

# How the Bible Strengthens Our Resolve

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Well, we're going to turn together now to our Bibles and to our reading for this morning, which, if you've been with us in recent weeks, you'll know is in Psalm 119, the longest psalm in this altar. If you have a visitor's Bible, one of the blue Bibles, you'll find that on page 513.

And the screens there tell us we're going to read from verse 41. And that's not the psalm of saying wow right before these verses, although perhaps that's what we will think by the time we've listened to the sermon, but that's the Hebrew letter Vav. Remember, this is a psalm that each section begins with a new letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

That it was to help you remember the psalm, remember how to memorize it. But here we've come to this section, which begins like this. Let your steadfast love come to me, O Lord, your salvation, according to your promise.

Then shall I have an answer for him who taunts me, for I trust in your word. And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth, for my hope is in your rules.

I will keep your law continually forever and ever, and I shall walk in a wide place. For I have sought your precepts. I will also speak of your testimonies before kings, and shall not be put to shame.

[ 1 : 3 2 ] For I find my delight in your commandments, which I love. I will lift up my hands towards your commandments, which I love. And I will meditate on your statutes.

Amen. And may God bless us his word. Well, good morning, friends.

Good to see you all here. Let's open our Bibles, if we may please, at Psalm 119. It's always a help to have the text open, and then you can see the words as I try to bring out their meaning.

So Psalm 119, on page 513, and our section is those verses from 41 to 48. One of the consequences of living close to the Bible is that we become stronger and more resolute.

Now, human beings, we're always weak in many ways. Physically, we can be blown away by a puff of wind. Mentally, we can be subject to stress and illness sometimes.

[ 2 : 4 8 ] Morally, we're always in a danger zone of temptation and testing. You might say that weakness is our middle name for all of us. But as we learn to live close to the Bible, we become stronger.

The Bible forms and toughens our character. It deepens our convictions about the truth. It sharpens our ability to distinguish truth from falsehood.

And thank God, it enlarges our hearts. It opens our hearts up so that we learn to love God more and to love other people more. So the weak man or the weak woman becomes, over time, greatly strengthened.

Strengthened to live the Christian life in the midst of pressures and difficulties. Now, my title for this morning is How the Bible Strengthens Our Resolve.

And I've chosen that title because in this section, verses 41 to 48, our psalmist teaches us why he is able to keep going as a believer in the midst of considerable pressures.

[ 3 : 51 ] And you'll see the pressures particularly in verse 42, where he says, Then shall I have an answer for him who taunts me. And again in verse 46, I will also speak of your testimonies before kings.

Now, a king back in those days was a powerful individual and only had to snap his fingers and he could have you put to death if he didn't like your face. So to speak of God's testimonies, God's truth before kings was a risky business in those days.

Of course, it can still be a risky business for Christians to speak before presidents and dictators and ayatollahs. In some countries today, an unguarded Christian testimony can land you in prison or hard labor for many years.

So here is our friend the psalmist. He's under pressure and yet he is marvelously strengthened in his resolve to persevere. And the source of his strength is the Bible.

So let's see how he helps us in these eight verses. I'd like to make three main points. First, the Bible is the ground of our confidence when we're under attack.

[ 5 : 06 ] Let's notice the first word of verse 42. Then, then shall I have an answer for him who taunts me. Now, that little word then looks back to verse 41.

Verse 41 explains the confidence expressed in verse 42. So 41. Let your steadfast love come to me, O Lord, your salvation according to your promise.

Then, when that happens, when I have confidence in your steadfast love and salvation, that is when I shall have an answer for him who taunts me. Why?

Well, he says so at the end of verse 42. For I trust in your word. I trust your word of promise. Now, this phrase at the beginning of verse 41, steadfast love, is a very important Bible phrase.

It comes six times in Psalm 119, and this is the first time it appears. It doesn't just mean that the love of God is reliable. It certainly does mean that, but it means a great deal more.

[ 6 : 09 ] It means that the love of God is promised or covenanted to the believer. That phrase, steadfast love, is a technical term for the love of God promised by God to Israel in the covenant.

God has entered into a solemn and binding agreement with his chosen people, and he will under no circumstances renege on that agreement. In verse 41, our psalmist is thinking particularly of the covenant in its written form in the books of Moses.

In those books, the first five books of the Bible, God expresses his steadfast love, his promise to the Israelites to protect them and rescue them, his promise to bring them to their own land, finally, and his promise to be with them.

It's a covenant of mutual possession. I shall be your God, he says, and you shall be my people. I am yours, you are mine. It's the great marital covenant between the God of Israel and the people of Israel.

And our psalmist knows it. He knows it backwards. The books of Moses are his Bible. They're his constant delight and study. When he writes throughout this psalm of God's testimonies, statutes, precepts, laws, rules, word, promise, and commandments, it's the books of Moses that he's writing about.

[ 7 : 35 ] So when he prays in verse 41, let your steadfast love come to me, O Lord, he is not asking a favor. He's claiming a promise.

The second half of that verse bears this out. He prays your salvation according to your promise. In verse 41, he's reminding both himself and the Lord God of the relationship in which he stands with the Lord.

It's a relationship sealed in covenant blood at the Passover. And it's described in great detail in the first five books of the Bible. It is sure and solid.

God's covenant promise can be relied on. Now, our psalmist is in a position of ultimate security, the security of knowing that God will protect him and finally rescue him.

Now, if we are Christians, I'm not assuming that everybody here is a Christian today. Whoever you are, you're most welcome to be here. But if we are Christian people, we have an even greater covenant to rely on and therefore an even greater security.

[ 8 : 42 ] Jesus died and was raised from the grave in order to rescue us and to secure our ultimate rescue and safety. And we have his own word, his own promise about this.

So, for example, he says in John's Gospel, chapter 6, everyone who looks on the Son of God and believes in him will have eternal life and I will raise him up on the last day.

So, let's understand the logic of verses 41 and 42 in our psalm. The psalmist knows the promised, covenanted, steadfast love of the Lord.

He knows that he will be ultimately rescued. And therefore, he also trusts the Lord for smaller acts of rescue in this life. And because he knows that he is ultimately rescued, he's not afraid to answer the taunts of people who taunt him for his faith in God.

He's secure. He's strengthened by that security. That security expressed to him in the five books of Moses. Now, I think it's very encouraging to know that being taunted for your faith in God is as old as the book of Psalms.

[ 9 : 57 ] Of course, it's much older than the book of Psalms. Think, for example, of Noah. Think of Noah building his huge ark in the blazing sun of the Middle Eastern desert.

I can't believe that he was not regularly taunted by his neighbors. Imagine one of his neighbors coming up to the ark. There he is, up in the higher stories. And the neighbor calls up, Captain Noah, what are you building up there?

Is that the Queen Mary? Oh, it's an ark. What about those different rooms? There's a very big compartment for elephants. That's the compartment for elephants, isn't it?

I see. And what about that next one? That's for donkeys. Well, that's your compartment, Captain, isn't it? Because you're a donkey. Eeyore! Eeyore! Noah trusted the covenanted promise of the Lord.

Was he vindicated in the end against those who taunted him? He was indeed. It was they who were drowned. Jesus, too. He was taunted while he was hanging on the cross even then.

[ 11 : 00 ] Matthew tells us in his gospel about those taunts. The chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him, saying, He saved others. He cannot save himself.

He is the King of Israel. Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. Christian believers, we get taunted, too.

It's part of the air that we breathe. It's in the very atmosphere of human culture. Let me give you an example of it. I was traveling by train a few years ago from Aberdeen back to Glasgow.

And at Dundee Station, a man boarded the train and came and sat down opposite me with the little table between the two of us. And we began to talk to each other. He was a man of about my age.

And I soon discovered that he was a professor of medicine in one of our universities. Now, I'm not medical. I don't know a biceps from a triceps. But I began to get him talking about various aspects of his work, which was really very interesting.

[ 12 : 01 ] And once he'd been talking to me for 10 or 15 minutes, he then looked at me and he said, What about you? What do you do? And I said, I'm a Bible preacher and teacher.

And my job is to train students to be Bible preachers and teachers. At which point, he looked at me with a look of incredulity edged with contempt.

And he said to me, What on earth would you want to do that for? It was obvious what he was thinking. He was thinking, Here is a man who appears at least to have half a brain between his ears.

And has he wasted his life teaching the Bible? He could have been a scientist like me. He could have been a school teacher, perhaps. Made a good contribution to society. But he spent his energies teaching the Bible.

And behind his look of incredulity and contempt, I could feel the pressure of 150 years of liberal theology creeping its way into British society.

[ 13 : 00 ] 150 years during which a robust faith and belief in the Bible as the word of God has been simply draining out of the Western world. That's the atmosphere that we live and breathe in.

British people, of course, are fairly restrained and polite. And we rarely get taunted openly and derisively. But we will all face hostile questions. Now, verse 42 in our psalm shows us the ground of our confidence when we're under attack.

Just look at the verse again. Verse 42. Why can I have an answer for the person who taunts me? It is because I trust in God's word.

As a believer, I know his covenant in love. I know that I shall finally be rescued for eternal life. Therefore, let people taunt me. And even before the final rescue comes, God's word will always supply an answer to any taunt.

Let's think for a moment of some of the taunts which are frequently launched at Christians today. I'll pick out three typical ones as examples. Here's my first taunt.

[ 14 : 12 ] How can you Christians possibly believe in a book that was written 2,000, even 3,000 years ago? It's so ancient. Well, here's a possible answer.

We believe the Bible because it has the ring of truth about it. A ring of truth that you'll find nowhere else. It never argues philosophically for the existence of God.

It simply assumes his existence and declares it and demonstrates his existence in his dealings with historical Israel and particularly in the person of Jesus Christ. No other book, religious or secular, opens up the human condition as penetratingly as the Bible does.

And, Mr. Critic, you need to bear in mind that Western civilization owes everything that is good in it to the Bible. Liberal democracy has its roots in the Bible.

The values of honesty, truthfulness, thrift, hard work, loyalty, and public service all stem from the Bible. Our legal system is largely rooted in the Bible.

[ 15 : 18 ] Have you considered that to throw the Bible out of the Western world is to throw out the very glue that holds our society together? Talk number two.

Modern science is now the revealer of truth. The discoveries of physics, chemistry, biology, and geology are increasingly certain. Science establishes truth by moving from hypothesis through repeated experiments exhaustively tested and peer-reviewed to a point of near certainty.

We don't need the Bible anymore. The Bible deals with stories and dreams and visions. Modern man needs the more solid truths that science unveils. Here's a possible answer.

Christians agree wholeheartedly that science reveals truth, wonderful truth. But the truths revealed by science are God's truths. All truth is God's truth.

Every new discovery of the scientist is a fresh revelation of the astounding beauty and fertility of God's imagination and power. There's no conflict between science and Christianity.

[ 16 : 28 ] As the astronomer Kepler put it many years ago about his work, he said, You're wrong, Mr. Critic.

The work of the scientist reveals the beauty and subtlety of the way God has structured the universe. We rejoice in science. The Bible encourages scientific endeavor.

Talk number three. How can you Christians believe that a person's gender is something they have no control over? Surely it's a great fact of modern life that people can change their gender to suit the way they perceive themselves.

Well, here's a possible answer. We Christians hold that the Bible's teaching about human nature is not only true, but is given to us for our blessing and for our well-being.

The Bible teaches us that God made us male and female. That is to say that each of us has been assigned our gender by our loving creator. Therefore, if a young person feels uncomfortable in their given gender, it's far better to counsel that young person to come to terms with reality than to try to change something which cannot be changed.

[ 17 : 50 ] Surgical and hormone treatments which profess to change a person's gender only promote deception. When a young man says, I was a boy and now I'm a girl, he's simply deceiving himself.

His chromosomal data cannot be altered. And if you speak to doctors in general practice, they will tell you that most people who undergo a supposed sex change are susceptible to a high incidence of physical and mental illness in later life.

So-called gender reassignment will usually prove to be a snake that turns back to bite you. Now in describing these modern taunts, and there are many others too, I'm simply trying to illustrate the lovely teaching in our verses 41 and 42.

The reason why our psalmist has an answer for the one who taunts him is that he trusts in God's word. There is no taunt, ancient or modern, that cannot be answered by the teaching of the Bible.

The Bible addresses every question. There is a calm and honest answer that we can give to every objection to the Christian faith. And the ultimate ground of our confidence is the steadfast, covenanted love of God.

[ 19 : 07 ] And even if in this world the worst kind of thing happens to us, even if we get locked up in prison for our trust in Christ, even if a rifle is being pointed at our head, we can calmly trust that the Lord will save and rescue us eternally.

Our life with him does not come to a full stop because of a rifle bullet. As Martin Luther wrote, So there's the first thing.

The Bible is the ground of our confidence when we're taunted, when we're under attack. Then secondly, to have the Bible in our mouths confirms the assurance of our hope.

Look at verse 43 here. It's not quite what you'd expect. 43, And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth, for my hope is in your rules.

Now, you might have expected to read, don't take the word of truth out of my heart. But it's not that. The psalmist says, don't take it out of my mouth.

[ 20 : 24 ] Now, the Bible is usually much more concerned with what comes out of God's mouth than with what comes out of man's mouth. Think, for example, of that great verse, Deuteronomy chapter 8, verse 3.

Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. God speaks, man listens. That's what the Bible is all about.

It's one of the great themes. But in verse 43, our psalmist is thinking about the word of truth which is in his mouth. Don't take the word of truth, the truth about God, the truth from God, out of my mouth.

Now, why should he say that? Surely for this reason, that as long as the truth is in his mouth, it must be firmly fixed in his heart.

You don't speak out about things that you don't think about or know about. For example, most of us, I guess, would never speak out about rocket science. I certainly wouldn't, because we don't know anything about rocket science.

[ 21 : 26 ] Maybe one or two of you do, but most of us don't. We wouldn't speak about it. We speak out about the things that we know and understand and love. So in verse 43, our psalmist is asking God that a time will never come in his life when he stops speaking the truth about God.

Let that truth always be in my mouth. He's a bit like Charles Wesley, the hymn writer. You remember these famous words. Wesley wants to be speaking the truth about the Lord right up to the last moment of his life.

Now, verse 43 encourages all of us to speak the words of truth regularly. The things that we talk about are the things that we know and understand and love.

Our mouths become habituated. They become trained through regular usage. Let me give an example of this. There's a lovely Welshman who speaks regularly on Radio 2 about his allotment.

Hands up those who listen to Jeremy Vine on Radio 2 at lunchtime occasionally. Yeah, okay, just a few of you. Tends to be a certain age group. Anyway, this particular man is called Terry Walton.

[ 22 : 50 ] He lives somewhere down in Swansea or Cardiff. And he gets interviewed about once a week or once a fortnight by Jeremy Vine. So Jeremy says to him, well, Terry, how are your courgettes coming on? Are you winning your battle with the slugs down there in South Wales?

And Terry opens his mouth and out it all comes. A stream of information about what he's growing, what hindrances he's having to combat and so on.

It's a bit like opening a sluice gate. Out it comes sentence after sentence because he knows his subject backwards. The truth about it is always in his mouth.

Now, our psalmist is praying that he will be like that and that he will never stop being like that. Let the word of truth always be in my mouth. That's his prayer. How then can the word of truth be very much in our mouths?

Well, it's been in our mouths already in the last half hour or so. We've been singing it. We sing it to each other and to God in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. I recommended a few weeks ago that we should often read the Bible out loud in our own homes.

[ 23 : 58 ] Reading it out loud, reading it emphatically is a very good thing for us. Don't read it like a mouse. Read it in such a way as to bring out the force of it. And then it'll make much more of an impression.

You'll come to understand it better if you read it out with a sense of force. For example, look onto verse 84 here in the psalm. Just turn over the page if you would.

Look onto verse 84. Now you might read it like this. How long must your servant endure? When will you judge those who persecute me?

Now if you read it like that, you might as well be reading a railway timetable, mightn't you? Read it like this. How long must your servant endure? When will you judge those who persecute me?

The insolent have dug pitfalls for me. They do not live according to your law. All your commandments are sure. They persecute me with falsehood. Help me. Read it with passion.

[ 25 : 00 ] And then you'll feel the power of it. The Bible is a bit like a live electric cable. Put your finger in there and you feel the force of it. If you're alone in your room, you can't be embarrassed.

There's nobody else to hear there and make you feel embarrassed, is there? But you will feel strengthened if you read it out loud with a sense of passion like that. To read the Bible out loud gets the Bible into the very fibers of your being.

Or think of the Bible study groups that many of us belong to. In a fellowship group or study group, you read the Bible out loud, a passage in your group. And then, having read it out loud, and this is another good way of getting the Bible into our mouths, you then talk about it together.

You help each other to understand what the passage means and how that passage reshapes your thinking and your behavior. And as you do this regularly, your tongue gradually becomes loosened.

The Bible begins to fill your mouth. It takes time, but it's worth it. When I was young, I was very, very quiet and shy in group Bible study. I felt that if I opened my mouth, I would put my foot straight into it.

[ 26 : 11 ] But we can all of us gradually learn so that the word of truth is not confined just to the mouths of preachers and teachers. All of God's people can speak it. That's part of the blessing of Pentecost, that the Lord enables all of us to speak words of truth about God and words of truth about the gospel.

Now, there's another element in verse 43 which we need to notice, and that is the final phrase. For my hope is in your rules.

The word rules there really means your judgments or your decision in my favor. What he means is, my hope, my assurance of the future is based on all that you have said to me, promised to me in the Bible about your love, about your choice of the people who belong to you.

Now, for Christian people, what this means is, our hope, our assurance about spending eternity with the Lord Jesus and all his people is secured for us in the decision that God has made in our favor.

However, we have the assurance of all the promises of the gospel. The gospel is a promise from God. It's a promise of peace with God. It's a promise of eternal life with him in the new creation.

[ 27 : 30 ] So if you take the whole of verse 43, the first and second phrases, what our psalmist is saying is that the more our mouths are filled with the word of truth, the more we shall come to understand our hope.

The more we talk the gospel out loud, the more we sing it in psalms and hymns and songs, the more we discuss it with one another in groups and one-to-one, and particularly the more we share it with friends who are not Christians, the more deeply our hearts become assured that the truth really is true and that our hope of the world to come is solid.

He or she who speaks the word of truth regularly grows in the assured conviction that God's promise of life, life with him forever, is not a fantasy but is the very thing that God has made us for.

Do you remember the words of Jesus? He said to the apostles, That is our solid hope.

It's a promise. And to have the words of truth frequently in our mouths confirms our assurance strongly. So to have the Bible often in our mouths confirms the assurance of our hope.

[ 28 : 54 ] Now third, the Bible is the source of our freedom and joy, especially when we're faced with hostility. Look at verses 44, 5, and 6.

I will keep your law continually forever and ever, and I shall walk in a wide place, for I've sought your precepts.

I will also speak of your testimonies before kings, and shall not be put to shame. Now we've thought a little bit about the taunter in verse 42 and of how we have an answer to taunting.

But verse 46 introduces another scenario of pressure, perhaps an even more difficult scenario. And that is the situation where the believer is speaking of God's testimony before kings.

And that probably means a court hearing of some kind. We get examples of that in the New Testament. Think of Jesus. He's brought before Pontius Pilate, who is the representative of the Roman emperor, and he testifies to the truth before Pilate.

[ 30 : 00 ] Or think of the apostle Paul in the book of Acts, whose career so much follows and mirrors that of Jesus. Paul was brought to bear witness before King Agrippa, and he was then sent to Rome to be tried by the Caesar himself.

Now you only testify before kings at risk of your life, usually. Our present queen, of course, is an exception to that rule.

I have a good friend whose name is John Urquhart, and he was once asked to preach before the queen at Crathy Church, which is the little parish church beside Balmoral Castle some years ago.

So he preached his sermon, and the queen was so delighted with what my friend John said in the sermon that at lunchtime afterwards, the preacher gets invited back to lunch at the queen's table in Balmoral Castle.

At lunchtime afterwards, the queen turned to John Urquhart and said, I want you to repeat the main points of your sermon so that other members of the family who weren't in church with me could hear them.

[ 31 : 01 ] So the queen was evangelizing her own family. It was rather wonderful. And when John had finished his little explanation of the sermon, she clapped her hands with delight. She said, Now, Mr. Urquhart, will you please tell us how you came to know the Lord?

That's our queen. It's good, isn't it? Isn't that encouraging? But she, of course, is the exception. The experience of Jesus and Paul is much more normal.

To testify before kings, before senior rulers, is usually a pretty high-risk strategy. So what does our psalmist say about it? Verse 46, I will also speak of your testimonies before kings and shall not be put to shame.

In other words, I won't be gagged. I won't be forced into silence. I will speak the truth about God, even if I risk my neck. But verse 45 helps us to understand his boldness.

He says, And I shall walk in a wide place, for I have sought your precepts. Walking in a wide place. That's a lovely picture of freedom.

[ 32 : 10 ] There's an absence of pressure. You can breathe freely. I wonder if you've ever been in a very narrow place, like down a cave, potholing. Ever been down a cave?

Julie, have you been down a cave? No. Anyway, just imagine, I've done it once or twice, never again. You go down into a subterranean tunnel or channel. You have a light strapped to your head so you can see your way forward.

Sometimes you have to squeeze through a little tiny aperture. You feel like a rat going through a little tiny aperture. You're glad that you're not a 19 stone prop forward when you're trying to squeeze through a little place like that.

And to come out into the open air afterwards is a tremendous thing. Now compare that experience of claustrophobia and being squashed to the experience of walking through a broad valley, like some of those lovely valleys in Perthshire.



Do you know the sort of valley that you can drive through or walk through? Hills on either side, but a broad stretch of a mile or two across, expansive terrain. That's the psychological landscape that our psalmist is talking about in verse 45.

- [ 33 : 17 ] He uses the familiar verb to walk, but he doesn't speak here of walking in the Lord's ways, which is what he often says. He speaks here of walking in a wide place, having a sense of freedom and joy, being able to walk along at ease, to stretch his legs and sniff the breeze and enjoy his life.

Verse 45 is all about the enjoyment of the Christian life, even at times of pressure, even when having to testify before kings. But what is it about his life that enables him to walk in this wide place?

Well, he tells us in verse 45, I shall walk in a wide place. Why? For I have sought your precepts. This sense of breadth and freedom and ease has taken hold of his life because he's been seeking the Lord's precepts.

This man has known for years that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. That's why he's been seeking out God's teaching, getting to know his Bible, the books of Moses, backwards, devouring them.

He's obviously been devouring them. We sometimes speak of devouring a really good book. Well, our psalmist has been devouring his Bible, seeking out its teaching. It has been the quest of his life.

- [ 34 : 38 ] It has become the love of his life. Let's pray for the same kind of hunger for the Bible because as the Bible satisfies our questing hunger, we find ourselves more and more walking in a wide place.

Many people aren't like that, of course. Think of the way that folk often go to see their doctors these days because they're aware that they're not walking in a wide place.

Quite the opposite. They're feeling very unhappy, confined and frustrated in some way. Life has become a burden. Very often, there's nothing wrong with them in medical terms, but they're aware that life is out of kilter.

It's become skewed and it's full of pain. What can the doctor do? Well, antidepressant medication can be helpful sometimes. Regular exercise will certainly be helpful.

Counseling can be helpful. Getting involved with voluntary work and local projects, that can be helpful. But what every human being needs is to know the Lord.

- [ 35 : 43 ] Once we begin to seek out his teaching, we may be under pressures in various ways. We may even be testifying before kings, but we will find ourselves walking in a wide place.

Men and women were made to know God, to come to know him. That is to discover love, joy, peace, truth, forgiveness, reconciliation, and to become part of a wonderful family of fellow believers who provide loving friendship and support, such as the National Health Service can never give.

To be a Christian, to be part of the body of the Lord's Church, learning the Bible, learning to know the Lord, that is the secret of joy. That's the secret of walking in a wide place.

And our psalmist presses his point home in the last two verses, 47 and 8. For I find my delight in your commandments, which I love. I will lift up my hands towards your commandments, which I love.

And I will meditate on your statutes. Those two verses show us the joy which is overflowing from his heart. And you'll see twice, he says, your commandments, which I love.

- [ 36 : 58 ] He loves the words of God. That's what this psalm is all about. People sometimes say, but aren't we supposed to love the Lord rather than his words?

But you can't separate the two any more than you can with ourselves. Think of someone that you love greatly. Think of having a phone conversation with someone you love greatly. As you listen to their words, you're listening to them.

You can't separate the words from the person. The words convey the person. The words are the self-expression of the person. The words of God enable us to know him. Without the words, there could be no communication, no knowledge of him.

What you say communicates what you are. What God says communicates who he is and how greatly he cares about us. His words bring him to us in all his love and power and glory.

And that's why our psalmist at the end of verse 48 says, I will meditate on your statutes. I will think about them and think again and go on thinking about them. And if we will follow his example and learn to seek out God's words, to meditate on them, they will be our joy and delight.

[ 38 : 14 ] And we shall discover more and more what it means to walk in a wide place. Let's bow our heads and we'll pray. God, our Father, how gracious you are and how loving to us when we have deserved none of it.

but you love us and indeed have sent your son, the Lord Jesus, to demonstrate the extent of your love. That he should go to the cross and bear the penalty of our sins in our place.

That he should be raised from death as the guarantee that all who belong to him likewise will be raised from death to be with you forever. And how we thank you for the Bible.

We pray therefore that you will put into the hearts of all of us a growing hunger and thirst to know you and to know your words. That we may delight in them and love them.

And that our assurance and hope should be deepened. And that more and more we shall have courage and strength to be able to speak up for you. And we ask it in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

[ 39 : 25 ] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.