

WORSHIP SERVICE - 5.19.2024

PSALM 19 - THE SURPASSING WORTH OF GOD'S WORD

I. INTRODUCTION

Psalm 19:1-14

1 The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

2 Day to day pours out speech,
and night to night reveals knowledge.

3 There is no speech, nor are there words,
whose voice is not heard.

4 Their voice goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.

In them he has set a tent for the sun,

5 which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber,
and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy.

6 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 The law of the Lord is perfect,
reviving the soul;

the testimony of the Lord is sure,
making wise the simple;

8 the precepts of the Lord are right,
rejoicing the heart;

the commandment of the Lord is pure,

enlightening the eyes;

9 the fear of the Lord is clean,

enduring forever;

the rules of the Lord are true,

and righteous altogether.

10 More to be desired are they than gold,

even much fine gold;

sweeter also than honey

and drippings of the honeycomb.

11 Moreover, by them is your servant warned;

in keeping them there is great reward.

12 Who can discern his errors?

Declare me innocent from hidden faults.

13 Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins;

let them not have dominion over me!

Then I shall be blameless,

and innocent of great transgression.

14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart

be acceptable in your sight,

O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

- This psalm is a marvelous reflection of the beauty and splendor of Hebrew poetry found in the Psalms.
- C.S. Lewis wrote, "*I take this to be the greatest poem in the Psalter and one of the greatest lyrics of the world.*"
- This is a profound wisdom hymn penned by David.
- As we study and reflect on its content, may we marvel at the revelation and glory of God in creation and Scripture, and may we respond in worship and surrender to the greater revelation that those things point to.

II. CREATION'S REVELATION

- We've seen before how the psalmist observes creation and it evokes within him a recognition of God's existence, majesty, wisdom—and this causes him to exult in the Creator. (Psalm 8)
- For David, creation reveals the Lord's majesty, supremacy, and sovereignty.
- Creation inspires awe and wonder in David and he responds to God's glory in creation by shaping language that celebrates what God has done.
- The poet is extolling the magnificence of the Creator.

- In the first six verses, the psalmist considers the revelation of the Creator in the things he has made.
 - The heavens and the skies are personified speakers, declaring the glory of God and proclaiming his works.
 - Creation points to a Creator. The glory of creation attests to a greater glory beyond itself—that of its Maker.
 - God’s skill and power and worth are communicated in what he has made.
 - The psalmist looks back at the Genesis creation account of the first two days (Genesis 1:1-8).
 - Day and Night are depicted in human terms, they pour out speech and reveal knowledge.
 - This personification of creation declaring and proclaiming, and revealing, are expressed as an ongoing and continuous revelation, they keep declaring, and keep proclaiming, and keep revealing.
- The cycle of day and night reveals the constancy of God’s creation, which brings about the seasons and the regularity of the agricultural cycle, necessary to sustain life.
 - Day and night reveal knowledge in their own distinct speech.
 - This general or natural revelation not only imparts a knowledge about God but also other attributes, such as his goodness, wisdom, and power.
 - This speech is universal, transcending human communication without the use of speech, words, and sounds.
 - Their voice and words go to the ends of the earth.
 - There is no place on earth that is not exposed to what heaven and skies, day and night communicate.
 - Every person, in every place, ought to look at creation and contemplate what it reveals and acknowledge God the Creator, and admire his wisdom, goodness, and power.
- David amplifies the revelation from creation with the metaphorical imagery of the sun as a bridegroom emerging from his chamber and a champion running his course with joy.
 - The effect of the sun is evident, “nothing is hidden from its heat.”
 - The assertion is that God has revealed himself in creation everywhere the sun shines, everywhere the night falls, every place that is under the heavens.
 - There is no place where these communicators cannot be heard.
 - God’s glory, power, and wisdom are on full display in the things he has made, evident for all to see, and creation is continually proclaiming his glory and handiwork.
- Romans 1:20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.
 - Everyone, without fail, should look at the world, contemplate what they see, and then give praise to the Creator of this glorious creation.

III. SCRIPTURE'S REVELATION

- As wonderful as creation is and as clear a voice as creation is declaring the handwork of its Creator, there is an even greater and clearer voice.
 - And without this other revelation, what Creation declares falls on deaf ears.
- David is able to see God's glory in creation because he has experienced God's glory in Scripture.

- Creation speaks with one voice about the glory of God through the things he has made.
 - Scripture speaks with one voice about the glory of God through the things he has personally revealed about himself.
 - Vs9-11 David expresses the superior revelation, the Torah of Yahweh and what it does.
 - Scripture's revelation is clearer than Creation's revelation.
- There are five references to God's Word and they are terms that should be taken synonymously.
- V7 The law of the Lord is perfect— it is integrated, whole, there are no contradictions in God's Word, there are no conflicting perspectives as Scripture speaks with one voice. The Torah of Yahweh is flawless, complete, and without error.
 - And here's what it does—it revives the soul. It restores and gives healing to the soul, to the whole person.
 - God's Word gives life to the godly. It is an instrument in the renewal of the soul.
 - Psalm 1 - those who delight in Yahweh's Torah, who meditate on his Torah day and night, are like a well-watered, fruit-bearing tree, full of life and vigor.
- V7 the testimony of the Lord is sure—the two tablets of the Ten Commandments written by the finger of God are called the two tablets of the testimony (Ex. 31:18).
 - The ark of God is called the ark of the testimony. (Joshua 4:16).
 - God's law, his testimony, contains commandments, rules, statutes, and judgments, and these are "sure". That means they are trustworthy, reliable, and faithful.
 - God's word contains a reliable testimony about how things really are, what really happened, and what really should be.
 - And God's testimony, makes the simple wise.
 - The simple, as we learned in Proverbs, is a term for those who lack wisdom and have not committed themselves to the path of wisdom.
 - God's Word can make simpleminded people wise because it contains true and reliable testimony.
 - God's Word instructs the simple and imparts wisdom needed for life.
- V8 the precepts of the Lord are right—precepts are moral injunctions, statutes.
 - No matter what the world, or our culture may say to the contrary, God's precepts and commandments determine what is morally right.
 - To determine right and wrong apart from God's moral law is the height of folly and has devastating consequences.
 - God's precepts result in a "heart of rejoicing."
 - Here is the beautiful work of God's Spirit in the heart that has been renewed, that person now loves the law of God, and does not find God's commandments grievous.
 - Delighting and obeying God's precepts produces joy in the heart.
- V8 The commandment of the Lord is pure—there is nothing perverse or immoral or crooked in God's word.
 - What Yahweh demands his people to do is never immoral, or inappropriate. It is free from injustice, free from error or sin.
 - And his commandments have the power to "enlighten the eyes."
 - God's Word enables us to see where we should go and how to get there.
 - God's word brings understanding and clarity to our life.

- There is a shift in terms from a description of God's Word to a response that the Word of God produces.
 - V9 The fear of the Lord is clean—The revelation of God in Scripture prompts the appropriate response, the fear of the Lord.
 - Proverbs 1:7 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge...
 - Proverbs 9:10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom...
 - Psalm 111:10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever!
 - The fear of the Lord is a reverential respect and awe of the Holy One.
 - It is the right response we should have towards God.
 - The fear of the Lord puts you on the path of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding.
 - David says that the fear of the Lord is "clean," that word "clean" connotes ritual priority.
 - The one who fears the Lord will not be defiled or be made ritually unclean.
 - It is appropriate for those who reverentially fear the Lord to reverence him forever.
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- V9 the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether.
 - Yahweh's rules are his judgments. His judgments are never unjust, they will always enact righteousness.
 - All of his judgments and decisions recorded in Scripture are true.
 - His judgments are righteous, just, and equitable.
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- God's Word is perfect, trustworthy, righteous, pure, and true.
 - God's Word transforms the soul, the simple, the heart, and the eyes.
 - God's Word restores, makes wise, gives joy, enlightens, stands forever, and enacts righteousness, and produces the fear of the Lord.

SCRIPTURE'S SWEETNESS

- The truth of the Scriptures enables David to see the glory of God in creation, the truth of Scripture has transformed him, and it shows him his ongoing need for God's mercy and forgiveness.
 - This deep contemplation on Scripture's revelation and the work it does to transform, causes David to recognize the incomparable worth of God's Word.
 - His Word is more valuable and desirable than gold, even gold of the highest and purest quality.
 - All parts of God's Word are more valuable and desirable than the thing that men value and desire most.
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- Similarly, God's word is better than the best sensory experience one can have.
 - "Sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb."
 - God's Word is not only more desirable than the choicest and sweetest of foods, it surpasses the sensory delights that honey brings to the taste buds.
 - Israel's redemption from captivity was beautifully expressed as being brought into a land flowing with milk and honey.
 - David said, "How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (Psalm 119:103)
 - The delight we experience from knowing God, delighting in His Word, being in fellowship with our Creator, transcends the sweet taste of honey and our desire for material wealth.
 - The one who has encountered the God of Scriptures, has a greater desire for God's word than for money and any sensory pleasure.
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- V11 Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

- The revelation of Scripture warns him and also promises him great reward.
- From Scripture, he learns that the great reward is that of knowing God, that is the greatest treasure, and there are a multitude of promises for those who obey God.
- But Scripture also warns him of the destructive results of sin. It keeps the wise on the narrow path that leads to life. It warns them of pitfalls and guides them to the rewards of godliness.

IV. PRAYERFUL REFLECTION

- In Psalm 8, David reflected on the glory of creation and God's surpassing glory, and he was forced to contemplate the dignity of man, "What is man that you are mindful of him."
- Now, he reflects on human sinfulness and limitations.
- The light of creation, the revelation in nature, reveals the glory, wisdom, and power of God.
- The light of Scripture reveals the perfection of God, his holiness and righteousness.
- The voice of creation penetrates to the "ends of the earth," so God's Word penetrates and examines the human heart.
- The last part of the psalm, David reflects on his need for the moral clarity that only Scripture can bring.
- Who can discern his errors? By errors, David is referring to sins, as it is described in the Law.
- We don't always know the right thing to do. We don't understand our own sinfulness. We don't always understand the reasons for which we do what is wrong. We don't have an accurate view of sin. We don't see how deadly it truly is.
- We don't understand how weak we are when it comes to sin and how truly helpless we are apart from God.
- God's Word shines a light on our moral darkness.
- Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
- Nothing can scan you like the Word of God does. It reveals sinful areas in our heart, shows us the way of righteousness, leads us to repentance, and points us to our need of Jesus."
- "Declare me innocent from hidden faults, keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me!"
- He is asking for forgiveness for hidden sins and willful sins.
- He doesn't want to inadvertently sin against God and he doesn't want to knowingly sin against God.
- He wants God to restrain him from any hardness of heart that leads to public transgression.
- He wants God to restrain him from the worst impulses of his nature.
- He wants to be delivered from the dominion of sin.
- He desires true godliness. His aim is to live "blamelessly" before God.
- Blamelessness is not sinless perfection or even perfect obedience.
- But rather, blamelessness arises from confession of private sin that leads to God mercifully acquitting him of guilt and restraining him from presumptuous, willful sins.
- David closes the psalm, prompted to pray for the Lord to work so profoundly in him that what he says and thinks about might be pleasing in God's sight, that is, an acceptable sacrifice offered to God.

- David wants his speech, and what he thinks about, to reflect the glory, power, and wisdom of God.
- For Yahweh is his rock and redeemer.

CONCLUSION

- The word of God still does today what it did for David.
- It still opens our eyes to see the glory of God in creation, it teaches us everything we need to know God and what he expects of us, it scans and exposes the hidden thoughts of our heart, it gives us godly desires, it warns us, it woos us with the promises of reward, it restrains us from following our worst sinful impulses, and it provokes us to speak and think in ways that are pleasing to the Lord, renewing our mind for the glory of God.
- Ultimately, as we've seen with the other psalms, this one also points us to the need for the one greater than David.
- The One who could keep the law, who was truly blameless, righteous, and whose every word and meditation would be pleasing in God's sight.
- The One who perfectly obeyed the law of God, always did the will of his Father, who obeyed even unto death.
- David's prayer to be declared innocent from his sin, could only come about by the ultimate means whereby God can declare the guilty innocent, through the atoning work of Jesus Christ by the shedding of his blood (Romans 3:24-25).
- God's clearest revelation is found in Jesus.
- Hebrews 1:1-4 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. 3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.
- Jesus is the fullest and final revelation of God!
- Jesus is the Word of God made flesh, the glory of God, full of grace and truth (John 1:14).
- God's power and wisdom is most clearly revealed in Jesus.
- Jesus became the perfect, acceptable sacrifice to God. (Hebrews 10:12)
- In Christ we are delivered from the domain and the dominion of sin. (Rom. 6:5-14)
- See, the end of the psalm is David praying to become like the greater son of David.
- David needed the Redeemer and so do we!
- And God promises us in his Word, that he is working all things for our good, graciously working in us through His Spirit and His Word, to conform us to the image of Christ—David's greater son!
- In Him, we are truly made new, righteous, and renewed, and can, as creation and Scripture does, declare and proclaim the glory, goodness, power, and wisdom of God!

APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?

- With whom can I share the gospel this week?