

The Precious Word of God

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[0 : 00] Well, you've heard the saying that not all that sparkles is gold. And not all that the world tells us is precious is truly precious.

! Not all that your own heart tells you is precious is precious. And surely not all the voices whispering in your ear telling you what is precious are correct.

And that's why we need the Bible. Because here God tells us what is really precious. What is really worth running after. Giving yourself to.

Lock, stock, and barrel. And so we're in this study of the precious things of God by Octavius Winslow. And we're coming then to the word of God itself.

The next precious thing is the word of God. It actually comes up later in Winslow's book. And I've bumped it up here.

[0 : 59] Because I think it follows next and shows the interconnectedness of the precious things of God. We started with the preciousness of Christ.

He's the most precious thing of all. And yet, how do we perceive his preciousness? To you who believe he is precious.

And so we looked at faith that perceives Christ as precious. And so faith itself is precious. And then we saw last week that the things that try and test and perfect and prove faith are precious.

Trials are precious. And then we ask, well, what informs faith? Well, we're back to the word of God, aren't we? And so the word of God is precious. Because it informs our faith.

And enables it to be purified through our trials. And to make Christ more precious to us. And all these things are woven together. And so we're going to look next at the preciousness of God's word.

[2 : 06] Let's just sing number 674 in your hymnal. Holy Bible, Book Divine. Precious treasure, thou art mine.

It's number 674. And as we sing, you're going to see a preview to our lesson this week and next. Several reasons why the Bible is so precious to us.

So let's sing with thanksgiving 674. Well, that was the appraisal of the psalmist. Let's turn to Psalm 19 this morning.

And I just want to jump down to verse 10 for our launching off verse in our study today. We'll return to this chapter.

So hold your place here. But verse 10, speaking of the words of God, they are more precious than gold. Than much fine gold. So we sing, Holy Bible, Book Divine.

[3 : 07] Precious treasure. More precious than gold. Than much fine gold. Now I like the way Winslow attacks his subject in different chapters.

He'll often say, well, this is precious because of what it is. Precious and then precious because of what it does. And we've seen that style.

And so I'd like to follow that scheme today. First of all, the Word of God is precious because of what it is. And the first thing we want to say here is that the Word of God is precious because it is the Word of God.

And I think we who have had Bibles so long have grown familiar with them such that we lose something of the wonder of what we have.

We have the Word of the eternal, infinite, unchangeable God. And He speaks to us in a book.

[4 : 10] The One who was, who is, and is to come. He has spoken and written it down in a book. And in opening its pages, we're reading.

And we're hearing the very voice of God Himself. As much as the Israelites heard the voice of God from Mount Sinai giving the ten words. As much as Saul of Tarsus heard the voice of Jesus on the road to Damascus.

No less the Word of God for having come to us through human authors, prophets, apostles, and different men that spoke by the Holy Spirit.

So that all the scriptures are inspired by the Holy Spirit. And therefore, what the Bible says, God says.

And so this is as much the Word of God as if no man was involved. As if God Himself lowered it from heaven on a hook in your backyard.

[5 : 13] No Word of God. And then here one day comes this rope with a hook on it. And there's a book. And you went and you opened it and began to read.

And the very first thing you read is, In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. And right away you realize this book is written by the one who predates creation.

Because He's telling you what it was like to create. The Word of God. And that's what separates it from the 130 estimated books that have been written.

In human history. The thing that separates this book is, and makes it utterly unique, is that only here is God speaking. And since it is His Word, it comes with all of His authority, all of His knowledge and wisdom and truth.

Like its author, it is true and trustworthy and without error. For the Word of the Lord is flawless. It's truth. It's truth. It's unchained and unchanging.

[6 : 20] It's forever settled in heaven. And that means it's never out of date, never needing to be revised to keep up with the times.

Rather, the times are forever falling behind the word of God and need to be brought back up to God's word, what he has said. So you can put all your weight upon this book and never be disappointed.

Holy Bible, book divine. That's what makes it precious. Because it's divine. It's God speaking to us.

Now, some old books draw a high price because of their rarity. I recently saw a program where the U.S. Bill of Rights, an original copy of the 13 copies that were written and then given to the 13 first states, was sold for \$4 million.

Only 13. High price. The Codex Lester Leonardo da Vinci is the most famous of da Vinci's scientific journals.

[7 : 34] Just 72 pages of a notebook filled with his handwritten musings and theories on everything from fossils to the movement of water to what makes the moon glow.

And in 1994, Bill Gates snatched it up at an auction for \$30.8 million. It was precious because it was precious because it's rare. There's only one copy of that.

Well, this book is precious because there is none like it. God speaks here. God speaks here. And so the Word of God is precious because it is the Word of God.

And if we ever downgrade the Bible from that, if we ever introduce error into the Bible and we think of it somehow as being less than what it is, the inspired, inerrant Word of God, it will lose its preciousness.

And that's why the liberal denominations of our day that long ago sold out the Bible as the Word of God no longer have people hungering and thirsting to hear it preached from their pulpits.

[8 : 38] Because now they're trying to sort out which part is really the Word of God and which is the corruption of man. Well, the Word of God.

Book divine is a precious treasure. Now, if we went no further, we would just have to conclude from that that the Word of God is precious. Just from what it is.

But the Bible is just full of statements of being precious because of what it does. And there's indeed overlap between these two things.

And so I want us to think, first of all, that God's Word is precious because it reveals things that we otherwise would never know. We know things that without this book we wouldn't know.

The past. Think of the origin of the universe and what a puzzle that has been to men. And how men are continually spending billions of dollars to try to figure out the origins of our universe.

[9 : 45] And we have the maker of the universe telling us how he made it. But he even tells us things before that. He tells us things that happened in eternity past.

In that eternal covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son. The Father choosing a people and giving them to the Son to come and redeem by his own precious blood.

We find things that happened before the creation of the world. How else would we ever know? That's rare knowledge. And we only know it because God said it. Future things.

The reality of this awaitingness on the other side of death. Again, man's always trying to pry into that, aren't they? Trying to figure out what happens after death.

And here we're told. It's appointed unto man once did I. Then the judgment. And then heaven and hell. Forever and ever.

[10 : 47] How do we know that? We know it because God has told us. Even as we sang, Holy Bible, precious treasure, thou art mine. Mine to tell me of joys to come.

And of the rebel sinners doom. How would you know either one of those had he not told us? Was it not a privilege to sit and hear the destiny of every one of us who are in Christ?

That we're headed for a world of perfect love. Perfect love. Joys to come. How do we know that? Because he has spoken about it in his word. Unseen things.

Angels, demons. God the Father. God the Son. God the Holy Spirit. The realities of prayer. That on the other side of prayer there is a listening God. And a Savior at his right hand interceding for us.

All these unseen things. We know them because he has revealed them in a book. Think how little we would know had God not given us the Bible. Does it not make the Bible precious?

[11 : 48] Because it reveals what we otherwise would never know. And really a lot of what follows on that. So secondly, it reveals God to us. God reveals God in the Bible.

He reveals himself. How do we know this glorious God? Well, here is true knowledge about him in a book.

This is not man's ideas about God. But this is God's ideas about God. God's own knowledge of himself revealed to man. His own self-revelation.

So let's think of all of man's books about God. And let's put them on a pile over here. All of the philosophical and theological books that have ever been written.

I think God is like this. I think he should be like that. The God as I envision him is like this. And here is this massive pile of books of man's ideas about God.

[12:47] And then over here we just have the one book. Again, it's absolutely unique from every other book about God. Because here he tells us what he's like. The difference is huge.

It's the difference between biography and autobiography. Isn't it? Last week I quoted John Payton up in a chestnut tree with cannibals hunting him below with their muskets.

I didn't tell you what someone else was trying to imagine that Payton was thinking about when he was up there in that tree. That would be biography.

What I think would be going through his mind at a time like that. No, rather he tells us himself because he has written an autobiography. And he remembers and he's telling us exactly what he was thinking, what he was feeling.

And so the Bible is not just another book of man's ideas about God, but it's God telling us himself what he's like, what he thinks, what he's planned and decreed.

[13:55] 1 Corinthians 2 is a chapter about God's revelation. That God has revealed many things to us by his spirit in scripture.

And 1 Corinthians 2:11 says, For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? Who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit in him?

Who of you knows the thoughts of my spirit right now? Only I. So I'm thinking of a number between one and a million.

All right, you got one? You got a guess? No, you're wrong. It was two. All right? Anybody had two? How do you know what I'm thinking about unless I tell you?

That's what 1 Corinthians 2:11 is saying. And then it applies it to God. In the same way, no one knows the thoughts of God except the spirit of God.

[14:57] And in scripture, he has revealed the thoughts of God to us. Precious treasure, thou art mine.

Now when we think about the truth about God, God revealing himself to man, there are really two books that he's given us. The first is the book of creation and providence.

And so I told you we started in Psalm 19. We're going back there. Because Psalm 19 begins with the book of creation and nature, doesn't it? That the heavens declare the glory of God.

The skies proclaim the work of his hand. Day after day, they're pouring forth speech. Every night, they're declaring knowledge about God. And that declaration goes to all languages.

It goes to all places. It is a revelation about God. Now, what does the creation book teach us about God?

[16:02] Let's list some things that it teaches us about God. His power. His order. His authority in what way, Rex?

Excellent. He's in control of it all. It's not just haphazard. We find there is an authority behind the creation. What else? Wisdom.

Pardon? How do you see that in creation? Or providence? It was perfect before the fall.

Okay. We don't see a perfect creation, though, do we? So, we need some other information. We wouldn't maybe know that just by looking at our world, that it's perfect.

Combine all those, his otherness. His otherness. In that sense, his holiness is his otherness. He's not part of this.

[17:04] He's over it. There's got to be a being that's not creation but is over it all. His eternal Godhead. His majesty. His majesty.

What about his kindness, goodness? Does anything in creation teach you about his goodness or kindness? Doesn't he send rain on the just and the unjust and cause food to grow to make man happy? And we see something of his goodness, his kindness.

Jim? His love. Yeah, just look at the world and how many things are in it.

Just because God is so full of love and kindness and goodness to his creature. So we learn many, many things about God in the book that he's given us, namely creation and providence.

But what's the one great omission that we can't learn from the book of creation? The gospel.

[18:05] What must I do to be saved? What must I as a sinner, a rebel against this God that's made me and is going to judge me one, what do I have to do to be right with him, to be saved by him?

And, yeah, Winslow is waxes poetic at this point. And that there's not a flower below, a star above that will tell me of Jesus, the savior of sinners.

You can look into the sky all night long and you'll never hear about Jesus and his substitutionary curse bearing, how he bore God's wrath in the place of sinners who trust in him.

That God demonstrates his love for us in this, and that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. For that, we need a different book. And that's the thing about the book of creation.

It is enough light about God that every one of us ought to be fearing, worshiping, trusting him. So there is enough light in the big book of creation to make us all without excuse, Romans says, Romans chapter 1.

[19:14] But there is not enough light in it to tell us how inexcusable sinners can be forgiven. So we turn away from the book of creation.

And Psalm 19 lays out the glory of God revealed in creation. But then it's going to turn to the second book at verse 7 and prove to us the greater glory of God revealed in the scriptures.

Here he reveals himself to us more clearly than in the created order. So the Bible is precious because it reveals God to us.

It reveals the only way of salvation to us. 2 Timothy 3.15, Paul says to Timothy, How from infancy you have known the holy scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

You didn't learn that, Timothy, by looking at the stars or the flowers. You learned that from the holy scriptures at the knee of your mother and grandmother. And that's where we are made wise for salvation.

[20:27] So we're given the word of God to make plain the way of peace with God. And does that not make the Bible precious to us because it alone tells us how to be saved?

John Wesley wrote, God has condescended to teach the way.

For this very end he came from heaven. He has written it down in a book. Oh, give me that book. At any price, give me the book of God. I have it.

Here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be a man of one book. Here then, I am free from the busy ways of men. I sit down alone.

Only God is here. And in his presence I open, I read his book. For this end to find the way to heaven.

[21:49] So, the Bible, the word of God is precious because it reveals the only way of salvation. And, sure, tied up with that, but fourthly, it reveals Christ.

It not only reveals God, it reveals the way of salvation, but it reveals Christ. The Bible is supremely a book about him. And so many are in search of the historical Jesus today.

If only they would come to the Bible and let God be God and let him teach us who Jesus is. He's the Jesus of the Bible. That's the historical Jesus. But they attribute much of the Bible just to the fanaticism of his followers.

Well, they wrote that about all these miracles and that he rose from the dead. They were fanatics and they wished that it were true. But that's not the true word of God. And so they're forever trying to find the historical Jesus.

This part of the Bible, this part of the Gospels was just fanatical followers. This part is real. He really said these things. And so they're ever searching to find the historical Jesus.

[22:58] Denying the miraculous, the supernatural. But the Jesus revealed in Scripture is the historical Jesus. It's the Jesus that lived and died and was raised again and ascended into heaven and is coming again.

And it's God's own revelation about his son. So here's a book about Jesus. So let's read it to find Jesus in it. Let that be one of the things we're aiming at as we read this book.

To know him better. Paul says, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For whose sake I have lost all things.

I want to know him. And here's a book to get to know him. Winslow speaks, It's a great danger to study the book merely intellectually.

Without any desire to know the precious Savior revealed there. How differently to study it as the word of Christ. With soul hungering and thirsting for him.

[24:00] To read it with an aim to know him. To know that precious Savior who died for sinners. That divine Redeemer who purchased his church with his own blood. That friend who loves us.

That brother who sympathizes with us. That enthroned Christ who intercedes for us within the veil. So with the psalmist, I open my mouth and pant.

Longing for your commands. Why? Because I want fellowship with this Jesus. So do we read to find Jesus in the scriptures. That's the important thing.

Many Jewish leaders of Jesus' day diligently studied the scriptures. Jesus said. But because you think that by them you possess eternal life. But these are the scriptures that testify about me.

But you won't come to me. That you might have eternal life. So scripture. It's a book about Jesus. Now let's return to Psalm 19.

[24:58] For the remainder of our time. Psalm 19. We've seen that God reveals himself in the book of creation and nature. Now at verse 7.

We're going to see him shift to the book of scripture. And what we find is an even brighter display.

If the heavens are declaring the glory of God. Here is an even brighter display of God's glory in scripture. Now beginning at verse 7.

We have the psalmist telling us what the word of God is. And then what it does. And I found that interesting. As we've noticed that method in Winslow.

He's just following what we find in many places in the word of God itself. So let's see what it is and what it does. Verse 7. We begin. The law of the Lord is perfect.

[25 : 57] Reviving the soul. What is it? It's perfect. Not many things in this life are perfect. Imperfection seems to mar so much of life in this age.

But in such an imperfect age. Here is something perfect. The word of the Lord is flawless. The law of the Lord is perfect.

Now what does this perfect law of the Lord do? Well it revives the soul. It quickens to new life. Now that happened originally at our conversion.

Didn't it? We were dead in trespasses and sins. And God uses his word as an instrument in quickening us to new life. 1 Peter 1.23.

For you have been born again not of perishable seed but of imperishable through the living and enduring word of God. Quickened to new life.

[26 : 57] James 1.18. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth. So the Bible quickened us to life initially as we were born again.

It was God's instrument to bring a conviction of sin. A sense of who we are and why we need Jesus. And to hold before us Jesus as Savior and Lord. And to give us faith through the word you see.

But then after the initial quickening at conversion there are many times, so many times in the Christian life where we are in need of reviving. Where our hands are hanging down.

And our feet are dragging. We're growing weary and doing good. We're tired of suffering long. We're tired of fighting temptation and sin. We're tired of waiting on the Lord.

Then why is it that we don't quit? Why don't we give it up? And walk away. Well here's one reason. Because the perfect law of the Lord revives our soul.

[28 : 00] It has this life-giving influence upon us. And it revives the fire maybe down just to a glowing coal. And it comes along and its truths blow upon that coal and bring it back to a flame.

David was here from time to time. How long, O Lord? How long will you forget me forever? Will you hide your face? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I wrestle with my thoughts?

And every day have sorrow in my heart. How long will my enemy triumph over me? And it was then when he was lagging in life that the word of God came with life-giving freshness to his soul.

And he says to us in several places, I have put my hope in your word. Yes, I'm weary. I'm bone weary. But I am hoping in what?

Your word. I wait for the Lord. My soul waits. And in his word I put my hope. In other words, he said things in his word to revive our hope. Hope. And hope is a grace that strengthens us.

[29 : 06] Because those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. And that's why they go on fighting and waiting and suffering and serving and obeying. Because God's word is a reviving word to them.

And if you've been a Christian for very long, you know what David is talking about. And why he is celebrating the word of God in this Psalm 19. You too have found this perfect word to revive your soul.

It breathes fresh life into you. Put new strength into your stride. It strengthens your resolve to fight on, to run on. Does that not make the word of God precious to you?

A reviving word. The world has its five-hour energy drinks. The believer has the reviving, quickening word of the living God. Well, David, why else is the word of God like more precious than gold?

Well, he says in verse 7, the last part, It makes me wise. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. Notice again what they are.

[30 : 19] They're trustworthy. Oh, we live in a deceitful world with a deceitful devil and deceitful flesh. All kinds of lies. What's it worth to have a trustworthy word that you can bank on?

Put the whole weight of your eternal soul and know you'll never be disappointed. Here it is. A trustworthy word. So God, in his infinite wisdom, who has made us and who controls this world that we live in, has concluded that there is one very best way to live.

And he's written it down in a book. And he's given it to us. Here it is. And that is a trustworthy word. And every single human being who has followed that has proven that he's right.

And everyone who's rebelled against it has proven that he's right. This is the very best way to live. Here it is. It's a trustworthy message. And that's what it is.

How precious to have a trustworthy message in a world of lies, in a world where there's a way that seems right to a man, but it ends in death. Oh, God, give me a trustworthy word to follow.

[31 : 30] Here, son. Here it is. Well, what does this trustworthy word do to us? Well, it makes the simple wise. Anybody ever called you a simple?

If you've read the Proverbs, you've been called simple, haven't you? That's how we enter the world. Simple. Naive. We go the wrong way.

We don't see things as they really are. We're not street savvy. We're stupid. We're naive. We're simple. And here's a book to make us wise. What's wise?

What's wisdom? It's living according to God's way, according to his knowledge. And this book makes us wise when we start out simple.

So in perusing God's wisdom in Scripture, we're taught wisdom. We're made wise. But without God's word, what are we left with?

[32 : 27] Well, we're left with somebody else's recommendation. How safe is that? We're left with trial and error. You try to live your life the best you think.

Isn't that what people are doing? Constantly doing? And they're constantly revising. Why? Because they're seeing maybe halfway through life, oh, this is not the right way.

Now what do I do? Well, I look for another way. Folks, we've got to get it right the first time. We only have one life. And so how precious is it to have trustworthy words given to us?

This is the best way to live. And we can live our one life that way, made wise by God. How David loved the word of God because it made him wise.

He says, your statutes are my counselors. What men pay to have counsel given to them. Here it is, God's counsel. His commands teach me knowledge and good judgment.

[33 : 28] God, your commands make me wiser than my enemies. I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes. I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts.

Well, I don't know what his elders were doing. But he's saying that he had more understanding, insight, wisdom than his enemies, his teachers, and elders. Why?

Just because he gave himself to the study and obedience of God's word. I gain understanding from your precepts. Therefore, I hate every wrong path.

So they're trustworthy words. You can bank your soul on them, and you will never be put to shame. That makes the word of God precious. 19.8. The next reason, the precepts of the Lord are right.

Giving joy to the heart. So they're right. Right in God's sight. Not what men say are right. This is what God says is right. And what do they do?

[34 : 24] Well, they give joy to the heart. I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches.

It's lottery joy. That kind of joy. It's not a little joy. I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches.

They are the joy of my heart. Now, David didn't live on a different planet. He had plenty of suffering and sorrow, yet like Paul, he could say, as sorrowing, yet always rejoicing. Because he had found an oasis of joy in this desert of sorrows, God's word.

In other words, God says things in his word to make our hearts glad, to make our hearts joyful. That's what Jesus told his apostles in the upper room that night.

He laid out all kinds of things to them. And then he said in chapter 15, I've told you this so that my joy might be in you and that your joy might be full. In other words, he said things to cause our hearts to be right full up and overflowing with joy.

[35 : 31] And the Lord Jesus knows where we live. He knows the many joy robbers in a world that's under the curse. And so he has spoken to us words to fill us with joy.

So we have come to the word of God beaten down and depressed and sorrowing. And then we've left with a song of joy. How many psalms start that way and end that way, you see?

Something about God revealed in his word. Some promise, something about our future, some revelation of God's heart. And it brings us into the fellowship with God himself.

And that's the greatest joy giver. Just fellowship with him. In whose presence is fullness of joy. What a precious thing is the word of God. Because in a world of trouble, a veil of tears, it gives joy to the heart.

And then lastly, it enlightens us. Verse 8b. The commands of the Lord are right, giving light to the eyes. What are they? They're radiant. They're bright.

[36 : 40] That's good news for us who live in the dark. Without God's law, without God's word, this is a dark planet. But here are some radiant words.

And what do they do? They give light to the eyes. The entrance of your word gives light. It gives understanding to the simple. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

So I'm making my way through a very dangerous world. And there's a very narrow road that leads to everlasting life. And then there's a broad road. And there's a lot of people on it.

And it leads to everlasting destruction. And I've got to find my way. And it gets dark. What's it worth to have a light? A light that shines upon my path.

And leads me to the celestial city. And leads me and points out the ways of wickedness. Displeasing to the Lord. The traps of the devil. Exposes the temptation for what it is.

[37 : 40] What's it worth to have a light like that? To make our way through this life? Oh, it's a precious light. Precious word. It guides us and leads us in that path of righteousness.

By them is your servant warned. And in keeping them there is great reward. What a light. To show me the way that leads to destruction. And to show me the way that leads to great reward.

Well, no wonder David bursts out. These words are more precious than gold and much fine gold. Sweeter than honey and honey from the comb.

And he ends the psalm, you'll notice, with a prayer. May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be pleasing in your sight.

Oh, Lord, my rock and my redeemer. In other words, I want my words to be affected by your words. And I want my thoughts and meditations to be affected by your thoughts and meditations.

[38 : 43] So let this precious book that's joy-giving, light-giving, wisdom-giving, let this book so come to my heart that I start to bear the impression of it.

And my thoughts are your thoughts. I start thinking your thoughts. And so may the thoughts of my heart be pleasing in your sight. And your words, the words that come out of your mouth, will so affect my being that the words that come out of my mouth will also be pleasing in your sight.

And David realizes that he doesn't have the strength and he casts himself upon the Lord, his rock and his redeemer. You're my strength. Only in you can I find such help and strength.

So the book is utterly unique. It's precious because it is the word of God. Let's read it this week with that fresh awareness as if it were let down from heaven on a hook.

This is the word of God to me. Let me meet with him then. Let me meet with the Savior then as I read my Bible. And we'll come back next week and see more of the reasons of why this book is precious.

[39 : 58] And I trust we'll come back with a testimony of our own, even in this coming week, of how we have found the word of God precious to us. We're dismissed.