

“SEEING AND HEARING GOD.”

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First Christian Reformed Church

August 16, 2023, 6:00PM

Scripture Texts: Psalm 19

Prayer: “May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable to you, O Lord my Rock and my Redeemer.”

Introduction.

We have brought together in one psalm the two books of God, the two ways God communicates Himself and reveals Himself to His creatures, through His workmanship and His Word. The skies and Scripture. General revelation and special revelation.

It moves from the glorious heights of creation, the heavens down to the humility of the human soul before God.

This psalm combines some of the most beautiful poetry with some of the most profound theology. It is filled with rich, beautiful imagery and metaphors.

“I take this to be the greatest poem in the Psalter and one of the greatest lyrics in the world” (C.S. Lewis, Reflections on the Psalms).

God is always talking, always speaking to us, always revealing His glory in creation, and His grace in His Word.

Psalm 19:1-6, what we should see.

First, we see God’s silent splendor. The heavens declare the glory of God. The heavens don’t just declare glory, they declare the glory of God.

Glory can mean heavy, weighty, as in the heavens declare how weighty, how impressive, how gloriously majestic God is.

He describes the cosmos as if it was preaching a sermon to us day after day, night after night, witnessing to the glory of God.

The verbs in verse 1 are participles, meaning continuing action. The heavens keep on declaring, keep on proclaiming, keep on reciting, keep on pointing out the glory of God. Creation can’t contain itself, it can’t help but constantly speak up and loudly declare the glory of the creator God day and night.

This is non-verbal communication that communicates. When I go out at night and look up to the heavens and see the Big Dipper (Ursa Major), Orion, Cassiopeia and Mars and Venus, I hear their silent voices declaring the splendor and majesty of our mighty Creator.

Even if the heavens and the earth don't utter a word, they proclaim loudly and clearly for all to hear and know they are the workmanship of a mighty, powerful, divine Creator. The heavens declare that they are not their own maker, but they are made by an infinite, incomprehensible, omnipotent, everlasting, good and glorious God.

There is no language on earth in which this is not heard and understood. Creation speaks a common and universal language, understood in every tongue on earth.

Romans 1:19-20 What can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 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 is without excuse, there is no people, no country outside of knowing God. Who looks at the heavens and all creation and says it is all just mutations, all blind chance, that it all came out of nothing, that there is no rhyme or reason, no order or design? Only the willfully spiritually deaf and blind.

When we look at the heavens and all of God's creation, we must at some point be overwhelmed by the infinite power, wisdom, goodness and wonder of it all. We ought to be overwhelmed by the staggering greatness of it all, billions of galaxies filled with trillions of stars, stars the size of half our solar system. Vast expanses of space. And a luxuriant planet teeming with life, filled with beauty and goodness, variety and order, perfectly balanced to sustain our lives.

Not a single day passes, indeed, not a minute passes, without God displaying His glory and power and sustaining grace, revealing His attributes and perfections. Day after day, night after night gives all the evidence for the unarguable case for a conscious, intelligent, planning, controlling, and presiding Creator.

Just one day, one night is more than sufficient to prove His glory and leave every human being without excuse to confess and worship Him. Ignorance is not an option, only affirmation or rebellion.

The sun.

The Psalmist moves from the grand to the specific. To the earthly observer, the sun stands out in all of visible creation as of supreme rank. No wonder no other part of creation is more often deified, made to be a god.

To pagan's the sun is the most common part of creation worshipped as a god. Sun worship was the dominant religion in all ancient civilizations, from Babylon to India, China, Africa, Greece, Rome, Mexico, South America, Egypt and Europe.

To David the sun is a cosmic messenger speaking on behalf of God Almighty. The sun belongs to God, points to God, displays God's glory and power and beauty. God made it, God moves it, God appoints it rounds.

David has some fun describing the sun. He metaphorically speaks of the sun like a the beauty of an adorned bridegroom coming out of his tent and going for a run across the sky, and with joy adds. He exalts the suns splendor, excellency, swiftness and the astonishing power of its heat.

Notice the majesty of the Creator and the pageantry of the glory of the sun, which we take for granted. We need poets who see what we don't see, or who see what we have forgotten to see.

I like the description one pastor gives of God's utter joy and delight in His creation and how He is intimately involved in every aspect of it, to the point that it is God who says every morning. "Sun, do it again" and it comes out like the bridegroom leaving his chamber and running its course across the heavens with glorious joy.

Don't be blind to God and His creation, to the work of His hands that is all around us all the time. The season, the flowers, the fruitful plants and gardens, the sun, the moon, the stars, the aurora borealis if you ever catch a glimpse or a meteor shower.

All humanity knows something of God in creation. Now to the Jews the Psalmist speaks of the particular revelation of God they have received. To those to whom God determines to bring to salvation, He gives His Word, the fuller, more intimate revelation of Himself.

Psalm 19:7-10, what we should hear.

The Word of God is God's clearest speech in which He more fully reveals Himself and His will.

Notice the change in the word for the name of God. In verse 1 it is *God, the cosmic God*, who dwells above creation, far and distant. Now it is *Lord, Yahweh, the covenant making* and covenant keeping God who dwells not just in the heavens but is present among His people. "I will be their God and they will be my people."

The Character of God's Word.

David stretches for words to describe the character and nature of God's Word, just as he does in Psalm 119.

Notice David uses more words to describe the glory of Scripture. It is more to be praised and seen for its blessings, than anything in creation.

He uses every synonym he can think of, law, testimony, precepts, commandment, rules, and he is effusive in his descriptions and praise.

The *law* of the Lord is perfect, flawless, without defect or error, whole, complete. It is all there, all you need. It revives every weary soul exhausted by trials or troubles.

The *testimony* of the Lord is sure, reliable. Trustworthy, you can rely on it. It helps the simple, the naïve, the inexperienced. It wises us up.

The *precepts* of the Lord are right. This speaks to authority. And far from being boring or drudgery, it brings delight. What God commands ought to be cause for joy, rejoicing the heart.

The *commandment* of the Lord is pure, without pollution or stain or defect. It gives light to the eyes.

The *fear* of the Lord is clean. Heaven and earth will pass away, but the Word of the Lord will endure forever.

The *rules* of the Lord are true. Like the Ten Commandments and all the particular details and applications of those rulings, down to the jot and the tittle. All true and righteous.

The value of God's Word.

Consider each of these characteristics as a tree in the forest of God's Word, David is not so interested in us knowing the difference between law, testimony and precept. Don't stare at the tree, take in the whole forest, see the total picture of God's true, reliable, soul-renewing, joy-giving, life-preserving truth. And then be overwhelmed to the point of responding like verse 10.

May God's Word become more and more desirable to you, better than gold, sweeter than honey. David wants us to move from seeing what God's Word is like to saying, "I have to have that."

Actually, the word is covet, may you covet God's Word. Like the way Eve coveted the fruit, only have a holy coveting, a pure lust for what is truly good and to be desired, more than gold, more than honey.

If we could have vast wealth, or the Word of God, which would we chose? Which will make us richer, which will leave us with a greater inheritance? May God gives us a greater hunger and thirst for His life-giving, soul-refreshing, wisdom-imparting Word.

Psalm 19:11-14, what we should say.

The worshipper's response is a humble prayer, mixed with confession and petition. Some would call this the third book, creation, Scripture and conscience. Read all three.

In the light of God's creation, there is no room for human boasting. When all the created glory dawns on the human mind and soul, and the truth of His Word enters our hearts, it leads to humility, confession, and dependence acknowledging petitions for help.

First, he acknowledges both the positive and negative side of truth. There is warning and there is reward. We should receive both equally.

II Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Then, notice where his mind goes, what he is most anxious about. Who can know all his sins?

Make no mistake, there are more than we know or can count, more than the hairs of our heads. No one can comprehend how many ways we are guilty before God. Who can discern all his errors? The heart is deceitful, who can know it?

David sums up his sins into two serious sins, two ways of sinning, hidden and presumptuous.

The heart you don't know and the heart you do know.

First, hidden faults (unintentional, accidental, secret,). Sins he doesn't even know about in himself. And they are many. We all have them. These can be actions we have done, but we don't see or don't realize the sinfulness of them either from blindness or pride. These can be sins we deceive ourselves into thinking they are not sins.

Second, presumptuous sins, willful, deliberate sins done on purpose. Presumptuous sins are sins against knowledge. These are arrogant sins, entered into boldly without any fear of the Lord. "I know God says this is wrong and harmful, but I don't care what God thinks; I'm going to do it anyway."

Such were David's sins against Bathsheba and her husband, Uriah. Even the holiest of men, like David, must be soberly aware of their natural desires to sin, even willfully and deliberately. We all act against the light of our conscience.

The heart you know and the heart you don't know.

Hidden sin is like a trap door that catches us off guard, by surprise. Presumptuous sin is a double-door that we walk toward and deliberately go through.

So what must be done? He knows he must take this seriously, he must deal with his sin. He deals with these two sins in two different ways.

For the hidden sins, he asks forgiveness, pardon. The only way to know them is for God to reveal them. It is good to confess and good to ask God to show us what to confess.

For the presumptuous sins he asks for power or preservation to not commit them. He knows he is prone to deliberate, willful, eyes-wide-open sins.

Sadly, we all need a bit and bridle when it comes to sin. Unless God restrain us, we quickly forget God and His will and His ways. We forget to fear God.

This is a prayer for both pardon of all past transgressions, and a prayer for power to persevere against all future temptations.

Fear above all presumptuous sins, plead with God against them, flee to God to be cleansed of them and forgiven, before they lead your further astray and into that far country.

This prayer against hidden sins and willful sins, is a prayer to be kept from something even worse, the great transgression, the great rebellion, apostasy, totally renouncing the Lord. Don't let your assurance cause you to avoid Scripture's warnings.

The greatest saints will sin the lowest sin, without the restraining hand of God's grace. Don't ever let yourself say I could never do that. Say rather with trembling, "There but for the grace of God go I." Without the grace of God, no one can withstand the temptations of Satan.

When you look in the mirror of God's creation and see His glory, when you look in the mirror of His Word and see His holy wisdom and truth, what do you see in your heart?

Implications and application.

There is no life on this planet without the sun, perfectly positioned 93 million miles away. And there is no true human life on this planet without the life-giving, life-sustaining Word of God positioned in your heart.

The glory of God is revealed in the splendor of all creation, and in the incredible revelation of God's wisdom and truth in His Word, and His glory is revealed in His forgiving grace toward our great and many sins, known and unknown, willful and in ignorance.

Because of this look into Psalm 19, may God increasingly be your only Rock and Redeemer.