***Psalm 119:141-144 I am small and despised, Yet I do not forget Your precepts. 142Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, And Your law is truth. 143Trouble and anguish have overtaken me, Yet Your commandments are my delights. 144The righteousness of Your testimonies is everlasting; Give me understanding, and I shall live.***

Last week, we spoke about the way that grief and anguish, sorrow of spirit can affect us. Remember that the disciples were found sleeping while Jesus prayed in the garden, but Luke tells us that it was a sleep of sorrow. Jesus said that the spirit was indeed willing, but the flesh was weak. But too often, we allow the desires of our flesh to generate excuses to justify the sinful choices we make. We give our flesh license, though every part of our spirit knows what is right and what is truth. Jesus gave the disciples this gentle rebuke – the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak – but, it was a rebuke nonetheless. He doesn’t call us to have a spirit blocked by the flesh, but flesh that is submitted to the spirit.

In our verses today, long held to be authored by David, we encounter a man unwilling to allow the weakness of his flesh to interfere with the work of his spirit. Are we allowing the weakness of our flesh to interfere with the work of our spirit? Verse 141 says - *I am small and despised, Yet I do not forget Your precepts****.*** This doesn’t refer to physical smallness or a young age, but to his condition as it relates to others in his surroundings. Some suggest that David wrote this while being pursued by King Saul. During that time, he was dismissed and despised. But, though he was dismissed and despised, not looked upon as worthy of notice, yet David does not forget God and His commandments. Though he suffers and is tested, he does not turn away from obedience to God. And so we must do the same – even as the things of this world tempt and the flesh calls, we must live God’s commands and not allow the flesh to lead us to sin.

Verse 142 *Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, And Your law is truth.* God’s righteousness and truth are always and unchanging. The pleasures of the flesh are everchanging and undependable, proving to be nothing more than stubble burned up in the Maker’s testing fire. Yet, people too often give up the imperishable for the perishable, the eternal for the dying. God made righteousness available to us through Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 1:30 says - *But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God – and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.* And we recall what we heard in John 14:6 *Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.* Since Jesus is our only source of righteousness and truth, it seems only fitting that we should live as Galatians 5:24-25 says - *And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.****25****If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*

Verse 143 - *Trouble and anguish have overtaken me, Yet Your commandments are my delights.* Troubles of this world will take hold of us, just as they did David, yet we must not allow these troubles to become our guiding principles. Too often, our worldly troubles become all we talk about, all we concentrate on, and, for some, an all consuming idol. David says – Yet… Yet, Your commandments are my delights. Trouble and anguish has overtaken me, but I will delight in Your word! He is contented even in time of trouble, for he knows the God he serves. We must not allow the weakness of our flesh to draw us away from our Savior! The spirit indeed in willing, give it kingship over the flesh.

Verse 144 - *The righteousness of Your testimonies is everlasting; Give me understanding, and I shall live.* The testimonies that David finds everlasting and that we find everlasting are trustworthy and unchanging. God is the same, yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Revelation 1:8 says - *I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,” says the Lord, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.* Give me understanding and I shall live. Give me full understanding of the excellence of Your commandments, of who You are. When we see God as He is and, as fully as humanly possible, we understand the depth and the richness of His love for us through Jesus, our spirit insists we pursue Him with all our heart, all our soul, and all our mind, even as our flesh resists. We see that to live is Christ and to die is gain.

This week, though troubles may surround us, and anguish may threaten to overcome us, let’s set our eyes upon the Holy God that delivers us. Let’s remember His commands and delight in them. John 4:23 *But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.* The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Yet, God can only be worshipped from a place of spirit and truth. John 4:24 *God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”* Excuses are the ropes sin uses to bind us far from God. Let’s throw off the sin which so easily ensnares us and walk in the strength of the spirit, rejecting with all we are the weakness of our flesh.