

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 27 Feb 2022

Sermon Title : Stable or Stumbling

Speaker : Rev Shannon Chan

Text : Psalm 119:11, 165

INTRODUCTION

As young men and women battle the influence of sin in this world, they are increasingly encouraged to be free, to experience all that the world has to offer, to find their own way, to make decisions that will make them happy. One can see the avalanche of advertisements that is all about satisfying your wants or your desires, and so much of it is actually inward looking focused.

It is likely that the Psalmist who wrote Psalm 119 believes that the young ones desire moral purity and holy living. No one starts off from young by wanting to be immoral or live unholy lives. Yet with the environment of this world which we are all in, moral purity and holy living are difficult to achieve, especially for those who are younger. How can a young man keep his way pure? The Psalmist suggests by guarding it according to God's Word.

The allure and pursuit of money, sex and power in all of their different guises is seductive, and all too often, it derails our faith. Added to this, all Christians young or old tend to compartmentalize God in their lives - we can have a spiritual life and a real life, a Sunday life and a weekday life, a church life and an outside church life. We can say we are Christians who read the Bible and pray, yet these activities fail to have any transforming impact in our lives. Instead we can actually be no different from our peers, be it in sinful nature or worldly living.

1. **Treasuring God's Word can keep us from sin (Psalm 119:11)**

In wrestling with the question of '*how can a young person cleanse his way in the pull of all that is worldly and unrighteous?*', the Psalmist returned to what was fundamental, what would lead to a stable and firm foundation and it is:

Treasuring God's Word can keep us from sin

- "**Your Word I have hidden in my heart**" (Psalm 119:11, NKJV)
'**Word**' - in Hebrew is '*imrah*', which translates to 'word of promise'. God has spoken for times of confusion, distress and discouragement.
- "**By taking heed according to Your Word**" (Psalm 119:9, NKJV)
'**Word**' - in Hebrew is '*dibar*' which translates to 'totality of revelation'. Today, this refers to the totality of God's revealed written work of the Bible.

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

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- “Your Word I have **hidden** in my heart” (Psalm 119:11, NKJV)
‘hidden’ – in Hebrew is ‘*tsaphan*’ which means ‘hide’ or ‘store’ as something valuable; a treasure. It means we store up the totality of God’s revelation and His promises as something supremely valuable like great treasure.
- By treasuring the Word of God in our hearts as something infinitely precious, we can keep from sinning.

Treasuring God’s Word in our hearts:

- It is not an outward show - e.g. carrying your bible around
- It is an inward reality - It is about internalizing God’s Word, memorizing it and acting upon it. Do you know and overflow with the Word of God? Scripture memory is the starting point. Whatever that is in your heart will be yours to keep and to encourage you on life’s journey
- It is a steady compass for life - either the Word of God will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from the Word of God. May we be encouraged to commit to treasuring God’s Word in our hearts so that it is a steady compass for life.
- As we memorize God’s Word, we can:
 - Discover God’s Word
 - Act upon God’s Word
 - Reap the benefits of God’s Word
 - Pass it on

2. Loving God’s law brings promise of abundant peace (Psalm 119:165)

In Psalm 119:161-165 the Psalmist refers to his enemies as ‘princes’ (people with authority, position and power) and they are actively pursuing him for no real reason (without cause).

- The reality of persecution

What was his response?

- The right focus: the Ultimate Authority and His Word

He turns his attention away from these wicked enemies to the one ultimate authority and His Word. Instead of being eaten up by the persecution or trembling in fear from being targeted by powerful enemies, the Psalmist stands in awe at what God has said. His concern is exclusively towards pleasing God. He does not fear the schemes of man, but is consumed by a real, holy reverence for the Almighty.

It is here that the right focus takes us to:

- The right understanding: true shalom; will never trip

The Psalmist declares “Great peace have those who love Your law and nothing causes them to stumble”.

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The word 'peace' here is a rich term that we must understand

The Hebrew word '**shalom**' indicates more than just the absence of hostility. It goes further to indicate a state of prosperity and well-being. To greet someone with shalom or peace goes well beyond you wishing a lack of violence or opposition – it is an expressed desire for their well-being, for their wholeness.

- For those who love God's law/instruction, there is nothing in their path that will cause them to stumble, nothing that will trip them up. (Have a strong foundation in times of trouble)

The reality is that we will go through life filled with problems and difficulties. Sooner or later, all have to deal with sickness, failure, disappointments, sadness, betrayal and even unexpected tragedy, and death eventually comes knocking on every door. We all will have our full measure of problems to deal with before this life is over especially if the Lord tarries. So the promise is this: To those who love God's law you will not stumble. When you do come to them, you will not stumble. Perhaps you will step over them, walk around them or God will give you the grace to walk through them. Whichever the case may be, you will not stumble, you will not fall, you will not be destroyed by the changing circumstances of life.

What does it mean to love God's law or instruction?

We love the Bible containing God's words and instructions because we love the One who wrote them. His words have meaning for us. We know He loves us. The words are meaningful because we know Him personally.

- Loving God's law means to embrace it wholeheartedly, as the rule of our lives. Our love for God and His Word will make it the foundation and the centre of all that we do.
- When we have become lovers of His law, "God will take all that is troubling us and exchange it for peace" – a supernatural peace far exceeding what we have yet imagined!"
- The Lord says: "I will be with you..." (Matthew 28:20). It begs your answer to Him: "Will you be with Me?" When we go through trying and testing times, do we remember the Lord's promise?

CONCLUSION

When we treasure God's Word and love God's law, we are kept from sinning against God, and we are promised abundant peace. May we be willing to trust and obey, willing to yield to the Potter's hand, even as He shapes our life and one day, we will also allow Him to shape our death.

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As a group, spend some time to share your success and struggle in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do at the previous meeting.

A. Review Sermon Content

Purpose: Reflect on one key takeaway.

Appoint someone to read Psalm 119:9-11, 161-165 twice, slowly.

1. At the end of the reading, the reader will say, "This is the Word of the Lord."

All to respond, "Thanks be to God." Our response reminds us that this is the Word of the Lord. Just as God had spoken to His people in the past, He is still speaking to us even today, right now."

a. As God's Word was read, how have verses 11 and 165 spoken to you?

b. (i) What is the key takeaway for you from the sermon "Stable or Stumbling"?

(ii) How will you align the way you live to your key takeaway?

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B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

- 2a. The Psalmist remained stable and did not stumble even in persecution (Psalm 119:161-165) because he treasured and loved God's law/instructions (Word).
- (i) Why is treasuring or loving God's Word able to keep us from sin?
 - (ii) How do you know if a person treasures God's Word?
- 2b. What would a typical day in your life look like if you treasure God's Word as much as the Psalmist who wrote Psalm 119?
- 3a. How much of God's Word have you hidden in your heart (Psalm 119:11)? Do you think it is enough?
- 3b. (i) What is one thing you can do to increase the amount of God's Word that is hidden in your heart?
- (ii) What is one challenge you will face in 3b(i)?
- 3c. How can your group members help or encourage you to achieve 3b(i) above, for the following week(s) till your next meeting?

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C. Testimonies and Prayer

Purpose: Give glory to God and seek Him.

4. Share your personal testimony on how treasuring God's Word and loving God's law have kept you from sin or brought you peace.

OR

Give thanks to God that you can have free access to His Word, His laws and His promises.

5. Discuss what your group can do to discover God's Word together, act upon it, reap its benefit and also pass it on as a small group, to others especially the next generation. Pray also for the Holy Spirit's presence to be in your lives to strengthen you, grant you wisdom and enable you to treasure God's Word and hide more and more of it in your hearts so you may remain stable even in times of trouble.

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