

Psalm 119 – Session 2

Week 7, v. 19

Ps 119:19 I am a stranger in the earth; Do not hide Thy commandments from me.

Think of a time when you have been completely out of place. Perhaps you walked into the middle of a conversation or you were at a gathering where you were ill at ease and didn't really know anyone. Or perhaps you've been in a different country where the customs and language weren't familiar. **What feelings do you recall having?**

David says he is a stranger in the earth. Stranger can be translated to mean a guest, a foreigner, an alien or a sojourner. We'll explore each of these terms. Notice how the idea of not belonging gets increasingly stronger with each definition.

Guest: 1. A visitor to whom hospitality is extended 2. A customer of a hotel or restaurant, etc.

Being a guest may be positive yet many times as a guest you are unfamiliar with your surroundings, with expectations, with what is considered normal. Think of beginning a new job or attending a new school. You can easily feel insecure because you don't know the ropes yet. You are not acclimated to the situation. This is usually true for the first few times we try anything new.

Foreigner: 1. A person who comes from a foreign country; someone who does not owe allegiance to your country 2. Someone who is excluded from or is not a member of a group; an outsider

This word is stronger than being a guest. It can still be positive but has the connotation of not completely belonging. **Have you ever been excluded from a group or gathering?** Think of your time in elementary school or junior high. Often there are cliques that form, an exclusive group of people. You may see this at work. Perhaps it is evident in your neighborhood where maybe you are the family that doesn't "fit in". If you are in a different country and it is evident that you don't belong, you can even be taken advantage of. Regardless of where you have experienced this, it is very uncomfortable to know you don't belong. You never really feel at ease. A foreigner is often unaware of certain customs and can easily offend others.

Alien: 1. A person who comes from a foreign country; 2. anyone who does not belong in the environment in which they are found 3. A form of life assumed to

exist outside the Earth or its atmosphere; a noncitizen, an extraterrestrial being

This is more than just not belonging to a specific group, it's not belonging at all, anywhere! I don't think anyone of us has experienced being an alien according to the literal definition. We are humans and humans live on the Earth. However, figuratively as a child of God, our life is not on this Earth, it is in Christ and we are not citizens of this Earth. We are aliens in a sense because our citizenship is in Heaven – beyond the Earth and its atmosphere. **How does the idea of alienation present itself in your life?**

Sojourner: 1. A temporary resident

This is the idea of just moving through; a brief stay

**Would you consider your life on Earth to be permanent? Is anyone able to claim this?**

**Are you able to conclude with David that you are a stranger in the earth? What word in the definition – guest, foreigner, alien, sojourner – would you use to describe yourself? As our relationship and understanding of God grows increasingly stronger, the attachment we have to this earth and what it offers should become weaker. Are you a guest – enjoying all this world has to offer? Do you feel like a foreigner where you really have a difficult time fitting in or even understanding how people think who are in the world? Are you an alien – obviously standing out as different and not part of the world? Are you a sojourner – just passing through in order to arrive at your final destination? Take the time to consider this – it may be a good litmus test.**

**Bottom line -- How comfortable are you here? Are you seeking to get comfortable here? Are you looking forward to that day when you go home, where you truly belong?**

**Ge 47:9 So Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The years of my sojourning are one hundred and thirty; few and unpleasant have been the years of my life, nor have they attained the years that my fathers lived during the days of their sojourning."**

**Heb 11:13 All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.**

**1Ch 29:15 "For we are sojourners before Thee, and tenants, as all our fathers were; our days on the earth are like a shadow, and there is no hope.**

**How do you get around when you are in an unfamiliar place? What types of places are you handed directions or maps? Why? How is your time spent if you don't have a map?**

If we are strangers as David says, we need directions on how to live here. If we just follow what we see around us, we' ll become like the world, no longer just passing through but part of it, running from one empty answer to the next. **What do you use for your guide? Where do you consider your home?**

David pleases with God to not hide His commandments from him. **Think, why do people hide things? What types of things are often hidden?**

We hide things to prevent them from being seen or discovered; to keep something out of sight; to make something undecipherable or imperceptible by obscuring it. You might hide a present or a surprise which would be positive. Or, you might hide the truth of something to eliminate negative consequences. **Would you hide information that would help someone you cared about? Why or why not? Does God care about you?**

As a traveler in a strange land needs a directory to mark his path, so does a pilgrim on the earth need the guidance of God' s truth. Annotated Bible Notes

As a stranger has no inheritance in the land of his pilgrimage, so I am as a stranger on the earth, having no inheritance but thy word. Therefore take not away from me this precious treasure, but let it be before my eyes continually as my comforter. Family Bible Notes

**Ps 119:54 Thy statutes are my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.**

As a stranger, I need a guide before me at all times or I will lose my way. Help me to keep your commands in my view as I travel this life. We are on a journey, traveling towards HOME! Our inheritance lies in heaven.

Stranger as I am to the world, let me not be a stranger to thy will. With thy precepts as my map I shall find my road, even in this foreign country; without them I shall be as a traveller lost in the desert. Spurgeon Devotional Commentary

While we wander here we can endure all the ills of this foreign land with patience if the word of God is applied to our hearts by the Spirit of God; but if the heavenly things which make for our peace were hid from our eyes we should be in an evil case, -- in fact, we should be at sea without a compass, in a desert without a guide, in an enemy' s country without a friend. Treasury of David

Go back and look again at Psalm 119:18.

**Ps 119:18 Open my eyes, that I may behold Wonderful things from Thy law.**

The pleas David is making is to the only one who can answer them – God. So often, without even realizing it, we can look to other people or other things for direction and answers. **What do we have if we don' t have God?**

Ps 146:3-10 Do not trust in princes, In mortal man, in whom there is no salvation. His spirit departs, he returns to the earth; In that very day his thoughts perish. How blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, Whose hope is in the LORD his God; Who made heaven and earth, The sea and all that is in them; Who keeps faith forever; Who executes justice for the oppressed; Who gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets the prisoners free. The LORD opens [the eyes of] the blind; The LORD raises up those who are bowed down; The LORD loves the righteous; The LORD protects the strangers; He supports the fatherless and the widow; But He thwarts the way of the wicked. The LORD will reign forever, Thy God, O Zion, to all generations. Praise the LORD!

Of all your possessions on earth, what do you treasure most? Would others know your answer by the way you live your life?

What's the bottom line of this verse?

We are strangers in the earth. Therefore, we should not be surprised or discouraged when we don't "fit in". In fact, we should be delighted that we do not blend into the world.

Does God "hide" His commandments from His children? God wants us to understand and follow His commands. Therefore, the problem exists with us. Either we are unable to understand because our vision is obstructed by other things or we are unwilling to obey because our sight is not focused on God.

So the prayer might be, "I realize I am not to consider earth my 'home'. Help all things of this world to be minimized in order that I might see the greater picture of Your plan."

What is your prayer and response to Psalm 119:19?

## Application Questions

Read Psalm 119:1-19. What has God put on your heart through this study? If you took notes or jotted down words or scripture references, what was relevant to you? Is there something you need to address more closely?

Who do you spend time with? Are you more comfortable with those who are striving to know God or do you gravitate towards your friendships where God is not the topic of conversation?

David says he is a stranger in the earth. How would you describe your existence on earth? You may want to look up the four words we discussed. Are you a guest, a foreigner, an alien or a sojourner? Explain.

Why does David plea with God to not hide His commandments from him?

Do you feel as if God's commands are not clear to you? What is in the way of your understanding? Read Psalm 146:3-10