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Psalm 119:89-93 "God's Unchanging Word"
September 23, 2018.

Shall we open our Bibles this morning to Psalm 119 verse 89.

I wanted to talk to you this morning a little bit, just a few verses, specifically about that book that's on your lap, God's Word. In fact, we read in verse 89, "Forever, O Lord, your word has been settled in heaven." The book on your lap is different than any other book that you will ever hold in your hand. It is God's Word, and because it is God's Word, it is permanent, which is why you can read forever. Oh Lord, this word has been settled in heaven. Why is it permanent? Because it's God's Word. He never changes His mind. He doesn't re-evaluate His position. He doesn't adjust His understanding or somehow has to temper His feelings. He just knows. And it's permanent and it's settled. That should give you great confidence as you hold it in your hand, as you look to it for direction, as you hope in it for the future.

We usually develop a level of confidence or skepticism about sure things by our experiences with them. We learn quickly in life that very few things are sure things at all. In fact, we have a tendency to be skeptical and become, as you get older, cynical, because everything that we heard was a sure thing was not, and those things that we began to trust in we had to abandon. Things that are sure things then are not sure things now. Things change, fluctuate, they waiver. A new study finds, a new -- or evidence shows. Smoking used to be cool. If you watch a Johnny Carson show from the 1960s, you can't see the people; it's just smoke. Not so cool now. We're pretty sure it'll kill you, but it used to be cool. Every couple of years we get a new sugar substitute which is safe. Two years later it will kill the rats, but for now it's safe. The pill that your mother gave you used to make you well, now it causes cancer.

So we're skeptical by experience. We don't trust things. We're not buying into news or advertising. Our worldly experience says that can't be trusted. And now we come to the Bible and we bring all of that outlook with us to it. And yet God's book is very different. He is omniscient. He is acquainted with every facet of your life. He understands what you're going through or what you will. He knows

everything about everyone in heaven and in earth and in hell. He may be invisible to you. You're not invisible to Him.

Paul would write to the Hebrews in Chapter 4 that we are in a position where as creatures, we're not hidden from His sight. In fact, naked and open is every man before His eyes, and everyone who will have to give an account to Him of their lives. God knows it all. He's a know-it-all, in a good sense. He doesn't make mistakes. He doesn't hedge His bets. He's not 95 percent sure. He doesn't need more information. He's not waiting for further lab results. He's the Lord.

He sees everything before it happens, knows exactly what's going to result as a result. He saw Adam and Eve hiding in the garden. He saw Cain murdering his brother. He saw Sarah laughing when she was told she would have a child late in life. He saw you getting ready at home this morning, how you grumbled about going. He knows if you're paying attention right now and the attitude with which you've arrived.

"Forever, O Lord, Your word." That's a powerful book you have laying on your lap. One of the first revelations that you will get about God as you begin to read the Bible in the first couple of chapters is that God knows everything. Then you will read "and God looked and God saw." He knows it all. Imagine His wisdom. Every past and present and future event, from the smallest to the greatest; from the most insignificant to the most forgettable. I think those are the same things.

James, when he finally stood up at the Jerusalem counsel, and they had met to discuss whether the Gentiles would first have to become Jews to be saved or could they just go directly to God without passing go and paying \$200, determined that God's grace saved. And James reached back to the Old Testament to substantiate his decision, and he said in Chapter 15 of Acts, verse 18, "Known of God for all eternity are all of His works." And this little section that in this Bible chapter that writes about the goodness of God's word begins with the words, God's word is permanent. It is as solid and as dependable as His knowledge and understanding of all things. "The grass may wither, the flower may fade, but the word of God will abide forever." It's an important book you're carrying around. And your attitudes towards it should be developed based upon what you know about the Author and His track record, because He is a sure thing that you can believe in.

James would write in Chapter 1 in his short little book there towards the end of your Bibles, "Every good gift and every perfect gift comes down from above, from the Father of lights, with Whom there is no variations or shadows of turning." It can be counted on because God doesn't change. It will be good this generation and next generation. It was good in the 1800s, an in the 1400s, an in the 900s, and it will be good forever. It is a dependable word.

"Forever, O Lord, your word is settled in heaven." And if you wonder how long it's going to last, notice these words: It is permanent even in glory. One day when I die and you go to stand before the Lord, His word will still be the rule. It'll still be the standard about which God will judge. It'll be the way of the Lord that you can depend upon. Far removed from man then. Far removed from his daily opinions, from his belief system, from the article in the paper, or the group that gathers against you, His word will stand. His word in heaven stands. It lasts beyond the grave. It lasts beyond time. It is permanent. Time won't change it. Death can't tamper with it. Eternity won't remove it. It will last beyond the grave. And your opinions about it won't affect it.

Settled in heaven, forever. Big deal, this book. Do you know it well? Do you love it? Are you looking into it? Does it guide your life? Voltaire, who was the self-avowed atheist in his day, a very popular man, held up his Bible one time in front of a large group. He was on a roll. And he said, "Within 50 years, I'm going to bury this book in the morgue." 50 years later, he was in the morgue, and the Geneva Bible Society had bought his house to distribute Bibles from it. Take that, Voltaire, nah-nah-nah-nah-nah-nah.

"Heaven and earth may pass away," Jesus said, "but My word will by no means pass away." It's beyond the galaxy. It's beyond the reach of man. It is beyond the foes of heaven. It is settled, it is sure, it is permanent. You can depend upon it.

We read in verse 90, "Your faithfulness has endured to every generation; and You have established the earth so that it abides." In the context of the verses, the proof of God's word being permanent and sure can be found in creation itself, that every generation has been able to experience. You created the earth. You've established it, it abides. You can read in the first pages of the Bible how God established the earth. He spoke the world into existence and all of its creativeness, and the functions that you see today started

there the day He spoke, and it was so.

His Word is powerful. It creates and it abides. On day one, the laws of light were established. God ordained that light should travel at 186,000 miles a second, and what happened that day still happens today. It should dispel the darkness, and it does. Its speed is constant throughout the universe. Thousands of years later a Jewish scientist, depending upon the permanence of the speed of light, introduced the atomic age with the equation $E=MC^2$. Einstein wrote, "Energy is equal to the mass multiplied by the speed of light squared." And it still operates so. Why? Because when God does something, He does it permanently so. And you can see it in the creation that He established.

Day two, He formed the firmaments. He established the forces of evaporation and condensation, putting them in motion so that from then to this day, salt water can be gathered by the clouds, turned into fresh water, and keep man alive, water his plants, and then have it just return to that same place again. That cycle that God has established to renew and replenish the earth.

On day three He established the lay of the land; ordained the edges of the sea, the boundaries of the waves, and they responded. When Job was getting his lashing at the end of the book, as he had complained to God and kind of questioned the Lord, the Lord ends that book by asking Job a lot of questions. Lots of questions. "Where were you when I created the heavens and the earth? What were you doing?" So that Job had to go away going, "I guess You're God and I'm not." But he said to Him in Chapter 38, "Where were you when I set the doors upon the seas, when I fixed their limits and barred their progress, when I said you can come this far and no further, and the proud waves stopped right there?" And they did. His Word is established in the very things that we see, the order of creation as we know it.

On day four, he established the service of the sun to rule by day and the moon to rule by night, and man was assured not only of seasons, but of a celestial timepiece by which he could measure dates and times and years and days. And they remain, on those courses, to this day.

Faithful, we read. Faithful, Lord, you have been to all generations. You established the earth. It abides forever. You're Lord. Your word is settled.

The prophet Jeremiah spoke of God's oversight of creation as the assurance that His promises to the people would continue. He said in Chapter 33, "The Lord said, 'If my covenant is not with the light and with the dark, with the day and with the night, if I haven't appointed the seasons and the heavens and the earth, then you might not be able to depend upon Me, but I've done those things, so you can count on Me.'"

That's a powerful book you have in your hand. That's God's word.

On day five God established the fish in the sea, the fowls in the air, and developed laws regarding their survival for successive generations, and they survived.

And then on day six He made you and I. Made man the monarch over all that He had created. And to this day, everywhere you turn, there's this evidence of the power of God in what He has made.

All modern science is predicated upon the fact that the laws of nature don't change. And they don't, because God is faithful. The laws of light and electricity and heat and sound and magnetism and gravity and chemistry and physics and biology and mathematics, they have all been established by God's word. They abide until this day to say to you, God's word is reliable. Creation bears it out. God does not change. Gravity continues. So does the sun. So does the earth's rotation.

You will read 10 times again in the book of Genesis, "and God said, and it was so." Let there be light, and it was so. That's what this book on your lap is all about, God said. Upon it your faith can easily rest, but how do you feel about it? Do you trust in it with that kind of confidence or do you bring that cynicism that the world develops in you from day one to bear upon your faith? You shouldn't allow doubt or hesitancy to steal from you the confidence and the joy you can have from a word from God that is absolute. And, in fact, if you'll start walking with God, your experience in His word will establish your hope, not steal it away.

We read in verse 91, "they," these creations of God, "continue this day according to your ordinances, and they are all Your servants." They continue to this day. What God has established continues in your life.

You might have heard people say, "Mother Nature has not been

good to us this year." I heard a guy on the news say that with the weather. Another fellow, "Oh, well, as providence would have it," as if the laws of nature had a will of their own and a way of their own. They do not. Those kinds of statements, when you hear them in the world, are nothing more than depersonalized references to Almighty God, who makes all of those things, who rules over them all. But if you have to avoid knowledge of Him or acknowledgement of Him, then you go with Mother Nature.

The reality is that beyond the vast fiber and fabric of nature sits a Lord whose word is obeyed 100 percent. Every atom moves at His discretion. He is so dependable in His laws that He has established that if you go home and put a pot of water on and turn on the stove, it's going to boil. It's not going to freeze, it's not going to stay at room temperature. If you drop a lead weight, it's going to fall. It's not going to fly. And even these exceptions in the Bible, they support the rule.

Jonah ran from God. God called upon His servants to stop him. His servants: A big wind, a really hungry fish who didn't care what he ate, and a gourd that shrunk at His Word. In the end, a disobedient prophet is arrested and God is still God.

Pharaoh digs in his heels, defies the Lord, says I'm not letting my people go, and the Lord called to His servants: The frogs, the lice, the locusts, the flies, the boils, and Egypt found themselves in the dust.

When the disciples were with Jesus there in Mark 4 going across the Sea of Galilee to try to get to the other side, a storm rose. It was terrible. It was frightening. Even experienced fishermen were worried. Jesus was sleeping. They couldn't believe He'd sleep through something that was so death defying. The Lord woke up, stopped the winds, rebuked them for their lack of faith, and they turned to one another in Mark 4:41 and they said, "What kind of Man is this, that even the waves and the sea would obey Him?"

To this day, according to your testimonies, your ordinances, they're your servants, Lord. Your creation is your servants. And there is nothing in creation that doesn't serve the Lord except for you and I. We're given that choice. Of course they obey Him. They're at His beck and call. He made them. And as the Psalmist ponders that thought and sings about the permanence of God's word, he finds great

comfort in this truth: God doesn't change. He's been faithful to every generation. He's still faithful. And what you see in creation, you'll see in eternity.

We read in verse 92, "Unless Your law had been my delight, I would have perished in my affliction." The word of God, when you receive it as such, will keep you from harm. It'll keep you afloat in this life. If you'll hang on to it, a permanent word for a temporal world. It's a rock, it's an anchor, it's a safe harbor. God's word, if you embrace it, will give you sure footing in the midst of a menacing kind of circumstance. In a world that is ever changing, He doesn't. In a world that lies to you, He won't. It ought to get you to read your Bible and replace whatever opinions you might have with what you should know that God says. Makes all the difference in the world.

And more than a life preserver, God's word became the delight of the Psalmist. It thrilled him. The word delight means just jump for joy. Let me ask you something: Did you come to church this morning jumping for joy, you're going to hear about God's word? Is that the way you get up in the morning and open your Bible? Or do you complain? You're up late, you need coffee, it's going to be trafficky, it's going to be a hard day. Oh, I ain't got time for this. How do you feel about God's word? Does thrill over it, delight over, explain your attitude towards it? I would invite all of you to come to church on Wednesday nights and make that a permanent part of your week. If this is your experience with God, 30 minutes on Sunday, you're selling yourself really short. You need it, and so do I. And God would like nothing more than to bless you with His word. It is permanent. It is dependable.

I teach on Wednesday night, I usually begin with the words, "This is my favorite book of the Bible." And people start laughing, because after a while, that's been said about a lot of books. But it should be so. When we used to go to Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa with Pastor Chuck in the early '70s, he would teach on Sunday nights at 7:30 at night, which I was going to school. I was -- man, can't we start earlier? But thousands of us would come. And Chuck would teach through 10 chapters of the Bible, sometimes 20. And he didn't really touch much. He would just read 15, 20, 30 verses. And then he'd do this, "Oh, oh, oh. Isn't God good?" And then he'd read 30 more. And we just sucked it all in. By the time 10 o'clock rolled around two and a half hours later, Chuck says, "Well, we'll start again next week." And then 3,000

kids went, "One more chapter. One more chapter." Could that be you after two and a half hours? We could try. I got all kinds of stuff. No wonder there was revival. There was a true hunger for God's word.

It became the delight of the Psalmist's life. And it was so because he believed it. God's word was solid. It was dependable, and so he conformed his life to it and it kept him from ruin. Notice, I would have perished in my affliction, but your word being my delight kept me from it. How do you feel about God's word?

John Bunyan was a young preacher who was thrown into the Bedford prison for preaching. He had a young wife and a blind daughter. He realized his incarceration was certainly going to put him in a position where he could lose all hope, despair of life. He wasn't going to be able to care for his child or for his wife. But as a young man who believed God, he reached for his Bible. He said, "Lord, I believe if I can't take care of them, You will; that You can provide. You've made that promise." And he began to write Pilgrim's Progress, a book, by the way, that has sold almost -- except for the Bible, probably the greatest selling Christian book around. Allegory about personalized biblical truths. There's a guy named Christian in there, and a guy named Pliable, and a fellow named Giant Despair. It's an amazing book. It has led to the salvation of thousands. But rather than falling apart, and he certainly had every reason to, Bunyan held on to God's word as being permanent.

It will protect you from error. It will keep you from lies. It will deliver you from this world. And the Psalmist allows God's word to become his delight. And when God's word becomes your delight, Satan's done with you. He's got no way in at this point. If I hadn't had the Lord's word be my delight, then the world would have been my ruin, but it is not. He embraced the eternal over the temporal.

We read in verse 93, "I will never forget your precepts, for by them You have given me life." By the fact that he had come to know the Lord well, he was saved and delivered.

It's interesting that a lot of people see God's word as legislative. By that I mean it's just a bunch of rules: Do this, don't do that. A lot more don't do that's. But in the case of the scriptures, God's word, more often than not, is executive. It executes. Let there be light, there was light. Let the sea bring forth abundantly, and it did. When

the leper came to Jesus and he said, "If you will, you can make me clean," and Jesus said, "I will. Be clean." And then we read, next sentence, "And he was clean." It worked the same way for the waves be still, to Lazarus come forth.

Jesus stood up in the synagogue in Nazareth, and reading on the Sabbath said, "The Spirit is upon Me. Anoint Me to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, to declare sight to the blind, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Shut the book, sat down. Said, "Today this is fulfilled in your eyes. I've come to do all of these things." Because that is what He had said He would do. He will keep us. He will save us by His Word.

When you read in the Bible you must be born again, you might not want to pass by that too quickly, because when God says you must, you should probably think you must. "You call upon My name, and you can be saved," you can believe that. But when the Lord said, "Don't you forsake the assembling of yourselves together as is the manner of some," especially as you see these days coming, He would encourage you to hang out with Christians. Let no corrupt communication come out of your mouth. Forgive and it will be forgiven you. Love not the world or the things of the world. He's telling you the truth. The word of God will not only lead you to Christ, but it'll keep you in His ways. When you're weak, when you're in trial, when there's decisions to be made, when there's doubt, set God's word aside and you perish in your own affliction. Hear it and you can be saved.

I know God would like to make a Bible lover out of you. Not sure that's the truth in your case. I don't know. Where you can't get enough, that you could come to church and yell out from your seat, "One more minute. One more chapter," and mean it. It usually comes when you've come to the conclusion, as we read early on, that God's word is important, it is internal, it is dependable, it will not change. Because everything in life will, but this will not. What God says to you today He means 1,000 years from now. It won't change. Come on, man, be a Bible lover. What else would you love that's so dependable?