

Make the Bible Your Best Friend

by Erlo Stegen

God's word is a guide for living a pure life, and it has the power to keep us from sin and bring us spiritual growth.

Duration: 1:03:33

Scripture: Psalm 119:9-132, Matthew 6:33, Mark 5:19, Mark 5:43

Topics: "Bible Reading"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance and power of God's word. He shares a story of a minister who punished his child by making him memorize Psalm 119, highlighting the value of knowing and treasuring God's word. The speaker also shares his personal testimony of being healed from cancer, attributing it to the power of God's word. He concludes by urging listeners to repent and choose the right path, emphasizing that God's word is the guide and rule by which we should live.

Transcript

This is now an engagement service. There's a young man that's getting engaged. Now years ago, our forefathers, when they were in the mission field, a young man got engaged and the bride-to-be was in another country.

They would get another girl to represent her at the engagement. But now we don't do it that way, we'll just ask the young man to come forward. Michael is a German, he speaks German, and I would have spoken German too, but unfortunately you all haven't learned German.

You didn't learn it at school, so I can't speak German here. Michael is a German, he speaks German, and I would have spoken German too, but unfortunately you all haven't learned it at school, so I can't speak German here. What's the name of the couple? What's the name of the young man? Philip.

Philip. Philip, the son of? Manhat. Philip Manhat, he's the oldest.

Oh, Philip Manhat. Philip Manhat, he's the oldest. Michael is getting engaged to Barbara.

Barbara is in Switzerland. So they will be having an engagement service in Switzerland this afternoon while we are doing it here with Michael. But then today in Switzerland, it's an activity of Phillip Manhat, who some of us remember.

He was here when he was a small boy and he's getting engaged to Tamara. And now we'll hand over to Michael. Some days ago, I went to buy my wedding ring, and the lady in the store, when I paid, she asked me, do you want anything else for your girlfriend? And then I realized, that's how the world thinks.

I promised my life to Christ when I was 16, and I'm 32 today. And I want to thank the Lord, I never had a girlfriend in my life. And I think it has two main reasons.

I attended a government school, a secular school, and I was used to see boys and girls kissing each other, sleeping around, and it was just, they would change partners. But there was always a God-fearing spirit in our house at home, and my parents would have never, ever allowed it to my brother or to me to bring a girl back home. It was an unwritten law in our family, but we understood it well.

My father passed away four years ago, but my mother is here, and I want to thank her for being so strict with us. And the second reason is meeting with the revival, where I learned purity is not only not having a girlfriend, but living your life in the light. And I'm not ashamed of the testimony, I can say I'm proud of it, for the glory of God, And the engagement today, it reminds me of an advert for watches, Omega watches.

There's an advert for Omega watches with Michael Schumacher. And the slogan on that advert is, Michael Schumacher's choice. But the slogan for this engagement is not Michael Muller's choice, it is God's choice.

It was only prayer and seeking God's will. As Tandavs, we thank you Lord for the testimony of your child, for saying this has not been my choice, but he felt it is God's will, God's choice. Lord Jesus bless them both, grant that their time of engagement will be a bright outshining to all the world, to show Christians and non-Christians, Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, this is the right way.

Till the day will break when they stand before the altar, and you bring them together to be one flesh. May they be holy in spirit, soul and body, in their thought life, everything. May their words holy unto the Lord be written upon everything.

Amen. Amen. When I asked him, I said, Michael, is there a word in the Bible on your heart? Because I was pretty sure that most probably most of you will not be at the wedding, which will probably be in Europe.

Then he said, yes, there is a word that was a tremendous blessing to him, but he doesn't expect that one should preach about that. He says there was a word that was always a help to him in his youth, and which kept him from much sin. And that we find in Psalm 119 and verse 11.

Thy word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against thee. He said, Uncle Elo, that's the word that has helped me in my life. I treasured, I kept God's word in my heart, and that kept me from sin.

The Bible, God's word, will separate you from sin, or sin will separate you from the Bible. But I'd also like to read verse 9. How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to thy word. Let's stop reading there.

Psalm 119 is the longest Psalm in the Bible. And in fact, there is no longer chapter in the Bible, right from Genesis to Revelation. It's the longest chapter.

It has many, many verses which go over a number of pages, five or six pages. There's a man of God in Germany, who was a minister, and his child was naughty, and he punished it. But how did he punish it?

There are many ways of punishing your child, even though the government has passed a law that you're not allowed to punish your child by giving it a hiding.

But there are many ways that you can give a child punishment. So he used this method. He sent the child to the bathroom, said, go and lock yourself up in the bathroom, and go and learn the 119th Psalm off by heart.

Said to the child, you'll only come out the bathroom when you've learned to say the whole of Psalm 119 off by heart. From beginning to end. If I'm not mistaken, after one and a half hours, the boy came out, and from the first verse to the last, and the father didn't find one mistake.

People's brains aren't the same. Some are very gifted. They've got like a photographic memory.

They read it and it sticks. Some people don't have brains like that. Other people, they actually sit on their brains.

Now it doesn't matter what type of brains you have. What is important is that which God tells you, even if it's one verse, keep that what he says. Now we don't know who wrote this psalm.

Some psalms we know are written by Asaph or David, but this one is not known who it was written by. But there are many theologians who say the probability is great that it was written by Ezra. After he had built the temple, when you're at home, you can read in Ezra 6, verses 13 and 14.

It's wonderful. It's a wonderful story to read how the king said to him he could go to Jerusalem, and he gave him whatever he needed for his journey. Now Michael says what helped him in his life is that he kept, he treasured God's word in his heart.

And that kept him from sinning against God. Dear boys, dear girls here, you young person, that's what will help you to keep, to treasure God's word in your heart. And that will keep you from sinning.

That's why in verse 9 it says how can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to his word. Even in the New Testament, the Lord Jesus spoke in John 15. And he said if you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you.

You see here how he says for one thing if you abide in me and then he changes it and he says and my words in you. It's interesting isn't it? If you abide in me, we abide in him. And then he changes and he says and my words abide in you.

Then you'll ask whatever you want, whatever you will, and you'll receive it. In this chapter the Lord also says you have been cleansed by the word which I have spoken to you. God's word cleanses us.

God's word is like water that washes us. We can bathe in this and we are cleansed by it. And God's word is like a seed.

When it is in us, it abides in us. It will grow in us and cause us also then to pray in the right way, not just praying for anything that is worthless and nonsense, but we'll ask and pray according to God's will. Now this psalm that goes over so many pages, it is a song of praise and thanksgiving, thankfulness to God for his goodness.

There is nothing, there is nothing as sweet. It is sweeter than honey, God's word. It also works in us, it helps us, it brings us life and saves us.

It also keeps us from sin and from doing what is wrong. Some people say when I read the Bible I feel nothing, it just doesn't make sense to me. It's because of sin.

Get rid of the sin and suddenly God's word will become alive to you. God's word is like water that washes us. We can bathe in this and we are cleansed by it.

And God's word is like a seed. When it is in us, it abides in us. And then before you read the Bible you pray and ask God to direct you to the right verse and that he will speak to you through it.

And then you don't even need to read many chapters, sometimes you only need to read one verse and God will be speaking to you through it. And sometimes two or three verses and you realize, now God is speaking to me. And then you stop and consider what God is saying to you.

Then you meditate on that, think on that, maybe it's not even one verse, just one letter and God strikes your heart, speaks to you. And then you pray and ask God to direct you to the right verse and that he will speak to you through it. And then you meditate on that, think on that, maybe it's not even one verse, just one letter and God strikes your heart, speaks to you.

And so it is also when you share God's word with other people, before you do it, pray and ask God to prepare you and to speak to you, that you can pass on to others what God has said to you. And then you will be serving them with something fresh, it will be like fresh bread out of the oven. So that I may speak.

How can you pass on God's message to others when you haven't even received it? When you haven't received it from him in the first place, then you will stand up and say, well I don't know what I must say, if I've got to say something now what will I say? You see you are dry spiritually, dead. You've got nothing to pass on. Now this psalm is a repetitive meditation on the beauty of God's word.

Even among the Zulus you find this, and they may have learnt it from the Hebrews, but they also repeat, even a song, they sing the same verse over and over again. They repeat the same words over and over again and that helps you to remember what you have said or sung, that repetition helps. And it helps you not to quickly forget the word.

That also often helps me, when God shows me something through a verse, I will go back and read it again and again, sometimes for a few days in a row, even when I'm on the road, driving in the car, I'll be thinking about this verse, that repetition helps. Now this psalm is a repetitive meditation on the beauty of God's word. Even among the Zulus you find this, and they may have learnt it from the Hebrews, but they also repeat, even a song, they sing the same words over and over again and that helps you to remember what you have said or sung, that repetition helps.

And it happens that someone opens the Bible and his eyes fall on a certain verse, he reads it, it's a blessing to him. Maybe the next day he opens his Bible, it falls open exactly in the same place, and it happens over and over again. And the person realises, God is speaking to me, he wants to say something to me through this word.

And so it is that God's word is alive to him, God is speaking to him. Now this whole psalm is all about God's word. Every verse, it's all about God's word.

There are only two verses where God's word isn't referred to specifically. Verse 122 and verse 132. Otherwise every verse in this Bible refers to the word of God.

And these verses reveal to us the wonder, the beauty of God's word. And these words and verses keep us and teach us to be pure before God. They help us to grow in God's grace and in our faith.

Some people they enjoy looking at pornography, that's what they enjoy. Others they have posters of men or women hanging up there. Those are things of hell.

But God's word far exceeds that. Far... It's far more beautiful and you who have experienced it will agree with me. But you who don't know it, obviously you live in a different world.

Our ancestors there in Germany, they used to write a Bible verse above the door of their homes. Where you entered you could read a Bible verse. Even sometimes when you walked into the cow shed they put a verse.

And these days I read a verse and I thought, I wish I could write this above the entrance of my house. And some people in the East London area where they experienced revival in the past, they would write a Bible verse even on their bicycles or on their car or even on their clothing. Because the word of God was so beautiful, so lovely to them.

But of course if you do it, just make sure that you live accordingly. Some people they put a fish on their car. By that saying and showing that they are a Christian.

Years ago the Christians used to use that as a sign that they could identify each other. Others didn't know what it meant. But whoever knew about it would then recognize that person as a fellow Christian.

Twenty-two. the alphabet. alphabet.

alphabet. A, B, C, D, E, F, G. alphabet. A, B, C, D, E, F, G. alphabet.

A, B, C, D, E, F, G. From A to Z. From A to Z. alphabet. The twenty-two stands as a portion in this psalm. And each portion begins with a Hebrew letter, with the alphabet.

we've got our A to Z. Now they've got their alphabet and every portion begins with a different letter with those 22, one of the 22 letters in the Hebrew language. So this psalm has got its own peculiarities. Peculiarities.

This was just by the way but also just some things which will help you perhaps remember different aspects. This psalm shows us the importance of keeping and remembering God's Word. Remember the Bible.

It's the only sure guide for living a pure life. There is no other guide. Even if governments and even if some churches want to do away with the Bible but there is no other book, nothing else that can teach us and instruct us like Take the Bible out of your family.

You'll see what will become of your children. Take it out of the schools. You'll see what will happen there.

Take it out of government. You'll see the result and then the result will be that one passes laws like legalizing homosexuality and prostitution and all those things. But remember the election is just around the

corner.

Where are you going to make your cross? I'm just sorry I forgot a book or a letter in my office. Someone gave it to me. It's written about someone in Denmark who is against Christianity and he claims not to be a Satanist but he says I'm against Christianity.

I don't want it. And he's trying to influence people to go against Christianity. He makes and designs women's dresses or clothing.

Now I don't know all the names of your materials. Most long jeans are from denim or what? What do you call it? Denim. Where are my children? Now on these denim jeans he's put a cross but upside down by that portraying the message that I despise the cross and Christianity and I trample it underfoot.

He wants the girls and all the ladies to be influenced against Christianity and on their denim jeans he puts the cross in front upside down. I said well in a way he's actually making it easier for me because I'll soon recognize these ladies that wear these denim jeans and then I'll be able to see who they are and what they stand for. Ah, I don't know all the names of your materials.

Most long jeans are from denim or what? What do you call it? Denim. Where are my children? Now on these denim jeans he's put a cross but upside down by that portraying the message that I despise the cross and Christianity and I trample it underfoot. Now I don't know all the names of your materials.

Most long jeans are from denim or what? What do you call it? Denim. Where are my children? Now I don't know all the names of your materials. Most long jeans are from denim or what? What do you call it? Now let us who call ourselves Christians stand up and work while we have the opportunity.

But even if you're a school child don't say well I'm still at school I'll do it later. You may not even finish school. Now this psalm teaches us to treasure the word of God.

Declare it to others. Meditate on it. Heartily delight in it.

And by the grace of God act according to it. Don't be ashamed of that. So Michael when he got converted gave his life to the Lord when he was 16 years old.

He treasured God's word in his heart. And that kept him all these years. That extra 16 years.

He's doubled his age since then. And so he will be able to when he gets married to Barbara he'll be able to say to her you're the first one in my life. Now he asked me originally he said can you please phone Barbara and speak to her and ask her whether she'd be prepared to get engaged to me.

I asked Barbara whether she knew Michael Muller from Germany because she is from Switzerland. She said yes I know him. And then I said well he'd like to he's asking that you pray and ask God whether it would be his will for you to get engaged to him.

She said well uncle I'd never thought of Michael in that way. No thought has ever crossed my mind like that. But she said she always had the prayer saying Lord if it would ever be your will for me to get married please give me a husband that is a man of God who fears you and who serves you and that I can support him in that.

She said but I will pray about it. And I said I will pray about it because he's not the first one to approach me. Others have come as well and I haven't felt it was God's will to get married to them.

So the answer was no to those. There are those that can say no. Not like others who just say yes yes yes to everything.

Don't just grab anybody with blind eyes. Anybody Lord. Just anybody Lord.

You know that story of the girl who was so desperate to get a husband. And people would get engaged there and engaged there. And she didn't get a husband and she counted her years.

So one night she was so desperate she went out of the house. She went under a big huge tree and she prayed and it became more emotional more emotional more emotional always louder louder louder. And she didn't know there was a owl in the tree and the owl got a fright when it was so loud.

And she said just anybody Lord. Just anybody Lord. Just anybody Lord.

Rather be a spinster than just anybody Lord. Such who? It's not good to get that desperate. The Bible even says sometimes it's better not to get married than to get married.

Many people get married and then they don't make it. Their marriage ends on the rocks. I was once very ill to the point where I thought I could die.

But this book was so precious to me. And so when I meet people that are very ill I tell them to make the Bible their best friend. The Bible will heal you.

Any doctor who knows my story shakes his head and he says I can't believe it. I was with a specialist the other day. He was thrilled when he saw the count of my blood.

And I wasn't. I was concerned about something else. He says don't you hear? I've got good news for you.

It's like this. I'm a living miracle of what Christ can do. I should have been in the grave 10 years ago and I'm still alive.

I'm a fitter today than I was then. And this doctor told me you know that cancer should have been in all your bones. In all your body.

And they can't find a trace of it. And one specialist told me look when you die you'll die of something else. You won't die of this sickness.

My doctor was a Jew. Unconverted Jew. He said I can't understand it.

I can't understand it. It must be the spirit that's in you. So you understand that this life I'm living is not my own.

It's not yours. I gave it to God. And that's why I don't preach like other preachers.

I tell you the truth. You'll repent or you'll be damned. You go God's way or you're a citizen of hell.

There are no two ways about that. And you choose the right way. Psalm 119 teaches us there's a guide.

There's a rule by which we've got to live. And that's God's holy word. No other way.

Well maybe I must stop now. Maybe you're tired of sitting already. So Michael we wish you God's blessing.

Don't forsake the Lord's way. Be faithful to him. And keep and treasure God's word in your heart.

It will keep you from sin and from many things. Let us pray. We pray Lord Jesus.

Help us through your grace that we will always abide in you. And that your word abides in our hearts. And that your word will be alive in us.

Amen.

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