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3/16/97

Psalms 119

“FIND IT IN THE BOOK”

For awhile, the Yellow Pages advertised that you could “Find it in the Book.” The phone company declared that you could find whatever you needed by consulting their phone book.

Although people can find many things in the yellow pages, I’m not convinced that they can find what they need most, in there. But I know another Book, where they can. It is God’s Book, the Bible!

Psalms 119 is a tribute to God’s Book. This longest of all Psalms lavishes the highest praises on the Word of God. In verse after verse, the inspired writer recommends the Bible in the most flowery language.

“I love thy law” - vs. 97

“It is sweeter to me than honey” - vs. 103

“...better than gold and silver” - vs. 72

“I delight in it” - vs. 47

“It is wonderful” - vs. 129

“I trust it” - vs. 42

“I meditate on it day and night” - vs. 97

“I stand in awe of thy Word” - vs. 161

Now you might say, “That’s pretty strong language for a book. Isn’t David laying it on a little thick?”

Yes, it would be a little thick, if it were any other book than God’s Book. But after trying to build my life around it for the past 49 years, I do not think that David’s praise is overdone at all!

Of course, many people today have never taken a look at it. Some even say: “I can’t believe a lot of it. It is unscientific, inaccurate, just ancient superstition.” Or “it is written by men.”

It’s like the little boy, who went to Sunday School. When he got home, his dad asked him what he had learned.

“We studied in the Bible about Moses, crossing the Red Sea. Now Moses and his people were being chased by this enemy king, when they came to edge of this big sea. So he radioed for his corps of engineers, to build a pontoon bridge across the sea. Then his people crossed over to the other side. But the enemy tried to follow him across. So Moses radioed for his air force to bomb the bridge and blow it up. They did, and the enemy was destroyed in the sea. And Moses and his people were safe.”

Wide-eyed with amazement the father asked: “Are you sure that’s the way your Sunday School teacher told that Bible story?”

“Well, not exactly,” said the boy. “But if I had told it in the way that he did, you would have never believed it!”

Now, certainly, there are people who have trouble believing some parts of the Bible. I don’t have time, in this particular sermon, to answer their problems.

Suffice it to say that the Bible has withstood the tests of time for nearly two thousand years. It is still a best-seller. It doesn’t need me to defend it.

I am not here today to defend it. I am here to recommend it!

Along with the writer of Psalm 119, I want to say: “Whatever you need, you can ‘find it in the Book.’” By pointing out some of the major themes in this long collection of tributes, let me show you **WHAT I HAVE FOUND IN THE BOOK**. I hope that I can help you to find what you need there, too.

I have personally found in this Book...

SOMETHING SOLID UPON WHICH TO BUILD MY LIFE.

Verse 89: "Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven."

We are living in a world where nothing seems to stay the same. They tell us that the economy is shaky...that the political climate is shifting...that moral values are changing...that old institutions, like family and marriage, are tottering.

In such a world, people are confused. In order to know what to do, they copy other people, who may be just as lost as they are.

Did you hear about the lady at the telephone company? She is the one who gives you the right time, whenever you call her. One day a man called and asked for the correct time. "I have to know," he said, "because I always blow the whistle at the factory every day at noon. And I want to be sure that I am exactly correct."

The lady at the phone company gasped, and then she let him in on her secret. Every day she would set her clock at noon, when she heard his factory whistle blow.

We laugh, but we know how true to life this is. So many people, who don't know what to do, set their lives by what other people are doing. And those other people are setting their lives by still other people. No wonder we meet so many mixed-up people!

Tell me, isn't there something solid and unchanging, in this world, upon which we can safely build our lives? Our time is based on the "Greenwich Mean" time. It is something constant and absolute. Isn't there also some source of absolute truth?

Yes, we have the teachings of this book. Notice...

Verse 152--"Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that you have founded them Forever."

Verse 160--"Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endures forever."

Thank God, there are some things which never change, nor shift, nor get shaky. They remain solid and firm.

There are some things which are always RIGHT and some things which are always WRONG. There are some things which always bring HAPPINESS and some things which always bring SORROW to us--no matter to what generation we belong.

There is a way which has always led to DESTRUCTION, and there is a way which has always led to LIFE. And this Book clearly describes both of them.

So many people talk to me, who have really gotten their lives into a complicated mess. I cannot help but love them. Many are beautiful, fine, intelligent, sharp, and hard-working people. Yet some, at very young ages, have been through multiple divorces and heartaches of all kinds.

And I can't figure it out. They are often very bright people. How can they keep getting into one mix-up after another?

The problem is that we must build our lives on a solid foundation. No matter how smart we are or how hard we try, if the foundation is not right, then everything will keep crumbling around us!

It reminds me of the story, which our Lord Jesus Christ told, of the two people who built houses. They both built well. But one built on the solid rock and the other built on the shifting sand.

Now eventually the storms of life came and beat on both houses. And the one, which was built on the rock, withstood the worst storms, while the one, which was built on the shifting sand, crumbled. It did not have a solid foundation.

Jesus said that the solid rock was his teachings, the teachings found in this Book! Everything else is shifting sand.

Friend, do you want something solid, on which to build your life? Build it on the teachings and principles of this Book. Meditate on its truths. Trust its teachings. Hide its words in your heart. Make God's laws your delight. Keep God's statutes with your whole heart. And you will stand firm, no matter what story winds life hurls at you.

Another thing I have found in this Book is a...

LIGHT TO HELP ME FIND MY WAY TO GOD.

Verse 105--"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

Verse 130--"The entrance of thy words gives light, it gives understanding to the simple."

Most people are completely in the dark, when it comes to getting close to God. That's why there are so many religions in the world, and there are always new ones, starting up!

God's Book is here described as the light, which we need to find our way to God.

First of all, the light of God's Word **helps me to see myself as God sees me**...to know where I stand with

God. If I were to simply compare myself to everyone else, I might feel content; for there are probably a number of people, who are worse than I am. This could give me a false sense of well-being. I could go through life, self-satisfied, only to be shocked on the judgment day, to find out that I had fallen short of what God wanted me to be.

So God shined the light of His Word on my life. In light of what God expects, I saw that I had fallen short. And that's what caused me to call on the Lord for His mercy and to ask Him to save me. The light of God's Word showed me my true need.

Unfortunately, many have never paid attention to what God's Word has to say about them. They have never had a look at themselves, as God sees them. Without his clear light,. They think that they look pretty good.

I once looked at a used car at night, under the artificial light, which surrounded the car lot. One car looked like a dream boat. I was smitten by it.

I went back on the next day to look at it again. However, in God's bright sunlight, I saw so many flaws in it that I was no longer interested in it.

My friend, in the bright clear light of God's Word, we don't look so good. We are sinners and very unlovely, compared to God's standard.

Now this is humiliating for some. That's why "men love darkness better than light: because their deeds are evil." And they don't want their evil to be shown up. That's why many reject the Bible--not because of their superior intellect, but because of their fierce pride. They can't stand to see themselves in the pure light of God's Word.

That's why some won't continue to attend a Bible-preaching church. They prefer formalism and ritualistic mumbo-jumbo or sentimental entertainment, but they resent someone shining the spotlight of God's truth around in the audience.

But I'm so glad I was shown myself, as God sees me. That's what drove me into his arms of love for mercy and salvation.

And this same Book, which showed me my sin, also **showed me His way of salvation**. Verse 41 says: "Let thy mercies come also unto me, O Lord, even thy salvation, according to thy Word."

This blessed Book showed me how God had sent His Son, in love to pay for my salvation, by dying in my place, on the cross. It told me how God would forgive and give a new life to anyone, who would pray for His mercy. And I prayed for it.

Have you? You can today. Romans 10:13 says that "whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved."

This Book even **guarantees** His forgiveness and your acceptance into the family of God. I John 5:13 says that "these things have I written unto you who believe on the name of the Son of God, so that you may **know** that you have eternal life..."

Let me share with you a thrilling story from "Decision" magazine: "A friend and I were sitting in my living room, smoking marijuana, when my seven-year-old son, Sean, came running into the house, babbling about a man wanting to take him for a bus ride. Then I heard a knock on the screen door. The man introduced himself as George Glover, the bus captain from a local church. He asked if I would allow my son to go to Sunday School. I told him that it was alright with me, but I declined his invitation for me to come to church, too.

"Two weeks later, George was once again standing at my door. This time he wanted to speak with about my son's misbehavior on the church bus. As we sat in the living room, I apologized for Sean's fighting and cursing, and I explained that he had learned the bad words from me. I began to relate my life story to this stranger, as though I'd known him all my life. I told him of two failed marriages, of how I was bringing up my son alone, of my smoking marijuana and taking drugs off and on, since I was 14, and how I had worked full time to support my son and me, since he was a year old.

"For two hours George listened. I had the impression that he was not there to judge me, but that he cared about me. Finally George asked, 'If you were to die today, would you know for sure that you would go to heaven?'

"I explained that I didn't think anyone could know that, because there was no proof that heaven really existed. I didn't feel that I was an atheist, but I wasn't sure that God was real. With all the religions in the World, which one was right?

"George asked: 'If I show you, from the Bible, the way to heaven, will you do what it says?' I told George that since I wasn't there when the Bible was written, I couldn't know that what it said was true.

"Do you believe that George Washington crossed the Delaware?' George asked. 'Yes,' I answered. 'But you weren't there at the time, so how do you know for sure?'

"It was as though someone had flicked on the light switch in a dark room. The possibility that the Bible could actually be true made me yearn to hear more of what George had to say. I listened intently as he talked with me about sin and about salvation through Jesus Christ.

"George then read Roman's 10:13: 'Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.' He

asked me if I'd like to ask Jesus into my heart. A voice inside me was saying, 'Yes, yes,' but I told George that I didn't know.

"My mind raced with thoughts of confusion, wonder, and fear that somehow made me know that, if George left before I prayed, I would never have another chance to get saved.

"I knew that I was a sinner and that everything I had taken pride in believing--evolution, astrology, the occult, my own sense of reasoning--now seemed empty and cold and didn't make much sense. I looked at George and saw something in his face--a warm peaceful glow. How I wanted what he had!

"I confessed to George that I wanted to ask Jesus into my heart, but I didn't know how to pray. He told me to repeat the words he would say, and to believe in my heart as I prayed. With George's help, I prayed the first prayer in my life: 'Yes, Lord, I am a sinner, and I believe that Jesus died for my sins. I ask Jesus to come into my heart and to forgive me and to give me eternal life.'

"There was an immediate change in my heart, one that I knew was brought on not by me, but by God. George left with my promise to come to church. I kept my promise.

"After I accepted Christ, my desire for rugs was replaced with the strong desire to know more about God, whom I had once so vehemently denied. It seemed as if I could not learn fast enough.

"And I was anxious to tell others about Jesus. My co-workers soon discovered that something was different about me. My entire attitude had changed, and now I bubbled with excitement about my new-found salvation. I invited my friend and supervisor, Rita, to go to church with me.

"On Sunday Rita went with me to the morning and evening services. At the evening service, we both went forward at the invitation...Rita, to receive Jesus into her heart, and I to ask for baptism. A week later, both of us were baptized in the presence of family and friends.

"I soon began going out to witness on Thursday nights, with other church members. Within the first six months of my conversion, through the power of the Holy Spirit, I led 14 of my co-workers, friends, even strangers, and my own dear son to the loving arms of Jesus."

What a marvelous true story. And what a perfect illustration of how this Book can give us the light to find our way to God!

The third thing I find in this Book is...

A SET OF TRACKS TO HELP ME GO PLACES IN LIFE.

Verse 133--"Order my steps in thy Word; and let not any iniquity have dominion over me."

Verse 45--"And I will walk at liberty, for I seek the precepts."

Notice, it says that God's law gives me "liberty," freedom to go places in life. Many people think of God's laws, in this Book, as something which would confine them and hold them back and keep them from having a full life.

Nothing could be farther from the truth. God's laws keep us from getting entangled in sins, which would bind us and put a strangle-hold on our lives!

God's laws are really like a set of tracks for a train. They are necessary for us, if we are to go places in life.

Probably my favorite childhood story is that of "little Toot." Little Toot was a small switching locomotive, who worked all day in the railroad yard, he went back and forth on the same old set of tracks. The rails, on which he ran, seemed like prison bars after awhile. Oh, how he wished he could be "free" from those tracks!

One day he was sent to pick up some cars, which had been left on a siding outside of town. While puffing along through the countryside, Toot saw a quiet pond, surrounded by a shade tree. He thought: "how great it would be to rest in that cool shade and soak my hot, tired wheels in the pond." How he wished that he could run up and down the smooth green hills and meadows. Oh, why was he such a prisoner in those tracks?!

On an impulse, he decided to jump those old tracks and to be free! Dizzily, he ran down the hills and across the green meadows. Only it wasn't long before he discovered that the meadows weren't as smooth as they had looked. They were so bumpy that his bell was knocked off its hinges. Soon he hit a rock, which bent his cow-catcher and knocked his cab crooked.

All disheveled, he pulled up to the pond. Well, at least he could rest in the shade and soak his wheels in the cool water.

But, you guessed it. He got stuck in the mud. His weight sank deeper and deeper; and, the harder he spun his wheels, the deeper he went into the mire. Never had he be so tired as he was, after this ordeal.

Finally, Little Toot had to be pulled out of the mud and set back on the tracks--the only place where he was really free to go places!

My friend, you and I were made by God to operate best on a set of tracks, called the laws of God. If we do not stay on those tracks, we will get bogged down in sin and sorrow of the worst kind.

Let's appreciate the laws and statutes, which we find in this Book. They were provided by a loving Creator, in order to help us go places in our lives. Tay on them, and they will be more valuable to you than silver or gold. You, too, will love them and delight in them.

A fourth thing I find in the Book is...

STRENGTH TO KEEP MOVING AHEAD.

As I have studied Psalm, the word "quicken" appears time after time. "Quicken thou me, according to thy law.) (Verses 25,28,37,40,88,93,107,149,154,156,159) To "quicken" means to revive, to bring to life, to rejuvenate, to strengthen someone to go on.

We all know that, in this life, it is easy to get discouraged or tired, to the point where we don't see how we are going to keep going. Disappointments, "raw deals," bitterness, fears, sickness, or disasters eventually come to everyone.

And, unfortunately, many people are stopped in their tracks by such things. They just can't seem to "get over" them and get started-up again.

This is where the man, who turns to God's Book, "quicken" -- started forward again. Verse 92 says: "Unless thy law had been my delight, I would have perished in mine affliction. I will never forget thy precepts, for with them thou hast quickened me."

How many of us have been really down, afflicted, where we didn't care if we kept going or not? But we turned to the Word of God, and we came across a promise or some word of hope, or a new and "wondrous" thing, which we had never noticed before (Verse 18). And it just spoke fresh faith into our being. And we were "quicken," ready to try again.

That's what God's Word can do. That's what it did for Pat Shaughnessy, the pastor of a small California church, who almost had his career stopped by a freak accident.

Pat had gone to Korea on a preaching mission. As he awaited his plane, a bomb exploded 25 feet from where he was standing. It threw Pat thirty feet. Three people, near him, were killed instantly. Thirty-five were injured.

Before it was over, Pat lost his right leg and the use of his left one. Can't you imagine the thought, which raced through his mind? Was his career ended? How could he carry on the strenuous routine of a pastor, as a cripple? Would he have been better off to have died in the explosion?

Pat began to look in God's Book for some answers. Romans 8:28 assured him that "all things will work together for good to them who...have answered God's call."

Pat saw that this was not an "accident," but only an "incident," which God could use for the good. He determined to trust God for the outcome.

Another verse, which "quicken" his desire to go on, was Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me."

God's Word "quicken" Pat; and, in a strength not his own, he made what the newspapers called a "miraculous" recovery. He realized that you didn't need two legs to preach the gospel. Since then he had told his story to millions on TV. Opportunities, which he would never have enjoyed as a local pastor, have been his.

And he is moving on with his life, because the Word of God kept him going. It "quicken" him. Truly, it became "sweeter than honey" to a fainting man!

I'm challenging you today to listen to this Book. Let it lead you to the Savior. Study this Book daily in 1997. Let it be your delight. You will discover wondrous things in it.

Meditate upon it. Walk in its light. Hide its words in your heart.

You will find what you need "in the Book!"