



TRANSITION:

Good morning Church! If you have a Bible or Bible App, and I hope you do, go ahead and make your way to ***Psalm 119 verses 33-40/Psalm 119:33-40***... While you're getting there I'll tell ya: I am REALLY excited to be with you this morning! Honestly, been looking forward to this day for about 5 months now - because unless you've been doin' a multi-month quarantine or something, you know that TODAY we are re-launching the church! Amen? Yes! For the last 5 months or so, we've been working hard to NOT JUST get us to a place where we can gather together on a regular basis - Today being the launch of every-other-week Sunday Gatherings like this - BUT working hard to get us to a place so that WHEN we gather like this, it'll be a time of real reminder and refreshment AFTER having spent all week living on mission together; ya know studying the Scriptures together within DNA Groups, and applying em as a part of our Missional Family Meals, and being hospitable to neighbors...so that WHEN we come back together here - no matter how up or down the week was - we can simply take a breath and joyfully anticipate hearing from the Lord, as we sit under the authority of His Scriptures! I'm excited.

But TOO I'm excited because TODAY we are beginning a new series we're calling "***True Myth: From Genesis to Revelation.***" It's taken from C.S. Lewis who called the Bible and more specifically, the Gospel; a "*True Myth*," meaning a worldview-forming grand story up there with all the greatest stories ever told EXCEPT...that it's true! And so as the name implies, we're gonna be spending the duration of 2021 walking through the whole Biblical story together! "*From Genesis to Revelation!*"...Now I'll tell ya, I'm a little nervous about this, because how do you synthesize something that has 31,102 verses, in 66 books, written by 40 different authors, in 3 different languages, across multiple continents, over the span of 1,554 years? I mean there's even 3,237 different characters in the Bible, 31 of which are named "Zechariah"¹...AND YET, what I believe you're gonna see this year, is that in all the books, all the verses, all the personalities, there's really only ONE story being told; ONE person being anticipated in the OT, manifested in the Gospels, proclaimed in Acts, explained in the Epistles and consummated in Revelation! One person who lived, died and resurrected in such a way that people throughout history haven't asked "*who He is*," but "***WHAT He is.***" Every character, every genealogy, every command, every story...whispering His name!

So I'm excited, because I really believe that if you'll commit to engaging with this series, it could change your life!

- For some of you, what's gonna happen is you're gonna see the big picture of the Bible for the first time. We obviously won't be unpacking every single verse this year. But we will be working our way from ***Genesis to Revelation*** and those sections that give you a sense of the whole story. And for some of you, I believe it's gonna make sense in a powerfully fresh way.
- For others of you, I really believe that you're gonna discover what real happiness looks like. Cuz instead of continuing to try and withstand the pressure of thinking you need to look within

¹ Bible facts taken from: "A Year of the Bible" // *The Whole Story* #1 // Psalm 119 - J.D. Greear (<https://summitchurch.com/GetFile.ashx?Guid=664bf83a-3dcd-42af-80cf-b89fcf5f7923>) and "Bible Overview - Tommy Nelson, Charlie Dunn.pages"

you or around you to discover happiness, you're gonna be compelled to look UP²...and in so doing, discover the one whose created you to be supremely happy in Him!

- And still for others of you, I really believe you're gonna find a true ballast for your life/an anchor for your soul. Cuz let's be honest, just because the calendar changed to a new year doesn't mean we won't experience hardship this year. And "what you need when life falls apart, is a Bible that won't!"³

So...whether you're new to Christianity, curious about Christianity, or a Christian simply looking for a resource with which to love and serve neighbors, I can't think of anything more beneficial than this time we're gonna spend together every-other-Sunday! So I HOPE you'll commit to it. You do and I promise you, this time next year, you will not be in the same spiritual place as you are right now. 2021 could be your best year ever!...So...you ready?

TEXT:

Psalm 119:33-40! Very simple message for you today, though you might be thinking, "*Pastor, if we're going from Genesis to Revelation, shouldn't we start in, oh I don't know, Genesis?*" Yes! HOWEVER, before we begin unpacking the STORY of the Bible, I want you to SIMPLY see the VALUE of the Bible you have in your hand. Cuz frankly, if you don't see that, you'll never take the time to read, meditate-on and apply the story that's in it. That's why I've titled this first message, simply, "**A Year In The Bible.**"...Cuz **Psalm 119** is not only the longest Psalm AND longest chapter in the Bible; it is the longest love-poem in Scripture. BUT a love-poem not about marriage, or children, or food, or nature - things you'd think the longest love poem oughta be about. No! It's about the Bible/the value OF the Scriptures.⁴ Let me read you one of it's 22 stanzas: **vv.33-40** if you'll follow along:

"Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes; and I will keep it to the end. — Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart. — Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it. — Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish gain! — Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways. — Confirm to your servant your promise, that you may be feared. — Turn away the reproach that I dread, for your rules are good. — Behold, I long for your precepts; in your righteousness give me life!"

In that stanza, which is representative of the whole Psalm, you see three simple but profound things: You see **What The Bible Actually Is; How We're To Engage With It In Light Of What It Is; and Where We Find The Ability to Engage With It In The Way We Should.** So **First, What The Bible Actually Is:** Everyone has an opinion about the Bible right? One of the fun things about being a teacher OF the Bible is that I'm never short on opportunities for conversation. Because for as many people as there are ought there, there's just as many opinions

² Idea framing adapted from <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/better-way-find-happiness/>

³ Quote from https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/life-bible/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=tcgcblog

⁴ Insight on nature of this psalm from Kevin DeYoung's book, *Taking God at His Word: Why the Bible Is Knowable, Necessary, and Enough, and What That Means for You and Me*, pp.10, 14

about the Bible. But ya notice, throughout these verses, the Psalmist has a very particular understanding of the Scriptures. Actually, he uses a number of synonyms for them. You see, he calls em, “*God’s statutes,*” His “*Law,*” His “*Commandments,*” “*Testimonies,*” “*Promises,*” “*Rules,*” and “*Precepts.*” See that? But THEN, ya notice in **v.37**, he says, “*Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in...your ways.*” So there’s a sense here in which, when the Psalmist reads the Scriptures, he obviously sees “*precepts*” and “*laws*” and “*commands.*” But in another sense, sees something... “*alive*”...sees God’s “*ways,*” which is to say, sees an expression of who God is...Write this word down: “Revelation.” The psalmist sees the Bible as Revelation! Ya ever wondered why we call the Bible “the Word of God” or “Scripture”? It’s because of this. To say something is the “word of God” is to say it’s been “revealed” by God. And if God’s “revealed” something, it’s proly a big deal right? Proly something we would consider “sacred”...which is exactly what the word “scripture” means; “Sacred!” So the psalmist is telling you that when he engages the Bible/when you engage it, you’re engaging something sacred, BECAUSE God Himself has revealed the contents of it.

Now, I know that might sound crazy, since our culture likes to relegate the Bible to AT BEST, being a collection of enlightened thoughts, by humans, about God. But you gotta understand: THAT is not the way the Psalmist here, or certainly Jesus later EVER thought about the Bible. Nowhere in Scripture is Scripture talked about as enlightened human thoughts about God. No! It’s God’s enlightened thoughts about Himself, to us! HIS revelation. Listen to how **2 Timothy 3:16** says it: “*All Scripture is BREATHED OUT by God and profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness.*” “Breathed out” - From God’s mouth!...A certain neighbor of mine will often say to me, “*C’mon. How can something written by imperfect humans be the word of God?*” And it’s a good question, with a lot of ways to answer it. But essentially it comes down to tension. Tension’s of course the ability to hold two things, that’re opposed together right? And obviously we live in a world FULL of tensions. SO it shouldn’t surprise us that there’s theological tensions too. For example, Jesus being both human and divine. That’s a tension right? The human side of Jesus meant that He was, to some degree, limited in His knowledge and power - proly why Scripture doesn’t record Him shooting lightning bolts out of His hands and stuff. BUT He was also 100% divine, which meant 100% free of error and sin. 100% man/100% God!...Not ironically, THAT is the SAME kind of tension we have with the Bible. Because it TOO is 100% human, in that it was written by fallible human beings, but ALSO 100% divine, making it perfectly free from error!⁵...And you say/as many people do, “*Well, that still seems crazy, SO I’ll just believe in Jesus, but not all the stuff written in the Bible.*”...Only problem with that is: JESUS believed all the stuff written in the Bible was divine. He said, “*sooner would heaven and earth pass away than one syllable of it become untrue.*”⁶ **Here’s my point:** What you have in your Bible is Revelation! Something wholly different in both quality and kind than any other book, text, or document out there. **That’s WHAT The Bible Is!**...The question is: **Do you believe that?**...If Not, that’s fine, but can I encourage you to NOT be intellectually lazy about this. If you don’t believe, you need to know WHY you don’t believe.

⁵ Explanation “A Year of the Bible” // *The Whole Story* #1 // Psalm 119 - J.D. Greear (<https://summitchurch.com/GetFile.ashx?Guid=664bf83a-3dcd-42af-80cf-b89cf5f7923>)

⁶ Matthew 5:18; John 10:30

Cuz honestly, if you're right, it's no skin off your back. But if you're wrong and this really IS God's word, but you refuse to engage it as such...you've got A LOT to lose...Or maybe you're saying "I'm Not Sure I believe this" - That's ok too, but can I encourage you? Keep joining us on Sundays, SO THAT you can decide for yourself?...AND if you Do Believe this, let me ask: Does the way you engage the Bible actually reflect that?

Because the ***Second*** thing you see in the text here is **How We're To Engage The Scriptures IN LIGHT Of Them Being God's Revelation**: Just look at how the Psalmist describes the way he approaches/or at least wants to approach the Scriptures. He says he wants to "*Keep it to the end*", "*Keep and observe it with his whole heart*", "*Delight in it*", "*Be inclined to it*", "*Find life in it*", "*Fear it*", "*See it as good*," even that he "*Longs for it*." Those are clearly not words of duty. Those are words of devotion.⁷ Really, they're words of love. Cuz ya see when he says in **v.40** that he "*longs for (God's) precepts?*" It literally translates being "lovesick" for God's word. He's not just studying the Bible or even saying, "*I'm gonna obey it*." He's poring over it. Passionate about it. Filled with delight as he reads it...***Is that how YOU feel about the Bible?***

I'll give you a scenario. Even if you say you value the Bible, this'll help you see if your behavior actually aligns with your belief. Imagine if I offered you \$500k to never again see, talk to or even think about your children if you're a parent, or your spouse if you're married, or your friends if you're a single person. \$500k to never again see, talk to or even think about em. Would you do it?...I'm just gonna assume, cuz you're all sane people, that the answer would of course be, "*No!*" And that's because you're, in a sense, lovesick for your kids, your spouse, your friends, and you know that no-price tag can be put on that!...But let me ask you another question: If I offered you \$500k to never again touch, read, talk/or even think about your Bible, would you take me up on that?...Most of you/hopefully, would again say "*No!*" But let me now ask: In saying "*No*," aren't you then admitting that, at the very least, the Bible is an asset worth over 1/2 million dollars?...Is there any other 1/2 million asset you'd just ignore?...If not, why are you ignoring the Bible/not consistently pouring over and devouring it?...And by-the-way, even those of you who woulda said, "*I'm not sure if I'd take the money or not, cuz I'm not even bought-in to it being Revelation from God*." That's fine, but if I offered you that \$500K to never read, hear or think about it again, I would still contend that you wouldn't take it BECAUSE if there's even a chance that it IS God's Word, then you wouldn't wanna be cut off from it for ANY amount of money...So why aren't YOU devouring it to figure out if it actually is the Word of God?⁸...***Are you lovesick for the Bible?*** Do you look forward to spending time in it? Prioritize it? Love sharing what you're learning from it, and gathering with people to discuss and apply it?...**THAT'S How We're To Engage The Bible.**

Which brings me to the ***Third and Final Point***: **WHERE We Find The Ability to Engage With It In That Way**: Cuz, let's be honest: For most of us, including me, the Bible doesn't have

⁷ Insight into the wording here adapted from Willem A. VanGemeren, "Psalms," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelien, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 744.

⁸ Illustration adapted from "A Year of the Bible" // *The Whole Story* #1 // Psalm 119 - J.D. Greear (<https://summitchurch.com/GetFile.ashx?Guid=664bf83a-3dcd-42af-80cf-b89fcf5f7923>)

nearly the place of prominence it should... And ya know what, the psalmist was no different. Cuz ya see throughout, he makes all these petitions: “*Teach me...*”, “*Give me...*”, “*Direct me...*”, “*Turn my heart...*”, “*Turn my eyes...*” “*Fulfill me...*” In **vv.36-37**, he even says, “*Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish gain! Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things...*” He WANTS to love and obey God’s word, but he also finds his heart easily turned to other things. **Can you relate?** And so what does he do?/What can you do? Two Things: **First**, you gotta start with **Humility**. And by that, I mean a kind of positive self-scrutiny. A willingness to be honest with yourself that if you’re gonna actually love what God loves; namely, His Word, God is gonna have to be the one who engenders that love in you. That’s why the psalmist is making all these petitions, asking for motivation and understanding. Cuz he’s humble enough to know that if he’s gonna love God’s word at all, or just more than he do now, he’s gotta start with humbly admitting that he doesn’t love it as much as he should... Maybe my favorite story in the NT is **Mark chapter 9**. It’s the story of a Dad who’s son is deathly sick. And so he takes him to Jesus’ Disciples to get him healed. But for one reason or another, the Disciples aren’t able to do it. So the Dad is totally distraught and this argument breaks out among him, the Disciples and a crowd, which Jesus sees. So Jesus steps in and asks, “what’s up?” So the Dad tells him: “*I brought my kid to be healed and your guys, who are supposed to have all this power, couldn’t do anything.*”... And what happens next is what’s so remarkable. Because the expectation is: Well have no fear, Jesus is here! Except that Jesus doesn’t immediately heal this child. INSTEAD, it’s like He starts a counseling sesh with this Dad UNTIL the Dad admits, quote, “*Jesus I believe you can heal him, but help me in my unbelief!*” Translation? “*I believe...ish.*” And right then, it’s as if Jesus goes, “Good enough” and simply heals the kids with a word!... A lot of times, the heavy lifting for Jesus is not helping or changing you. It’s getting you to humbly admit that you need help and changing. That’s where the psalmist started. And it’s where you’ve gotta start too.

But **Second and Finally**, you’ve gotta see that, ULTIMATELY, the only way you’re ever REALLY gonna love God and His word is when you see that God’s word is ultimately about how much He loves you. In **v.40**, you see the psalmist makes what seems like an odd statement. He says, “*Behold, I long for your precepts; in your righteousness give me life!*” And it’s odd, because it’s almost like a new thought. He’s been praising God for His word and petitioning God to help him love and obey His Word, but then suddenly begins talking ABOUT God/ “*His righteousness*” and out of His “*righteousness,*” blessing him with “*life.*”... You see what he’s saying? He’s saying, “*God, when I come*”/when any of us comes to the Bible, we’re not just coming to something that gives us examples, inspirations or even tools for how to live. We’re coming to the true story of how a “*righteous*” God has given us “*life!*” In other words, we’re coming to a love-letter! A book not about duties you need to DO for God, but about what God has DONE for you. How He’s come to rescue and give you “*life*” when you failed your duties, didn’t uphold the example, and rejected His tools. Every character, every genealogy, every story ultimately whispering the name of the one who, as **1 Peter 3:18** says, “*suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God...*” Ya see? It’s a love-letter! And when you understand it as that you’ll do what we all do with love letters: begin pour over it, examine every word of it with delight. Read it over and over... Treasure and RESOLVE to treasure it... **What would it look like for you to make that kind of resolution today?**

APPLICATION:

Friends, I wanna give you a chance to BEGIN discussing and APPLYING that question. So at this time we're gonna move into various breakout rooms for just about 10 minutes. And each of these Breakouts'll be organized by Missional Family Meal. So if you're connected to one, you'll be automatically placed with others in your Missional Family. If you're not - no worries - you'll remain here for just a low-key time to connect and ask any questions. But after 10min discussing 2 questions that're gonna be put onscreen now AND which you'll have in your breakouts, we'll all re-gather back here for a short time of celebration around what you discussed, and a sending blessing. Ok? Ok! At this time we'll move into those breakout rooms and you can start chatting together..."

- ***This Sunday's Application Questions: What Has Been Your View Of The Bible? // What Would It Look For You To Resolve To Treasure The Bible More?***
- ***CHARLIE BREAKOUT: Welcome > How Connected > Q&A/Abridged Covenant Card Share***

CELEBRATION:

Hey, Welcome back! I know 10 minutes is not a long time. Certainly not enough time to unpack those questions in full. BUT that's kinda the point. Our hope is that you would take those questions along with what we discussed today and continue the conversation during your Missional Family Meal time, as that's REALLY the space where we seek to apply the Scriptures together.

But in the meantime and before I send you out with a blessing, would 1 or 2 people be willing to come off mute and BRIEFLY share any Aha's today, or things you discussed that feel like evidence of God working, so that we can celebrate along with you? Anyone?

SENDING:

Church as you are SENT into your week, to live on mission as a family together, receive this truth from 2 Timothy 3:16, "*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness*" Go in peace, treasuring, loving and devouring this wonderful revelation that God has given us. You are SENT!