

Psalm 19

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[0 : 00] So we're going to be looking at Psalm 19 and Sarah's going to come and read it for us. Oh, Natalie, a quick sibling swap at the last minute. That's great. Thanks. And then we'll hand over to you, Nathan.

So it's Psalm 19 on 552 of the Church Bibles. It's Psalm 19.

The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever. The decrees of the Lord are firm, and all of them are righteous.

They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold. They are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb. By them your servant is warned. In keeping them there is great reward. But who can discern their own errors? Forgive my hidden faults. Keep your servant also from willful sins. May they not rule over me. Then I will be blameless, innocent of great transgression.

[1 : 55] May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Lord, my rock and my redeemer. Good evening, church. Hey, there we go.

Yeah, this is such a joy to be able to look through Psalm 19 together. Before I get into it and get myself set up over here, I'd love to say that as I was thinking about talking here, what was the purpose and reason with which we're doing this, I was reminded of Acts 17.11.

And the desire in my heart and the prayer is that we, as a church here today, would be an Acts 17.11 type of church. And the reason I say that is, in Acts 17, Paul is talking to this group of Jewish people and explaining the scriptures and who Jesus is and sharing the gospel.

And this is what is said of them. Acts 17.11 says, they received the message with great eagerness and examined the scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. My heart is that we would be a church here today that would receive the message with great eagerness, not because I have some special words, but because we are looking at God's word, which is alive and active today and wants to move through the Holy Spirit in our hearts to change us.

Now, we would examine the scriptures and that you would have, can I encourage you to keep the Bible open in front of you, see and make sure that what I'm saying is true and godly and in right standing with what God's word says.

[3 : 23] So as I say that, let me pray for us and then we'll get into Psalm 19. Lord, thank you that we get to come around your word. Thank you for the freedom of that. We know not every Christian has that.

And Lord, we pray that you would help us to delight in what you say, or that you would feed us through your word, but that we would also leave here hungry to share it with others. Lord, we pray, and Lord, I pray with the end of the Psalm 19, which says, may these words in my mouth and this meditation in my heart be pleasing in your sight.

Amen. Amen. Great. Why don't I start with the story of how Steve approached me to get me to do this evening service? He came on a Sunday morning going, hey, do you want to do an evening talk?

I said, great, absolutely. Would love to. Joy of joys. He said, great, why don't you do Psalm 18? And I thought, great, okay. I went home, opened up the pages, and started reading, and kept turning pages, because it's about 50 verses long, like we saw today morning.

And what has Steve done to me? The first talk that I get to do is 50 verses. How do I fit this into a 20, 25-minute slot? And then a couple of days later, he says, hey, actually, Ray's going to do that in the morning.

[4 : 39] You handle Psalm 19. And I thought, great. I've got 14 verses. I can get into this. I can divulge and understand this, I hope. And do you know what?

I was very wrong on that. There is so much depth in the words of Psalm 14, that I only think I could cover even half of it, but I think there's something in here that God wants us to see today.

So why don't we get into that? But if there is anything that Psalm 19 screams and shouts about, is this one statement that says, God is a God who wants to be known.

God is a God who wants to be known. Through the heavens that declare of his glory at the start, to the righteous commands that he gives us, there's a God that wants to be known.

So in order to sort of unpack that, this God that wants to be known reveals himself to us. And I want to introduce us to two terms you might have heard many times, you might never have heard before.

[5 : 35] But it's this idea, the first term is general revelation, and the second term is special revelation. So general revelation and special revelation. And this is how I'm going to explain it.

So general revelation is the idea of what we see in creation. So as we look at creation, maybe as we look at the beauty of all that God has created in different things that he's created, from humans to the mountains you see on holiday, there is creativity in God.

As we see creation, we see a little bit of that revealed to us. General revelation is the fact that in creation, we see something of who God is and what he's all about. That could be, as Daisy often tells me, as we sit, if we're mainly outside of London, because you can't see the stars around here, but as you sit and see the stars, you see a little bit of just how small you are in this world and the vastness of what God's created.

And you say, God is a powerful God. We can see that from just how much he's created and how much he sustains. That is general revelation, what we see, what God has created. And then there is special revelation.

That is the idea that God has revealed himself specifically to us, that he's spoken to us. We see this as he talks in the burning bush to Moses. We see this as the prophets speak and say, this is what the Lord says to Israel.

[6 : 50] And ultimately, and wholeheartedly, we see that in the word that we hold so dear in front of us. God's word is a special revelation to us. And Psalm 19 starts with the idea of general revelation, right?

So what God is revealing through his creation. Look down with me at verse one. I'm just going to read that again. It says, As Paul Tripp puts it, you can't get up in the morning without bumping into God.

There is something of what we see as we walk out of our doors that is his creation and speaks to who he is and what he's all about. And we see that as well in Romans 1.20, where he says, where it says, for since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities, his eternal power, divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that the people are without excuse.

What is that saying? It's saying essentially that God in creation has shown us that he is eternally powerful and his divine nature as we see what has been made. Nobody is without excuses.

You look at creation. There's no excuse to not say there is a God and a creator behind this. And I think we see some of what God's character is through this general revelation that we see.

[8 : 21] So if you look down at the end of verse four, it says, In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun. It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, like a champion rejoicing to erase his course. It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to other.

Nothing is deprived of its warmth. Nothing is deprived of its warmth. The sun rises and sets each day. We feel its warmth.

It grows the crops that we eat and it sustains so much of our life. And it is a great show of God's common grace to us all that whether you are a saint or a sinner, the sun rises and sets on us.

It runs its course and sets. Whether you love the Lord, your God with everything you have and worship him daily, or whether you deny his existence, God is gracious in making the sunrise and sunset, sustaining so much of our life.

It is God's common grace to humanity as a whole in this. Matthew 5, 45 puts it like this. He says, He causes the sun to rise in the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous alike.

[9 : 32] God is gracious to us and we see that through creation, through the sun that rises, runs its course, and sets each day. And then we run into the special revelation part, right?

Where we start talking about God's word. We see from verse 7, he says, The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever. The decrees of the Lord are firm and all of them are righteous.

And some of the best words that I've ever seen in the Bible, it says, They are more precious than gold, they're much pure gold. They are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb. By them, your servant is warned.

In keeping them, there is great reward. It is fair to say that David is not buying the lie that the world tries to say, which is that the Bible is a bunch of rules that make your life a bit more boring and maybe slightly easier.

[10:34] He doesn't buy that lie from what we see. Verse 10 says, They are more precious than gold, they're much pure gold. God's commands are great in David's eyes. And this is not somebody, even though it would be just as true, David is not somebody who hasn't experienced wealth and is saying, This is worth more than that.

He is a person who is powerful and king of a nation, has much pure gold of his own, and yet says God's words are more precious than this. And so I want us to take a pause here.

I want you guys all to think personally of something that you are passionate about, maybe a food or a drink, something that you would call yourself a connoisseur in. As in, if I told you, you need to do 30 minutes of a talk right now, come up and give it to us.

What would you talk about? Okay? Some people, just think of that in your head. For some people, that's wine. Some people will go to the winery and say, Hey, this is the pure stuff that I want to get straight from the winery.

For some people, I know for a few people in this room, I've realized Grace is one of these people today morning. But coffee is also something of a connoisseur thing. I mean, David Brown definitely talks to you about all the coffee things that you want to.

[11:45] And I love coffee as well. But I've got to admit, looking at Instagram, looking at the reels, I think it's gone too far. I saw a video as I scroll through my Instagram, and it has this guy with a cup.

He's on a little weight measurement thing. He's got to get 18 grams worth of coffee beans in there, stat, and then pulls it through, and then spritz it with this water. Never heard of that. And at this point, I'm already thinking these coffee beans are living a better quality of life than I am.

And then he grinds them in the best way possible. He continues going, and he strolls them again with a little fork and then puts it in the coffee machine. And out of that, in his eyes, I'm sure, what comes is this beautiful, pure nectar of coffee.

To all of us that don't love coffee or don't have that level of effort to put into that, it's ridiculous. But to him, to the person that loves and is passionate about that, what he's doing is going, I like this thing.

I want the purest form of it, the best form of it. And in David, where he says, they're sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb, where you see the purest form of that coffee, whatever is purest to you, whatever is honey straight from the honeycomb, whatever is purest form of the best thing, of the best thing that you consider sweet, he's saying Lord's commands are much better than all of that.

[13:08] They're sweeter than honey. And as you look at the verses before, I don't think it's that hard to see why. What the psalmist is basically saying is, your deepest desires are satisfied in following God's commands here.

If you are walking here, tired of the world that is in front of you, of the brokenness that we walk around, verse 7 says, the law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul. If you are walking around, looking at the world and saying, there are so many lies and divisive things, verse 7 seems to say, he is trustworthy and he makes wise the simple.

If you are disheartened and looking for something that will satisfy you daily, he says, the precepts of the Lord give joy to the heart. If you look for clarity in what this world is all about, he says it gives light to the eyes.

And if you're yearning for something that is bigger than you to be part of, that sustains, that is a purpose for your life, he says, the fear of the Lord is pure and endures forever.

In these passages, what we see is God's commands, fulfill all of what our deepest longings are. Yet, the law has also a different purpose.

[14:26] And that is to expose us. Look down with me in verse 12, he says, but who can discern their own errors? They discern their own errors.

Forgive my hidden faults. Keep your servant also from willful sins. May they not rule over me. Then I will be blameless, innocent of great transgression. See, in this idea, David sees that the law, the thing that he holds so precious to him, is also something of a mirror to soul.

Much like, this illustration has been used many a time, but the law of the Lord is like a mirror to us. In the same way, as we look at a mirror, you can see the little speck of something, of a stain. I actually had one as I walked in, which I thought was quite ironic. But a speck of a stain, as you look into the mirror, you see that stain on you. And this mirror shows it to you. The law is something like that.

As you see the great commands of God, the good commands of God, as we try to walk them out, and live them out, David's experience is, he has hidden faults that he knows not of, and willful sins that he still continues to commit.

[15:37] He is sinful in front of God. The law shows him, just like a mirror, that he is sinful. There is a speck on his t-shirt. And actually, it's probably inaccurate to say, he thinks of it as just a little speck on an otherwise white t-shirt.

He says, in verse 12, forgive my hidden faults. He's going, Lord, there are faults I am aware of, but there are faults I'm not aware of. When my heart drifts from you, Lord, this is a heart problem. But my flesh keeps on going, even to willful sins.

Lord, I know that they are wrong, but I still continue to engage in them. Lord, keep me from willful sins. May they not rule over me. But I think there is some hope here.

Even as we see, what looks like a drenched in dirt, t-shirt in front of the mirror, that is the law of our sin. What we see is something that, I'm going to quote him again, Paul Tripp says, the law as celebrated in Psalm 19, is not a heavy burden, but a merciful light.

It exposes the sin we've grown comfortable with and invites us into something far better, the grace of God. The grace of God is something that I think David is very aware of.

[16:48] Look at verse 14. He says, may these words in my mouth and this meditation in my heart be pleasing in your sight, Lord, my rock and my redeemer. David is incredibly aware of the fact that his redeemer lives, that God is able and willing to forgive the faults and sins of his heart and to redeem him from the penalty of sin.

And how much more should we, who live on this side of the cross, be completely confident that our redeemer lives? For we know that God is a God who wants to be known in creation and in his word. We've seen that here. But he also sent his son down to live a perfect life, fulfilling every one of the commands that we couldn't fulfill, died for us on the cross and rose again to be able to forgive every one of our sins that separated us from God.

So how can we ever deny that our redeemer lives? Dietrich Bonhoeffer puts it like this, Psalm 19 leads us from the wonderful works of God in creation to his wonderful word.

Both have one and the same end to bring us to God. As we stand in awe of God's creation, we see a God who graciously speaks to us through creation.

[18:03] The heavens declare the glory of the God, the skies proclaim the work of his hands. And as we see the goodness in his commands, we're also forced to see the sin that separates us from him.

Yet what he says is he calls us to run to him, to call upon the grace that's found in Jesus Christ. And what we find there is a father with open arms saying welcome home because he knows that our sins have already been forgiven on the cross by Jesus who would just repent and believe.

So we started by saying this psalm is about the fact that God in his great grace is one that wants to be known. But he is not only one that wants to be known, but he is also one that even when we messed it all up, he made a way for us to know him.

And that is a great story of grace that we see in the Bible and in this psalm. So let me pray and I'll draw us to an end. Lord, we thank you for your great goodness and grace that we see in this psalm. Thank you that your commands are great and that Lord, they bring us joy to our heart. Lord, we fall so short so many times. We fail and fumble our way.

[19:19] We've fallen short of that standard of the perfect law that you provided a sin offering for us in Jesus Christ. That our sins have been taken on the cross by him and that we get to light and running to him knowing that he's forgiven us for all of our sins.

Lord, help us to meditate on that daily. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen.