And we'll continue to be learners all the days of our life. Because we're disciples. And God's word is to be our lamp and light.

That's why our catechism, it reminds us so clearly the word of God is the only rule to direct us on how we may glorify God and enjoy him forever.

And this, you know, this is something we need to recapture in our day and age. The word of God is the only rule to direct us. And, you know, I say this because what I often find so difficult to understand is when Christians do things or they go places or they make decisions or they take the law into their own hands and they do it because they think and they believe and their desire is and their heart tells them that it's okay and it's the right thing to do.

But my Christian friend, as a Christian, your confession is that the word of God is your lamp, your light and your life. Therefore, the word of God is to be the only rule to direct you.

Because this word, it can give guidance and direction on every area and every subject matter in life. And if it's not stated in Scripture explicitly, it's stated implicitly.

[29 : 36] It's all there. Therefore, we need to read the word. We need to memorize the word. We need to learn the word and we need to obey the word. We need to learn.

We need discipleship. That's why Bible studies and fellowships are so important. As I said, we're starting a Bible study on Elijah this coming week.

And you're welcome to come along. Whether it's on Wednesday evening or Tuesday evening, you're welcome to come along because, you know, there's something that's desperately needed in our church today and it's discipleship.

People need to be disciplined. Our denomination is obsessed with numbers and getting people to fill the pews. And don't get me wrong, it's good to have people in church.

It's good to have people under the word of God. But we can't neglect the Christian. We can't neglect the Christian. We can't neglect the disciple of Jesus. Because the Great Commission is not go and fill the pews of the church.

[30 : 39] The Great Commission is not even go and make converts of all nations. The Great Commission is go and make disciples of all nations. That's the commission from the commander and chief.

Go and make disciples of all nations. Christians. And we need this word. We need this word to disciple us and to learn from it. That's why this lamp is so important.

What is this lamp for? This lamp is for lighting, leading and learning. But lastly and very briefly, this lamp is for looking. This lamp is for looking.

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. You know, this precious verse, it reminds us that it was God's word that dispelled and dispersed the darkness at creation.

And he dispelled and dispersed the darkness of our soul in salvation. It was God's word that brought light and leading and learning.

[31 : 46] And whilst we're in this world, we are to keep coming to the Bible because it's our lamp and light. But what I love about this lamp and light, what I love about God's word is that it points us to a day when we will no longer need this lamp and light.

Because my friend, there will come a day when we will no longer need the light in the world and we will no longer need the light in the word. Because in the closing words of our Bibles, the Bible promises to us in the book of Revelation, that when the Christian pilgrim finally reaches the celestial city, that they have been trudging towards all their life, we're told in Revelation that in that city they have no need of the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives light and its lamp is the Lamb.

And there we're told that the Christian pilgrim will see the face of Jesus, who is the true light of the world. We're told that his name will be on our foreheads and night will be no more.

They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord, we're told, will be their light and they will reign forever and ever.

my friend, do you remember what evangelists said to Christian? Do you see the shining light? Do you see the shining light?

[33 : 26] Keep that light in your eye and walk directly towards it. Keep that light in your eye and walk directly towards it.

it. Keep Jesus as your focus. He is the word. He is the word. What is this lamp for? Lighting, leading, learning, and looking.

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. My friend, keep that light in your eye and walk directly towards it.

May the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks to thee for the light of thy word, that it brings light into every dark situation, that thou are one who is able to speak light.

And Lord, we pray that for those who may be sitting in darkness tonight, that thou Lord, wouldst speak light into their darkness. Remind them, Lord, that thou are a God who is light and in whom there is no darkness at all, and that they would be able to confess like the psalmist and say that in that purest light of thine, we clearly light shall see.

[34 : 52] O Lord, help us to keep the light in our eye and keep walking towards it, to keep Jesus as our focus, to keep his word as our compass, and to keep going, to keep pressing on towards the mark of the high call of God in Christ Jesus.

Keep us, Lord, we ask, bless us in our time together this evening, bless us in our fellowship afterwards, that thou, Lord, wouldst continue with us and go before us for Jesus' sake.

Amen. We're going to bring our service to a conclusion by singing the words of that psalm, Psalm 119, Psalm 119, we're singing from verse 101 to verse 106, it's on page 408, Psalm 119 from verse 101, 1.

My feet from each ill way I stayed, that I may keep thy word, and from thy judgments have not swerved, for thou hast taught me, Lord. How sweet unto my taste, O Lord, are all thy words of truth, yea, I do find them sweeter far than honey to my mouth.

I through thy precepts that are pure, do understanding get, I therefore every way that's false with all my heart do hate. Thy word is to my feet a lamp and to my path a light.

[36 : 25] I sworn have and I will perform to keep thy judgments right. These verses of Psalm 119 to God's praise. My feet from each ill way I stayed, that I I give thy word I from thy judgments have not swerved for love has taught me Lord.

How sweet and true might is O Lord are all thy words so true yea I do find them sweeter far than honey to my mouth I through thy precepts that are pure to understanding get I therefore on every way that falls with all my heart to hear thy word is to my feet alone come unto my path

I swore above thy will perform to keep thy judgments wide the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forever more Amen