

BYOBible
Our Own Bible – A Place to Start
September 26, 2021

Overarching Theme: In 2021, FUMC will be SENT with the peace of Christ!

Instructions:

When using this material as teacher, feel free to pick and choose the point you want to emphasize in the lesson. *The format of the curriculum is designed to have an abundance of information in which to refer as desired.*

Core Point:

On Easter evening, the Risen Christ appears to his gathered disciples for the first time since Good Friday and speaks these words: "Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I send you" (John 20:21). Just as Jesus sent his disciples into a divided, conflicted 1st Century with his peace, so he sends us into a divided, conflicted 2021 with his peace.

Reflect on this Scripture:

Psalm 119:103-105 NRSV

*How sweet are your words to my taste,
sweeter than honey to my mouth!*

*104 Through your precepts I get understanding;
therefore I hate every false way.*

*105 Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path.*

This Week: Psalm 119

Simply by virtue of its length (the longest chapter in the Bible) Psalm 119 is impressive and imposing. Leslie Allen aptly calls it "a literary monument raised in honor of Yahweh's revelation... to Israel." Psalm 119 is known for its' extremely repetitive emphasis on the potency of God's word. When commentators consider this repetition tedious, they are missing the point. Psalm 119 is more artistic than artificial. As a literary artist, the psalmist intended the structure of the poem to reinforce its theological content. In short, "torah" – God's revelatory instruction – is pervasive and encompassing. It applies to everything from A to Z, or in Hebrew, Aleph to Tav, as the acrostic nature of the psalm reinforces.

In our particular section of focus, the exclamation in verse 103 is rich with sensory imagery – "*How sweet are your words to my taste...*" The Psalmist

is truly in love with God's revelation. The psalmist has an emotional attachment to God's word that is indicative of his/her love for and commitment to God. The correlate of loving God's word is hating "every false way." In other words, the psalmist hates what works toward death, and loves what works towards life: God's revelation. Finally, verse 105 offers this memorable profession – "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." God's revelation is the truly reliable guide to life. It is not surprising, since the word "light" is used as a metaphor for both God and God's word.

-Adapted from New Interpreters Commentary, Vol IV, pp 1166, 1171-72

Questions to Ponder for Accountability in the Group:

1. Methodism's founder John Wesley was extremely well-read but treasured the Bible above all, calling himself "a man of one book." Similarly, Psalm 119:103 extols the sweetness of God's word. Can you think of a time when a portion of Scripture was particularly impactful for you? Share this with your group.
2. Verse 104 tells us how the psalmist has mined the torah (instruction of God) for wisdom. How has the Bible helped shape your perspective as you live in a world with many false ways (for example, the false ways of "materialism" or "racism" or "sexism" or "addictions" or "workaholism" or "divisiveness" or "violence"? ... you get the idea).
3. Re-read verse 105. Have you ever bumped into something in the night because you did not have adequate light? Practically speaking, how might adhering to God's word prevent you from stumbling, spiritually speaking?
4. Do you have a regular time set aside to read Scripture? If so, share how this has been helpful and any tools that have aided your journey (an app or a study Bible, etc.)

Activity for the Life of a Disciple:

1. Remember to find encouragement for the day by reading the daily devotional from FUMCC and/or to journal in the "Morning by Morning" gratitude resource.
2. Challenge yourself to read or listen to a chapter a day from the Bible each day this week.
3. Ponder and pray on this scripture this week; **Psalm 119:105 NRSV**
*Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path.*