

The Glory of God Declared

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[0 : 00] This is the Word of God. Please do keep that passage open in front of you. Let us pray for the Lord's help with it as we turn to it together. The grass withers and the flowers fade, but the words of our Lord stand forever.

Our Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer, we thank you for your everlasting words. And we pray that you would speak to us now through it by your Spirit, that we might be made evermore into the likeness of your Son, in whose name we pray. Amen.

I wonder, how would you get to know someone? It's a very simple question. If you were standing over here and you saw someone you didn't know standing over there, how would you get to know them? The answer's really obvious, isn't it? I hope. I hope it's not throw something at them.

That's not right. Don't do that. The answer is you would go and do what? You'd speak to them, wouldn't you? If you want to get to know someone, you speak to them. Or better yet, the best way to get to know someone is to listen to them. When we listen, we learn, don't we?

And when we learn about someone, we get to know them. And the longer and more frequent those conversations are with someone, the better we know them. Think about the people you know best in your life. And I can almost guarantee they are the people you have spoken to and listened to the most. Well, given that we are made in God's image, it is hardly surprising, is it, that God made us to know Him the same way we get to know one another. If we want to know God, the best place to begin is not mercifully with a kind of divine icebreaker or something, but rather by listening to Him.

[2 : 22] We're going to be looking at Psalm 19 this evening. It is a wonderful psalm, and most of this psalm dwells on the two ways that our God speaks to us. And so this evening, we are just going to walk through this wonderful psalm together and hear, hear what God says about what God says to us.

So let's just dive right in and begin with our first point this evening, where we learn in verses one to six about the God who speaks constantly in creation. The God who speaks constantly in creation.

As Rory gets older, we've got a growing collection of children's books at home.

And one of them begins with a question, a very simple question, that I think captures what we should be taking away from the opening six verses of this. And it is simply this.

Did you know creation is talking to you? Did you know creation is talking to you? Just look there with me at the opening few verses of Psalm 19 and see what David, that the psalmist is describing here.

Verse one, he begins, the heavens, what do they do? They declare the glory of God. The sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pour out speech. Verse four, their voice goes out through all the earth and their words to the end of the world. Creation is speaking. And it is speaking to you. And it is speaking to you about the glory of God. Now, those words are not kind of audible, are they? But the point of these verses is not to try and convince us that stars sort of speak in English, but simply to say that they are communicating to us in a language that we can and should understand.

[4 : 52] I think that is something of maybe what we feel happening when we're perhaps left praising God for a sight that simply takes our breath away. I don't know if you've ever had the privilege of seeing the northern lights, kind of paint the sky wonderfully in green and purple. It is an amazing thing, isn't it? And when we take it in, we are left rightly kind of praising God as we listen to the testimony of the heavens. But the point Psalm 19 wants us to take away is that creation is constantly talking to you. Verse two, day to day pours out speech and night to night reveals knowledge.

So God is speaking about himself in and through creation and creation is carrying that message constantly. We see that as we go on. Just for a moment, right? Don't look at your Bible. It's not often we say that from this point. Just a moment, don't look down. The last six lines of this opening section are sort of a worked example of the heavens declaring God's glory. Before you look down, just think for a moment, okay? What would you suggest as an example of God's glory being spoken of in the skies above us? What would you put in there as a testimony to the greatness and glory of God? Maybe the northern lights, a solar eclipse. I only learned during the kids' talk that we can look forward to them this year, 29th of March, in case you're wondering. Maybe a solar eclipse, maybe a meteor shower or one of those times the moon looks enormous for some reason. Now those are all pretty amazing, aren't they? And they are amazing and do declare the glory of God. But look down now at the end of verse four and see what example David highlights of God's glory being declared in the heavens. In them he has set a tent for the sun, which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber. And like a straw man runs its course with joy, its rising is from the end of the heavens and its circuit to the end of them. And there is nothing hidden from its heat.

[7 : 33] You want to see the sun? You want to see the skies declaring the glory of God? Try the sun every single morning as it comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber every single night as it completes its circuit to the end of the heavens.

When something is regular and repeated and we just assume it's going to be there all the time, we are so quick, aren't we, to take it for granted and basically forget about it, don't we? But what David is reminding us is that God's glory is not only declared in the kind of once in a decade astronomical events that wow us. God's glory is declared in the skies every single day and every single night.

It is a reminder that God is great, isn't it? The sun says to us, God keeps moving me day and night. It is a reminder that God is good for we need the sun, don't we, every day.

And God brings it forth. The sun declares every single day that God is great and God is good and God is glorious. So praise God. Praise God when you see the sun. Praise God when you see the moon and the stars because he is good, he is great and he is glorious.

[9 : 12] And creation's declaration is not just that there is, that there is a God, as if it was just kind of an apologetic tool, but creation speaks to us about the glory of our God.

It is as Paul told us in that reading from Romans, it is the word of Christ making known to us. Making known to those who will hear it that our God is glorious.

Creation really does speak to us constantly about the glory of our God. But it does have its limitations. I recently, just very recently, read the biography of Alexei Navalny.

He was the kind of Russian anti-corruption activist. It was quite a good read. But reading that book does not kind of equip me, does it?

It does not qualify me to join Alexei's friends in a conversation about him as if we all knew him equally as well as each other. I have learned some things about him, but I do not know him.

[10 : 32] Or I would not have known him when he was still alive. There is a big difference, isn't there, between knowing something about someone and knowing them personally.

Creation, listening to the heavens declare the glory of God, is a bit like, I think, reading a biography. Through it, we can know and should know something about God.

And praise him because of it, but we cannot know God. And knowing God, being in a relationship with him, that is what we need.

So creation's declaration is wonderful, but it is not enough. And that is where we come to our second point this evening, where we see the Lord who speaks wonderfully in his words.

The Lord who speaks wonderfully in his word. You'll know it's pretty much straight away in verse 7. It's quite a stark change, isn't it? It's a change in topic, but it's also a change in the title used for God.

[11 : 53] God. The God whose glory was made known in verse 1 is now the Lord. As he is again there in verse 8 and verse 9.

And that is a significant change because it is a significant name. The Lord, as we have it there in all capital letters, is God's covenantal, relational name.

That is who he reveals himself to be to his people. To Moses and the Israelites is what he heard this morning in Exodus. The Lord, the Lord.

He is not just the God of creation. This is the Lord of his people. He is still the God of creation. But now in a covenant relationship with his own. And that relationship is built upon what? Not creation, is it? But his law.

[12:56] The law of the Lord. Now when David says law there in verse 7. We might kind of quite naturally think he's speaking about maybe the Ten Commandments.

Or just all the kind of the do's and don'ts of the Bible. But law was a much broader, much more inclusive meaning here. The word is Torah.

And it was used not to refer just to the commandments. But to the whole revelation of God. As given to Moses. That is now for us the first five books of the Bible.

So the law of the Lord is not just the kind of the do's and the don'ts. The law of the Lord is God's covenant.

It's God's self-disclosure of himself to his people. So that they can be in a relationship with him. It's not just commandments. It is promises.

[13:55] And as we go through. As you look through those verses in Psalm 19. Particularly from verse 7 through to verse 9. You'll see that every two lines.

You get a kind of synonym for this same law. It's not something new that's being brought in. But it is a description of the law that adds to our understanding of it. So again a couple of lines down in verse 7.

We see the testimony of the Lord. That is the law as a witness to the faithfulness of the Lord. Start of verse 8. The precepts of the Lord.

Speaks of the Lord's authority to utter decrees. The commands of the Lord. The commands of the Lord that we might live faithfully to. In the start of verse 9. The fear of the Lord.

That's the effect that the law of God. Has on those who hear it rightly. And then the rules or judicial decrees of the Lord. It tells us of God's complete justice.

[14:55] In all that he says and all that he does. Now we could probably spend a sermon on each and every one of those. Because they are so rich and tell so much.

And there be value in that. But I think we then likely miss. What David really wants us to understand about God's law. If you've been at Bon Accord for more than five minutes.

You'll know that we love the word of God. Because we believe that God speaks to us through it. But Psalm 19.

And this is what is so often great about poetry. Psalm 19 doesn't just kind of state some facts for us. About God's word.

It doesn't just tell us what it is. It reveals to us just how beautiful. And wonderful.

[15:58] And precious. And life-changing. God's word is. For us. C.S. Lewis famously said.

Well famously as far as quotes from Bible commentaries go. He famously said of Psalm 19. That it is the greatest poem in the Psalter. And one of the greatest lyrics in the world.

I'm not about to disagree with him. But it's important to know isn't it. What makes Psalm 19 so great. It's that it speaks so highly.

And so wonderfully. About something other than itself. If we read this Psalm rightly. We should not be left in awe of Psalm 19.

But rather in awe. Most of all of God's glorious law. Because we see don't we. That every one of those synonyms for God's law.

[17:01] Is accompanied by an adjective next to it. The law of the Lord. Is perfect. The testimony of the Lord. Is sure. The precepts of the Lord.

Are right. The commandment of the Lord. Is pure. The fear of the Lord. Is clean. The rules of the Lord. Are true. Perfect. Sure.

Right. Pure. Clean. True. Okay. And so much there. Isn't there. In each and every one. But take them together.

And you. You can't miss the big picture. Can you? The word of God is complete. In its perfection. It is flawless.

Inerrant. And infallible. Always true. Never misleading. Always right. Never mistaken. God's word.

[18:01] Is perfect. Completely. And utterly. There is no fault. No blemish. No shortcoming. And so it is no wonder. Is it. That as it reveals to us.

The Lord. As we come to know him. Through it. It's. We benefit greatly from it. Just look at the second line. Of each. Of those little descriptions.

In verse seven to nine. It revives the soul. It makes wise the simple. It rejoices the heart. And enlightens the eyes. It endures forever. And is altogether true. That is what the word of God. Does. For you. Now we might not feel it. Like we every time we open it. But that does not make it any less true.

[18 : 58] That is what the word of God. Does for you. As you hear the voice of the Lord. Through it. Because this is what God's word is. And this is what God's word.

Does. Does. It's a little wonder that David then goes on to say. That it is more precious than gold. More precious than gold. Even much fine gold. And sweeter than honey. Better. Better. Better to have a Bible in your hands.

Than all the gold in Fort Knox. In the basement of your house. And it is not just valuable. It is not just good. It is delightful. Sweeter than honey. It brings joy and satisfaction to the soul. What is revealed in creation.

[20 : 01] What is revealed in creation. Is the greatness and glory of God. But what is revealed in God's word. There's no less than that.

But it is so much more than that. Isaac Watts summarizes it well. Summarizes it well. In his hymn based on this psalm.

When he writes. He says. Heavens declare thy glory Lord. In every star thy wisdom shines. But when our eyes behold thy word.

We read thy name. In favor of our lives. Please go and meditate on these verses.

After the service. Through the week. After you've read the next section of John. Come back to Psalm 19. And dwell on what it is that you've just read.

[21 : 00] And. But before we move on to our last point. Let. Let me just remind you of. Of where we began this point. Thinking about what. What David meant.

As he wrote these words. By the term law. That the first. Five books of the Bible. As we have them. That. Right. Genesis to Deuteronomy.

That is what David was. Was so eager to proclaim. As perfect. And right. And pure. And clean. And true. That is what he praised. For its ability to revive souls.

Brings joy to the heart. And light in the eyes. But the law. The law is but a shadow. A shadow of the good things to come.

It was good. And right. And true. And is good. And right. And true. And praiseworthy. And effective. And effective. For all that David praised it to be. But what David was speaking so wonderfully about.

[22 : 02] Was in fact just. Just a fraction. Of what we have. Of what is on this table. What is in your lap. Right now. If David was trying to write Psalm 19 now.

I think he would be simply lost for words. Jesus Christ made known. The Messiah revealed.

The Lamb of God. The Son of God. Come to take away the sins of the world. The hope. The hope. Not only for Israel. But for the whole world. We look forward to living. With God. As the Lord.

Their God. Forever and ever. In a new creation. David was right. And glad. And delighted.

[23 : 04] To speak of the law. This way. But the complete revelation. Of the triune God. The full arc. Of redemptive history. Made known. In God's complete.

In an errant word. How much more. How much more joy. How much more light. To the eyes. How much more precious. How much sweeter.

To the soul. Let me just ask you. How. How do you feel. When you come to God's word.

Often. Perhaps. It feels more. More. More like a duty. Than a delight. Perhaps. Because it feels. Like a duty. We.

We push it away. We let it sit there. For another time. Wait until we feel like it. It is a duty.

[24 : 05] But hopefully. We're seeing through this. That duty. Is not incompatible. With delight. The word of God. Is the greatest.

Treasure. We have. More valuable. Than gold. Sweeter. Than honey. Eat. It heals us more fully. Than the most effective medicine.

It gives us more joy. Than the greatest pleasures. This world has to offer. It satisfies us. More than the most delicious meal. It teaches us. And warns us. It endures.

Longer than the sun itself. It is righteous. All together. Every time you pick up. Your Bible in the morning. Every time you open it.

Here in church. On a Sunday. That is what is before you. That is incredible. Isn't it? So read it.

[25 : 01] Take up and read. Read because you should. But read it also. Because you can. Listen to the voice. Of the Lord. It's like.

Like the most. The most amazing meal. Being placed on the table. In front of you. You eat it. Don't you? Because you need to eat.

But what joy. And what satisfaction. Fills your soul. And what thankfulness. Is in your heart. As you enjoy it.

And so God. Speaks to us. He speaks to us. He speaks to us. Constantly in creation. He speaks to us. Wonderfully in his words.

And then we. Respond. If listening is all we do. And no more. We have not.

[26 : 05] We have not. Properly heard. More precious than gold. Sweeter than honey. If someone. Someone. Won a million pounds. And ate the best meal ever.

Simultaneously. And they. They responded with nothing. Right. They didn't. They didn't say a word. They sat in silence.

Unmove. Their facial expression. Kind of didn't change. They've not understood. What's just happened. Have they? When God speaks.

If we properly hear. We will respond. That is what we see happen. In our third. And final. Very brief point. This evening. Where we see. The redeemer. Who saves. His servants.

As God speaks. Wonderfully. In his law. Well the wonderful law. Of the Lord. Evokes a response. And the response here.

[27 : 02] Is primarily. A petition. To be forgiven. And to be faithful. And that makes sense. Doesn't it? Because the perfect.

Law of God. Will revive our soul. Not by making us perfect. Perfect. But ultimately. By revealing. Our imperfections. And so.

Driving us. To. To the word of God. The word of God. We were hearing about this morning. The word made flesh. Jesus Christ. And so. David prays here.

In verse 12. He prays. That God. The Lord. His God. Would. Would declare him innocent.

From hidden faults. And keep him. From presumptuous sins. So that he. Who was guilty. Would by his rock. And redeemer.

[27 : 57] Be declared. Blameless. And innocent. Not only. Would he be made clean. But having been made clean. He would then.

Live a life. And speak words. And think thoughts. That are. Pleasing. In God's sight. God. Justify me. And sanctify me.

If you want to use the words. We were thinking about. A couple of months ago. That is the prayer. And it's one. We can take on our own lips. As we respond.

To God's wonderful word. To us. To make the desire. To make the desire. Of our own hearts. That we would be forgiven. And made faithful. In all that we do. And it is a prayer.

That David makes. To the one. Who is not only the Lord. But the Lord. My rock. And my.

Redeemer. As we are brought.

[28 : 54] Into a relationship. With God. He becomes to us. More than our creator. He is now. Our redeemer. Who saves us. Who saves us. From our. From our presumptuous sins.

And our hidden faults. The sin we know. And the sin we don't. And he does this. Of course. Through the servants. Of the Lord. The word. Made flesh.

The Messiah. And King of his people. Our Lord. Jesus Christ. Christ. The word of Christ. Is to drive us. To the person of Christ.

Never just knowing. About him. But as we listen to him. That we may know him. More and more. And so come to him.

More and more. So as we go. As we go now. Into the rest of this week. Let us together.

[29 : 48] Praise the God. Who speaks constantly. In creation. Let us delight. Each and every day. In God's words. Through which we not only.

Know about God. But through. Through which we actually. Come to know. Our Lord. Our rock. And our redeemer.

Through Jesus Christ. And as we delight. In his word. Let us respond. By seeking salvation. In our rock and redeemer. That we might live. In a manner.

Worthy of the gospel. To which we have been called. Let us pray. Before we sing. To God's praise together. Our Lord.

Our rock. Our rock. And our redeemer. We thank you. That you. Have spoken to us. We thank you. That creation. Declares your glory. To us.

[30 : 48] But we thank you. More than that. That you have spoken to us. Through your words. And made known to us. Your son. Father. We thank you. So much.

For the Bible. We pray. That we would treasure it. Treasure it. More dearly. Than all the gold in the world. And so come to know you. More and more through it.

Lord. We pray. That you would forgive us. Of our sins. Those we know. And those we don't know. That we might live. In a way. That is pleasing to you. In all that we do.

In Jesus name. We pray. Amen.