

“ Practical Christianity”

I Thess 5: 16-22 Pt 5

²⁰ Do not despise prophecies.

Introduction

“We live in a time when many people in the church and including many church leaders think that preaching is unnecessary or irrelevant. Preaching, they say, should give way to a motivational message or perhaps a "conversation", to use the Emergents' term. Many Evangelicals still call the speaking that goes in their church services "preaching", but they have changed the meaning of the term and the content of the message so that it bears little resemblance to the Bible's definition of preaching.

In the first two chapters of *Preaching and Preachers*, Martyn Lloyd-Jones asserts something that is almost totally contrary to the postmodern Evangelical view. Preaching, he states, is still the central focus of the life of the church and the service of worship. He further asserts that the growing ineffectiveness of the Christian church in the world is due to the abandonment of the primacy of preaching.

The principal reason for the decline of preaching, he says, is the product of postmodernism itself: the loss of belief in the authority of the Scriptures, due to the diminishment of belief in the concept of absolute Truth.

But Lloyd-Jones is adamant in stating that the only way to meet this decline is head-on, through the restoration of Biblical preaching. Only the Biblical model will work. Man-made, man-centered models will not, for the simple reason that God did not ordain them. He states that the primary task not only of the preacher, but also of the Church itself in all of its activities, must be the preaching of the Word of God. Everything else is subsidiary to this."

The Primacy of Preaching

Dr. Paul M. Elliott

R.L. Dabney, who is a very helpful writer, wrote,

All the leading Reformers, whether in Germany, Switzerland, England, or Scotland, were constant preachers, and their sermons were prevalently expository... We may assume with safety, that the instrumentality to which the spiritual power of that great revolution was mainly due, was the restoration of scriptural preaching. . .

That was really the key to the Reformation. And then Dabney says something that I think is pretty interesting. I think you can relate to this. He said,

a perversion of the pulpit is surely followed by spiritual apostasy in the Church.

Apostasy doesn't come first, Dabney said. The perversion comes first then the apostasy follows.

And he said,

[It is] instructive to note, that there are three stages through which preaching has repeatedly passed with the same results. The first is that in which scriptural truth is faithfully presented in scriptural garb—that is to say, not only are all the doctrines asserted which truly belong to the revealed system of redemption, but they are presented in that dress and connection in which the Holy Spirit has presented them, without seeking any other from human science. This state of the pulpit marks the golden age of the Church.

What does he mean by this? He means this: that biblical doctrine is preached in biblical dress. That is to say the truth is preached from the text. This is the golden age of the church.

Second, he writes, is the transition stage,
In this the doctrines taught are still those of the Scriptures, but their relations are moulded into conformity with the prevalent human dialectics.

John MacArthur

That is to say the truth is still preached. The gospel is still preached. But no longer in biblical dress. It's now put in cultural dress "People don't want to hear the Bible. People don't want to hear exposition of Scripture. You can't just drag people through verse by verse stuff. You've got to come up with cultural ways to communicate these truths. We believe these truths. We believe the gospel. We are evangelical. But we're not going to bore people with Bible

verses. So we take those great truths and we put them in cultural dress that people can relate to.”

Dabney said that’s the transition.

And God’s truth is now, he writes,
shorn of a part of its power over the soul.

Let me tell you something simple. God intended that sound doctrine be taught the way He revealed it and dressed it in Scripture. There isn’t a better way to do that or He would have used it. And if you think there is, mercy on you. You’ve got a god complex.

The third stage, writes Dabney, is then the stage in which, not only are the methods and explanations conformed to the philosophy of the day, but the doctrines themselves contradict the truth of the Word.

And he writes,

Again and again have the clergy traveled this descending scale, and always with the same disastrous result. May we ever be content to exhibit Bible doctrine in its own Bible dress!

Why Doctrinal Preaching Declines by Arthur W. Pink

During the last two or three generations the pulpit has given less and less prominence to doctrinal preaching, until today, with very rare exceptions, it has no place at all. In some quarters the cry from the pew was, ‘we want living experience and not dry doctrine’; in others, ‘we need practical sermons and not metaphysical dogmas’; and yet others, Give us Christ and not theology. Sad to say, such senseless cries were generally heeded: ‘senseless’ we say, for there is no other safe way of testing experience, as there is no foundation for practicals to be built upon if they be divorced from Scriptural

doctrine; while Christ cannot be known unless he be preached (1Cor.1:23), and he certainly cannot be 'preached' if doctrine is shelved. Various reasons may be given for the lamentable failure of the pulpit, chief among them being laziness, desire for popularity, superficial and lop-sided evangelism, and love of the sensational'.

Review

Lesson

Do not despise

Pres. Act. Imperative

exoutheneó: to despise, treat with contempt

Original Word: ἐξουθενέω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: exoutheneó

Phonetic Spelling: (ex-oo-then-eh'-o)

Short Definition: I ignore, despise

Definition: I set at naught, ignore, despise.

HELPS Word-studies

1848 *eksouthenéo* (from **1537** /ek, "completely out from," which intensifies *outheneō*, "bring to naught, reduce to nothing") – properly, cast *out* as nothing; set at naught; "to count as nothing, to treat with utter contempt, i.e. as zero" (*WP*, 2, 281); "*set at naught, despise utterly*" (*A-S*); to regard something as lacking any standing (value).

Prophecies

prophēteia: prophecy**Original Word:** προφητεία, ας, ἡ**Part of Speech:** Noun, Feminine**Transliteration:** prophēteia**Phonetic Spelling:** (prof-ay-ti'-ah)**Short Definition:** prophecy**Definition:** prophecy, prophesying; the gift of communicating and enforcing revealed truth.**HELPS Word-studies**

4394 *prophēteía* (from **4396** /*prophētēs*, "prophet," which is derived from **4253** /*pró*, "before" and **5346** /*phēmí*, "make clear, assert as a priority") – properly, what is clarified *beforehand*; *prophecy* which involves divinely-empowered *forthtelling* (asserting the mind of God) or *foretelling* (prediction).

The word *prophēteias*, which is the word here, is used in the New Testament both for spoken word and for written word. That's very important, because when you go to interpret this, there's not really anything there contextually to help you; and so you have to look at the word, and then you have to go to other texts and find out how it's used. Sometimes it is used for the spoken word, sometimes it is used for the written word.

Romans chapter 12, and just to kind of help you to grasp this word so that you have a clear understanding of this interpretation, you will find in chapter 12 of Romans a list of spiritual gifts. Then in verse 6 is that beginning point of that list, and it says in verse 6, "We have gifts that differ according to the grace given us, let us exercise them accordingly." Then this, "If prophecy according to the proportion of his faith." Now there is the use of that same word. And here it has to do with speaking, a speaking gift. In fact, 1 Peter 4 divides the spiritual gifts into two categories, speaking gifts and serving gifts. The word means to "speak

before.” Not in a prophetic sense, but to stand up in front of people and speak before them. It means literally to speak publicly, to proclaim publicly. This gift, the gift of prophecy, that some Christians have been given, is a Holy Spirit given skill for public proclamation of God’s Word. It is a Holy Spirit given skill for public proclamation of God’s Word.

So, prophecy is a broad term that refers to public proclamation of the message from God. It can be a new message, at least in New Testament times it could be, when they were still receiving revelation and God could speak directly through the mouth of a prophet, or it could be reiteration, that is, simply communicating publicly what God had already said, and already revealed. The miraculous part of it – that is, new revelation, whether it was practical or doctrinal – was distinctive to the early church era.

Most often, even in the early times, most often the gift of prophecy was the ability to proclaim God’s Word already revealed. And in **Romans 12:6**, that is precisely what Paul is saying. If you’ll look back at that verse a minute, I want to call something to your attention that is of utmost importance. In **Romans 12:6**, he says, “If you have the gift of prophecy, use it according to the proportion of the faith.” I want to get that translation right according to the Greek. “If prophecy, according to the proportion of the faith,” not his faith; the possessive pronoun not there in the original. Now, the word “proportion,” very important: *analogia*, *analogia*, from which we get “analogy.” When we say something is analogous to something else, we mean that it has a relationship of agreement with something else. If I say “That truth is analogous to this,” I mean that there is an agreeing relationship; that whatever this is it agrees with this. That’s why the Reformers used to say *analogia scriptura*, the Scripture always agrees with itself, right? It isn’t in disagreement with itself.

So what is he saying in **Romans 12:6**? That this gift of prophecy must be used in proper agreement with the faith – very important statement – in proper agreement with the faith. What is “the faith?” The faith is used several times in the New Testament as a synonym for the God-given body of Christian truth; doctrine; the God-given body of Christian truth; the revelation of God. In Acts 6, verse 7, “The Word of God kept on spreading, the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith,” that is, the doctrine, the truth. In Jude, Jude reminds the reader that we are earnestly contend for the faith. What faith? The once for all delivered to the saints faith, that’s the body of revelation we know as the Word of God. And in verse 20 of Jude, “Building yourselves up on your most holy faith.”

So Paul says in **Romans 12:6**, “Anybody who prophesies, is empowered to speak forth words for God, must be in complete agreement and harmony with God’s already revealed faith.” You understand that? So the one who speaks, speaks in agreement with the faith; that’s how that word is used. So if when Paul says “Do not despise prophesyings,” and we ask ourselves, “What does he mean,” we can say, first of all, he means those utterances coming from gifted men, which are in perfect agreement with – what – the Word of God – the Word of God.

Prophecies can never deviate from the written Word.

And by the way, in Romans 12 the gift of prophecy is in a list that is devoid of any reference to any miraculous gift. No miraculous gifts are listed in Romans 12. Some are listed in 1 Corinthians 12, but not in Romans 12. So we can then discern that this can be a non-miraculous gift; that is, simply

the proclamation of truth in perfect agreement with the Word of God.

1 Corinthians chapter 12.

1 Corinthians 12:10, to another person has been given prophecy, to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues or languages, to another the interpretation of those languages.

Now, there you have some miraculous gifts which were unique to the apostolic era. But the gift is here mentioned again, this time among the miraculous gifts, so we conclude that there are times when this gift, in apostolic time, was miraculous – in fact, when the prophet was literally getting a direct revelation from God, not prior given. So there were times when it had that miraculous element.

I Cor 14:1

Pursue love, and desire spiritual *gifts*, but especially that you may prophesy. ² For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands *him*; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries. ³ But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men. ⁴ He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. ⁵ I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies *is* greater than he who speaks with tongues,

unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification.

⁶ But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by teaching?

³⁷ If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord. ³⁸ But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant.

That is prophecy. It is the proclamation publicly of the truth of God. Now, we don't live in the apostolic era. **Ephesians 2:20** says the church is built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. We're a long way from that foundation. We still have the gift of prophecy, which is proclaiming the Word of God.

Matt 13:14

In Matthew 13, verse 14, you have the same word, *prophēteias*, and it's there referring to Isaiah. **Matthew 13:14**, "In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled," and then He goes on to quote out of the prophecy of Isaiah itself, chapter 6. So here you have this word prophecy not referring to a speaking, but referring to a writing; not referring to verbal communication, but written communication. And in fact here it refers to the Old Testament prophet Isaiah.

Go over to Romans, the very end, the last chapter, Romans chapter 16, and here you have a very interesting statement in verse 26, **Romans 16:26**. He says, does Paul, "Now is manifested" – that, of course, he's referring to the gospel and the revelation of the mystery which is long been hidden; that's the new covenant of verse 25 – "is now manifested" – and how – "by the Scriptures of the prophets." In other words, these men who wrote the Scriptures had a prophetic ministry. They spoke before

the people. They wrote before the people. They gave the Word of God to the people, either in spoken form and/or written form. So we know, then, that the word can refer to speaking or it can refer to the written Word.

Go to 2 Peter, for a moment, 2 Peter 1, he says in verse 19, “We have the prophetic word.” Then in verse 20, he defines it, “Prophecy of Scripture,” he calls it. The prophetic word, the prophecy of Scripture, here is the same term again, and here it refers to inspired Scripture. That little phrase “prophecy of Scripture” in verse 20 was the current term for the Old Testament as a unit. It was the Word prophesied. The Old Testament, then, is the composite of prophesied revelation. Peter’s words also would embrace the New Testament, because he says, “No prophecy, old or new, was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” There he’s talking about prophecy as written Scripture, written Scripture.

Look at Revelation, chapter 1, for just a moment, verse 3. You can just listen if you want. Speaking of Revelation, John writes, “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy.” And there he is calling the book of Revelation the prophecy – the prophecy. In the last chapter of Revelation, three times John refers to the book of Revelation as the prophecy – the prophecy – verse 10, verse 18, verse 19.

When he says, “Do not despise prophesyings,” he is saying, “Do not look down on or consider lightly the revelation of God inscripturated; whether you read it, or whether you hear it proclaimed, do not think lightly of it, do not diminish its importance, do not downgrade or degrade it.”

Job said he treasured the Word of God more than his daily food, chapter 23, verse 12. Jeremiah fed on it every day with joy. Joshua, you remember, in giving that wonderful instruction in

chapter 1, verse 8, said, “The book of the law” – that is the Bible, the Scripture – “shall not depart from your mouth; you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; then you will make your way prosperous, then you will have good success,” **Joshua 1:8**. In Deuteronomy, the Lord instructed the people very, very clearly about how they were to treat the Word of God with supreme devotion. He says to them, “These words which I am commanding you this day” – **Deuteronomy 6:6** – “shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons, shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up; and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontals on your forehead; and you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

Fill your life with the Word of God, is what he’s saying. Fill your whole life with the Word of God.

Psalm 1 said, “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, but who walks in the truth of God.” The man whose life is totally devoted to the Word; “His delight,” it says, “is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night.” That is the godly man. We do not look down on Scripture; we exalt it, we lift it up. “How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord. How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, who seek Him with all their heart,” **Psalm 119:1 and 2**. “O how I love Thy law,” said David. That command, then, takes us to a very serious consideration of Scripture. “Do not degrade the Word of God.” Treat it with eminent respect is what he is saying.

Now, this is only possible for Christians. **First Corinthians 2:10** says that God is revealed them to us through the Spirit. And then down in verse 14, **1 Corinthians 2:14**, “A natural man” – that’s an unconverted man, a non-Christian person – “does not accept the things of the Spirit of God. They are foolishness to him; he

cannot understand them because they are spiritually appraised.” The unregenerate person cannot lift up Scripture, exalt Scripture properly.

Martin Luther said that “the unconverted man is like a pillar of salt; he’s like Lot’s wife, like a log and a stone, like a lifeless statue which uses neither eyes nor mouth, neither sense nor heart, until he is converted and regenerated by the Holy Spirit.”

The best the unsaved man or woman can do is to gnaw on the bark of Scripture without ever really getting to the wood.

Kierkegaard, the Danish philosopher, suggested, I think, a graphic illustration of the wrong approach to Scripture. And he was looking at all these people in Academia, who purport to be Bible scholars, and he said this,

“A little boy is to be spanked by his father. While the father goes for the rod, the boy stuffs the bottom of his pants with several table napkins. When the father returns and administers the whipping, the boy feels no pain as the napkins absorb the whack of the rod. The little boy represents biblical scholars. They pad their britches with their lexicons, commentaries and concordances. As a result, the Scripture never reaches them as the Word of God. Having nullified its power by shielding themselves with their academic paraphernalia, they thus never hear the Scriptures as the Word of God. If they would unpack their books from their britchesthen the Scriptures could get through to them as the Word of God.”

“Do not despise prophecies” – do not downgrade, degrade, think lightly of the Scripture.

In fact, if you do, there is no way possible that you could ever live a Christian life, because the only chart, and compass, and manual you have is the Scripture.

What are some ways that we are downgrading, degrading, devising and rejecting the Prophetic Word The Bible

Amos 2:4, King James Version (KJV) ...they have **despised the law of the LORD**, and have not kept his commandments...

2 Chronicles 36:16 But they mocked God's messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the **wrath of the LORD** was aroused **against his people** and there was no remedy.

Jeremiah 6:10 To whom can I speak and give warning? Who will listen to me? Their ears are closed so they cannot hear. The **word of the LORD is offensive** to them; they **find no pleasure** in it.

Jeremiah 8:9 The wise will be put to shame; they will be dismayed and trapped. Since they have **rejected the word of the LORD**, what kind of **wisdom do they have?**

Jeremiah 9:12c-14a Why has the land been **ruined and laid waste** like a desert that no one can cross? [13] The LORD said, "It is **because they have forsaken my law**, which I set before them; they have **not obeyed** me or followed my law. [14] **Instead**, they have followed the **stubbornness of their hearts**

Hosea 4:5-6 You stumble day and night, and the prophets stumble with you... [6] **my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge**. Because you have **rejected** knowledge, I also **reject you** as my priests; because you have **ignored the law** of your God, I also will ignore your children.

Mark 7:9, 13a And he said to them: "You have a fine way of **setting aside the commands of God** in order to observe **your own traditions!**... [13a] Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down.

2 Timothy 4:3 For the time will come when men will **not put up with sound doctrine**. **Instead**, to suit their own desires, they

*will gather around them a great number of teachers to say **what their itching ears want to hear.***

1. Liberalism\
 1. Denial of the inspiration of scripture
2. Evangelical Darwinianism
 1. Denial of a literal view of Creation
3. Moral Relativism
 1. Capitulation of the church on Marriage

In 2015, The [Presbyterian Church USA](#) (not to be confused with conservative Presbyterian denominations like the PCA, OPC, and others) leaders voted to formally recognize and approve of same-sex marriages. With a membership of 1.8 million, this makes the Presbyterian Church USA the largest Protestant denomination in America to open embrace homosexuality and gay marriage.

Read more at <http://godfatherpolitics.com/21120/presbyterian-church-rejects-gods-word-in-favor-of-same-sex-marriage/#GRZFRqSo55lrMs2P.99>

4. Evangelical pragmatism
 - a. Decentralized Pulpit
 - b. Overemphasis of the Practical at the expense of the Doctrinal
 - c. Seeker Driven rather than Worship Driven

Why should I not despise the Scripture? Why should I not do it?
And I'll just run this by you very briefly.

1 because of its essential character -

We talked at the very beginning about the uniqueness of the Bible, but let me just tell you about its character as it comes from its own claims.

1 it is authoritative.

Isaiah 1:2 says, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord has spoken." When God speaks, you'd better listen; it is authoritative.

2 it is infallible

And that is collectively, totally, comprehensively, it misses nothing, makes no mistakes. **Psalm 19:7**, "The law of the Lord is perfect. The law of the Lord is perfect." It is total, comprehensive and perfect. And then I like to use the word inerrant. While it is infallible in the whole, it is inerrant in every part. **Proverbs 30:5** and **6** says, "Every word of God is pure," every one – every one, down to the jot and the tittle, "which will not be removed," Jesus said. The Word of God is authoritative. When God speaks, you'd better listen. The Word of God is infallible; that is the comprehensive Scripture is flawless.

3 It is Inerrant

There is not one mistake in it; in its original autographs, every word of God is pure.

4 it is sufficient

It is able to totally transform the soul, Psalm 19 says, to make simple people wise, to bring rejoicing to the heart, to enlighten the eyes. It is sufficient. It is able to make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. It is able to make you wise unto salvation, **2 Timothy 3:15** to 17. It is sufficient for everything.

5 it is effective.

You remember Isaiah 55 says, “So shall My Word be that goes out of My mouth, it shall not return to me void but shall accomplish what I please.” It is effective. When God speaks a word, it comes to pass.

6. it is determinative.

. What do I mean by that? Your response to the Word of God is determinative of your eternal destiny. “He that is of God hears God’s words. You, therefore, hear them not because you’re not of God.” When someone comes along and denies the authority, infallibility, inerrancy, sufficiency, and effectiveness of Scripture, all they do is reveal their spiritual condition, because if you don’t hear God’s words, you don’t belong to God. Jesus said that. If you do, you belong to God. It is determinative in ascertaining one’s eternal destiny.

So why should we not despise Scripture? Because of its essential character,

2 because of its generous benefits

1 Scripture is the source of truth. **John 17:17**, Jesus said, “Thy word is truth.” Oh, what a great, great reality that is. Thy word is truth.

2 It is the source of happiness,

secondly, it is the source of happiness. **Proverbs 8:34** said, “Happy is the man who hears Me.” John said, in **1 John 1:4**, “I

write these things so your joy may be full.” Luke says, “Happy is the man who obeys the Word,” Luke 6:47 and 48, Luke 11:27 and 28,

that’s all throughout Scripture.

Revelation 1:3, “Happy is the person who reads this book.” It’s the source of joy and happiness and blessedness.

3, it’s the source of victory. “Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin,” said the psalmist.

Ephesians 6:17 says, “Take the sword of the Spirit,” which is our weapon.

When Jesus was tempted, according to Matthew 4:1 to 11, every time He was tempted He answered with what? Scripture. He said three times, “It is written.” Yes, the Word of God is the source of our victory over temptation. It’s the source of our happiness. It’s the source of truth.

4 it’s the source of growth. You remember how we have referred often to 1 Peter 2:2, “As babes desire the pure milk of the Word that you may grow by it.” The Word is the source of our growth.

Spurgeon had a great word. He said, “It is the Word that prunes the Christian. It is the truth that purges him, the Scripture made living and powerful by the Holy Spirit.” That’s true. The Word cleanses, purifies and that’s the key to growing.

That’s why in John 15, Jesus said, “The Word is like a pruning knife;” it cuts off the succor branches so that the power of growth can reach the productive areas. The Word is the only source of truth, the only source of happiness, the only source of victory, the only source of growth.

5 the only source of guidance. Psalm 19:8 says that the Word is right, and what it means is it lays out a right path. It is a right path to walk in.

And then Psalm 119:105 says, “It is a lamp to that path.” It is the path, it is the lamp that lights the path; it is the way to walk. It makes us wise. It reveals God’s will.

6 it is the source of hope –.

Over and over again in Psalm 119, the psalmist says, “I have hope in Thy Word, I have hope in Thy Word, I hope in Thine ordinances,” which means the Scripture.

And so, the Word of God is the source of truth, and happiness, and victory, and growth, and guidance, and hope, and we could probably add a lot more to that list, but you get the idea. Little wonder it should be more desired than honey, and the honeycomb, and gold, even fine gold. Why, then, do we pursue it?

For the reason of its essential character, and its marvelous generous benefits.

3 Then a last issue; how are we to pursue it? How can I be sure I don’t despise it? Very simply. How can you be sure you don’t despise Scripture?

1 believe it.

That’s where it starts. Jesus cried out again and again to people, “Believe Me – believe what I say.” And in **John 5:24**, He said, “Truly, truly I say to you, he who hears My Word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and doesn’t come into judgment.” Believe it. Another way to say that is to say, “Receive it” – Paul said to the Thessalonians, “I’m so thankful that when I preach to you the Word of God you received it, as it is the Word of God.”

2 honor it.

What do we mean by that? Exalt it, lift it up. How do you do that? In obedience – in obedience. Don’t be a huckster of the Word, **2 Corinthians 2:17**, don’t use the Word to manipulate for your own purposes and your own ends. He says in **2 Corinthians 4:2**, “Some people adulterate the Word of God, but you are to honor it, to exalt it, to treasure it.”

3 love it.

David said in **Psalm 119:97**, as I mentioned earlier, “Oh, how I love Thy law,” and then as you get to the end of Psalm 119, there are just a myriad of repeated statements with that same thought in mind. “Thy Word is very pure,” **Psalm 119:140**, “therefore Thy servant loves it.” Deep affection, deep desire – that’s what Peter was talking about when he said, “As a babe desires, you’re to desire.”

fourth. Obey it.

In fact, the greatest mockery that you can render to Scripture is to say you believe it, but don’t obey it. “If you continue in My Word, you’re My real disciple.” “If you say you abide in Christ, you ought to walk the way He walked.” And how did He walk? In perfect obedience to God’s Word. Jesus told the story, you remember, about the two houses, and one went down in the flood, Matthew 7, and one remained, and the difference was that one person “didn’t do the will of My Father,” and the other “did the will of My Father.”

5 fight for it.

Jude 3 says, “Earnestly contend for the faith.” Engage yourself in the battle for the Bible.

6 study it

– “Study,” Paul says, “to show yourself approved unto God, a workman needing not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.” Be like the noble Bereans, “who searched the Scripture daily to see whether these things were so.” Be like Apollos, of whom it was said he was “mighty in the Scriptures.” “Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly,” **Colossians 3:16**.

7 proclaim it –

If you obediently and faithfully believe the Word, honor the Word, love the Word, obey the Word, fight for the Word, study the Word,

proclaim the Word, you're not going to look down on it. You're not going to despise it. It will be too much a part of the fabric of your life.

a little **note about Martin Luther and how he studied the Bible.** He said, "I study my Bible like I gather apples. I shake the whole tree first, that the ripest might fall. Then I shake each limb, and when I have shaken each limb, I shake each branch. And then I shake every twig. And then I look under every leaf. I search the Bible as a whole, like shaking the whole tree. Then I shake every limb, I study book after book. Then I shake every branch, I give attention to the chapters. Then I shake every twig, or a careful study of the paragraphs and sentences and words and meanings."

The Word is such a unique book. "When I am tired, the Bible is my bed. Or in the dark, the Bible is my light. When I am hungry, it is living bread, or fearful, it is armor for the fight. When I am sick, it is healing medicine, or lonely, throngs of friends I find therein. If I would work, the Bible is my tool. Or play, it is the harp of tuneful sound. If I am ignorant, it is my school. If I am sinking, it is solid ground. If I am cold, the Bible is my fire, and it gives wings, if boldly I aspire. Does gloom oppress? The Bible is a sun. Midst ugliness, it is a garden fair. Am I athirst? How cool its waters run, or stifled, what a vivifying air. Since thus thou givest of Thyself to me, how should I give myself, great Book, to thee."