

Psalm 19

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 03 December 2023

Preacher: Robin Silson

[0 : 00] Now, I've never been very good at learning languages. I'd love to. I'm guessing some of you may as well be able to speak French or Spanish.

Did a little bit of it. We're at college. Learned a bit of Greek and Hebrew, but never been a natural at learning languages. Apparently, if you are able to pick one up, you can then pick up more easier. But I'm not blessed with that gift. I'm guessing if you can speak a language, I don't know, but it's a real asset, isn't it? Being able to go different places, speak a language, converse with people. It'd be fantastic to be able to do that. But today, we're thinking not about us being able to speak. We're thinking about God speaking.

And we're in luck that we don't actually need to know another language to hear God speaking to us. Because he speaks to us amazingly through his word. He speaks to us through creation.

[1 : 11] And when he speaks, his speaking, his word, does amazing things. It changes us. So it's a cycle that we're going to think about God speaking in creation.

Now, artists or people, artists, either music or people who do artwork, I don't know if you've seen this, but they always have a signature, don't they, to their work.

A signature, you can, if you hear a Beatles song on the radio, you can pick it out anyway. You know their sound, their style, the chords. It's the same if you watch animation.

You know, don't you? You know whether a cartoon is Looney Tunes or Disney. Straight off, there's a distinct signature style to it. Whether you listen to one song or watch a five-second clip, you recognize the artist, that there is a signature style.

Their work represents them. It speaks of them. It is the same with the living God. Just look with me in verses 1 and 2. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

[2 : 27] Day after day they pour forth speech. Night after night they reveal knowledge. Like an artist expressing, revealing themselves in their creative work, God reveals himself.

He reveals his glory and speaks to us through his creation. On a clear night, I don't know if round here, the other night there was the, I think we were treated to the northern lights, but on a clear night, what you can see as you look up is incredible, isn't it?

It seems like you can see every star in the universe. We've been up to spend time in Lewis, and sometimes we've had that on a winter's night, a clear night. You look up, it's amazing.

You can see every single star, and you can't take your eyes from it. There's a beauty about looking up at it. And you realize, when you look at that, when you look at the beauty of creation, that it isn't made by an ordinary artist.

It can only be the work of God. God, you look up the sky next time, think how massive the universe is. The same skies and heavens that we gaze at, and the same ones that David, who wrote this psalm, looked at when he wrote it himself.

[3 : 42] It reveals the glory of God. It reveals the glory of God, and it's not just a once-in-a-lifetime show either. When I was younger, my auntie had this dream of seeing a West End musical, going from Yorkshire to London, seeing a musical as her ultimate treat.

Eventually she did make it down, but God's creation is not a once-in-a-lifetime show. It's never-ending. It happens day and night, a continuous show, revealing God every day, every night, more and more of God's glory, his power on display.

And no one is excluded. You don't have to save up to go and see it. Now you just look with me in verses 3 and 4. There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard.

Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the ends of the earth. It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter whether you're fishing in Finland, bungee jumping in Brazil, farming in France on a

savare, in South Africa, or canoeing in Canada.

Everyone across the world has the blessing of seeing this showstopper of the master creator. There's no favouritism. Throughout the whole world, the whole created cosmos, to all people, God is revealed.

[4 : 55] Whatever time zone you're in, we all look up at the same sky, the same moon and stars. And in the next few verses, David stresses the point even more.

He hones in a bit on perhaps a case study, a particular aspect, one detail of the show. He points out the sun. All with me in verses 4 to 6.

In them, there's the sky and the heavens, he has set a tent for the sun, which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber. And like a strong man runs its course with joy, its rising is from the ends of the heavens, and is a circuit to the end of them.

And there is nothing hidden from its heat. Like a bridegroom full of joy after his wedding night, a strong man or champion, grabbing all the attention in victory, this is not a difficult thing to notice. The sun shines on everything. It's not just speaking, but shouting of the glory of God. And each day, without fail, it happens all over again. Nothing is hidden from its heat.

[5 : 55] Everyone feels the warmth of the sun. Everyone needs its warmth. We all need the sun, don't we? It is life-giving, which is essential for our planet. And in the same way we need the sun, we need God.

God speaks through the sun and says, you need the sun, and you need me too. He's giving us a massive warning, a warning to everyone that deep down, it doesn't matter what our background is, where we're from, what we've done, where we came from.

We all know that God exists. It has been revealed to us in his creation, in his handiwork. And just like we need the sun to survive, we need God too. Paul echoes this sentiment in Romans 1.

Since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. We can't escape the revelation of God, each one of us. Everyone knows he exists, and that we need him. And we're without excuse on this one. But we're not left only with the creation that God has made, which brings us to the next point that I want to make.

[7 : 11] God speaks through his word. You think back to the creative artists that we know, the Beatles or Disney. It doesn't matter that you know the artist personally, does it?

To us, Mr. Walt Disney is Mr. Walt Disney. And we might know a little bit about him from the type of cartoons he used to draw. It might know something about the creative spark that he had, but I'm guessing that most of us wouldn't know.

That his middle name is Elias, and there are some things that his friends and family knew about him that we'll never know. To know these things, you'd have to have known him personally.

You'd have to have spoken to him directly. You get to know he had a fantastic creative mind, and he knew how to tell stories pretty well.

But you don't get to know the person of Walt Disney. It's the same with God. We don't get to know God personally through gazing at the sun, nor marvelling at anything else. He has created as amazing and astounding as it is.

[8 : 12] But God reveals himself personally when he speaks to us directly. What we see in the next chunk of the psalm from verses 7 to 11 is just that, that God has revealed himself personally through his word.

Notice back in verse 1, God is described as, well, just God. The Hebrew word El, which literally means God. The heavens declare the glory of God.

But notice how the language changes in verse 7. David starts using God's special name to his chosen people, his revealed name, Lord, or in Hebrew, Yahweh.

You can see it repeated, the Lord, the Lord, the Lord. It's God's special name for the covenant promise-keeping God. And this is the point. The Lord reveals himself through his word.

God reveals, he reveals himself as God to everyone, but he reveals himself as the covenant-keeping Lord to those he wants to know. His word tells us more about himself than his creation does.

[9 : 09] Through his word, we get to know him personally, his character, what he's like, what he dislikes, and how his chosen people should live according to what he says. David is praising God

for his direct word and proclaiming the never-ending fruit he gets from it.

Look with me in verse 7. The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving, refreshing the soul. The word for law is Torah, which means instruction.

The instructions of the Lord, they're perfect, faultless. They can be trusted and they revive, refresh, renew the soul, a man's very inner being. You know what it's like on a red-hot day when you're sweating like mad and all you need, well perhaps not today, but when all you need is a cold shower to refresh and revitalize you.

The law of the Lord does that but for your soul. Further down in verse 7, we read the statutes, all the testimonies of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

We all want to be wise. Being wise is something that everybody wants. But we look no further. It doesn't matter what your background or your education is, whether you've got umpteen university degrees or you left school at 15.

[10:22] This is where you get wisdom. The statutes of the Lord, we can trust them. They're trustworthy and they make us wise. The commands of the Lord. Look with me in verse 8.

The precepts of the Lord. The word precepts is a bit of a funny word, but it sort of means rule and that they're right, that they give joy to the heart. Who doesn't want to be joyful or happy to be content?

We're all after that, aren't we? Well, the precepts, the rules of the Lord are right and good and they bring joy, they'll bring us happiness. A little bit further down in verse 8, the commands of the Lord. They're radiant, giving light to the eyes, taking us from darkness and showing us how to live, opening our eyes, giving us light. If you've ever been lost, it is a scary prospect not knowing which way to go.

You need a torch and a map. God's commands shows the path to take, the way to go. Verse 9. The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever.

[11:21] The ordinances of the Lord are sure and altogether righteous. Here we get two phrases that work slightly different to the previous four, but actually work quite well in tandem.

Another way of describing ordinances is judgments. God's judgments are sure, they're true, and to be trusted, we can have a reverence, a fear of the Lord because he judges righteously.

There's no question about it. God's word is of incredible value to us. The benefits are many and wide ranging, but this is only a snippet of the benefits. It works like a snapshot of the good that it does.

Its true beauty is inexhaustible, something which David wants to impress upon us. Look in verse 10 and 11. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold.

They are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb. By them is your servant warned, and keeping them is great reward. What a statement. More precious than gold, sweeter than honey.

[12:23] We know how precious gold was in the Old Testament. You don't have to read about the building of the temple adorned with gold, Solomon's temple. At the time, it would have been the most precious metal that was around, everything made of gold that had any value.

David says that these instructions, the rules, the commandments, the precepts, the judgments, the law, God's own word, the Bible, that we have, that it is the most precious thing in the world.

It is more precious than gold. It is sweeter. It brings such delight in one's life to read it, and even eating the sweetest thing of the time, sweet honey.

It is so valuable even to have them on your lips that it brings greater delight than the sweetest of pleasures. What could be more valuable? Think about that. What could be more valuable than God's own words?

Remember, as we read that, as we read that, this is the same God of verses 1 to 6. The God who made the heavens, the moon, the stars, and the sky. We have his very own words to direct our lives.

[13:30] We need to savour every morsel and listen intently to everything he has to say. And if we've got God's words, we have everything we need. We just need to make sure we read it and live by it.

What a great blessing and gift to have. There are some people who don't have translated Bible in their own language. We've got the whole counsel of God. But also, we've got more than that.

We actually have the final revelation of God, Jesus, who's called the Word. Hebrews 1-2 tells us, in the past, God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways.

But in these days, the last days, he's spoken to us through his Son. The book is a treasure trove, but even more so is Jesus Christ, who speaks to us through the way he lived.

If we take notice of it, it will do something to us. If we take notice of Jesus, he will do something to us. Perhaps we might remember we've all had a book or a film that has changed us after we saw it or read it, we felt like we saw things in a different way and reflected on the world differently.

[14:44] Novels and powerful dramas can do that to us on a surface level. But God's Word changes something deep in us, down in the fibre of our being. The God of the Bible is the real deal and he did create all things and this is his Word.

David knows it to be true and that his Word is to be treasured. It is his Word that governs, his Word that directs, that we should listen to. How are you going to respond to him? God's Word impacts David, he's convicted and he responds in prayer.

Look with me in verse 12. 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.

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. It's clear that David knows he doesn't fit the bill. Who can?

I mean, take us as well. Which one of us can discern our own errors? There's hidden faults in our lives that we're not even aware of and the same thought goes through David's mind and it brings him to his knees.

[15:59] Forgive me, he says. And then, help me. Keep me from willful and deliberate sins. He doesn't want to be ruled by them.

He doesn't want to be controlled by his own desires. He wants to stop doing them. I don't want to be full of blame but blameless. I don't want to be guilty but innocent. It's a cry for help.

People often say, well, nobody's perfect. And that's precisely the point. Nobody is perfect. We're a bunch of messed up sinners. But there is forgiveness. There is no sin too big, too dirty, too shameful that we can't be forgiven for.

When we compare ourselves to God, we realise the extent to which we need him and that in reality we're all broken. David's a broken mess when he looks at God. He feels exposed.

All his hidden and willful sins put together are there to be seen. But he doesn't stop there because what we see in this final plea is a commitment to live differently and acknowledge that he's going to need God's help.

[17:00] may the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be pleasing, be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

He's repenting. He's turning away from his errors, his faults, his sins and saying, Lord, help me live for you. May my actions, my words, my thoughts, everything I do, could it be pleasing to you?

Could it be acceptable to you, O Lord, my God? Will you do that for me? Earlier I mentioned how we had seen God increasingly revealing himself from creation to his word and how that corresponded to him changing the name from God to Lord, from El to Yahweh.

Well, right at the end we see two further names. David calls his Lord my rock and my redeemer. My rock and my redeemer is a deeply personal address to the Lord.

A rock so dependable it's immovable, cannot be shaken or shifted, it won't let you down. It's solid, it will not fail you or buckle under pressure. God is that rock, he's the rock of your life that you can build upon and it won't be shaken or shifted.

[18:08] He's the redeemer, the one who rescues, who saves, who brought his children out of slavery, who will rescue us if we let him. God is our redeemer, he paid and redeemed us with his own blood out of slavery to sin.

God has been revealed to us through his son Jesus Christ and we know the plan. We know the plan that led him to be called these two things that he walked that lonely road and hung on a cross in order to be our rock and our redeemer.

If we know the power of the living and reigning almighty Savior, Jesus Christ, we too can say my rock and my redeemer because he'll not fail us, he'll not buckle under pressure but he will rescue. Our hidden faults, willful sins will be forgiven and you'll be declared blameless, innocent and great transgression because of his blood which is shed for you. We have an amazing saviour. What an amazing, almighty, gracious God that we have that would reveal himself to us in this way, that would speak to us, that would come down to us through creation, through his word and become our

rock, become the one that we can stand upon.

This is the God we worship. He's our Father, he's our saviour, our redeemer, our rock. God speaks to us today, he speaks to you and to me through his creation, through his word and through his soul and he offers forgiveness and transformation.

[19 : 31] Let's pray. Almighty God, we thank you for the Lord Jesus. we thank you for your goodness, for your glory, your majesty and might.

We thank you that as we look out and we see the snow and we see our families and we see just things in creation that would give us great joy, we thank you that everything in creation in some way reminds us tangibly of you.

We thank you that the reason it reminds us of you is because you've revealed yourself to us. And we thank you for your word. We thank you that you've spoken to us powerfully and that by the power of your spirit you've made us understand your word and made it relevant to our lives and that we have a living and active relationship with you.

Lord, we thank you that when we're weak we know that you're our rock, that you will not be shaken or moved. you're removable, you don't buckle under pressure like we do.

Lord, help us when we feel however we feel to come to you. I thank you that you bought us with the price that you paid for our lives with your own blood and body.

[20 : 56] Lord, as we have this first Sunday of the build-up to Christmas in December, we pray that evermore we would be trusting in you and knowing that you are our rock and our redeemer.

We do pray that many others over this Christmas time would come to know you as their rock and their redeemer and that you would speak to them as you've spoken to us through creation and through your word in a powerful way.

Bless us, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.