

PSALM 19:1-14

The Glory of God is Revealed!

[For the brothers of the Manitowoc Conference,
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by Matthew Doebler

This past week, I had the opportunity to hike down to Havasu Falls in Arizona. Havasu Falls is part of an Indian Reservation that is so secluded from the outside world that it can only be reached by clambering down a cliff and walking ten miles through deep canyons to reach it. What an incredible journey it was!

What a difficult journey it was! For a guy who is not in shape, hiking ten miles in rugged and steep terrain is not so easy. I was very tired at many points, and I spent a lot of time just focusing on the path ahead, trying to get to the end.

Because I was so focused on hiking and finishing, I had to remember to take time to look around me. I was in one of the most beautiful, Eden-type parts of the world. I was surrounded by luscious trees, ultra-blue rivers and high, red canyon walls, like those of the Grand Canyon. It was glorious. And I was going to miss it all, unless I stopped once in a while from my hike and looked about me.

In the opening Psalms of the Book of Psalms, David talked about everything, from his sins to his enemies to his daily struggles. Those were all important things, but David also wanted to remember to take time to look around him. He was constantly surrounded by the Glory of God, in Creation, in the Word, and in his own Life. He didn't want to miss the opportunity to praise God, so in this Psalm, he took the time to stop and reflect on the Glory of God. Brug comments on this:

“Most of the psalms surrounding Psalm 19 are prayers for deliverance or thanksgiving for deliverance. Psalm 19 is an interlude of praise which momentarily sets aside David's concern with his enemies and directs our attention to the glory of God. The Lord deserves our praise, not only for delivering us from enemies, but simply because of the majesty and glory which are his by his very nature. This glory is revealed by creation, by God's Word, and by his power in the believer's life.” (Psalms Volume 1, People's Bible, p. 96).

David's words remind us that, in order for us to continue to hike through life with spiritual strength and continuing peace, we must stop once in a while to reflect upon the glory of God. As we do so, we will once again be filled with awe at all that God has done and is doing for us.

Superscription

לְמַנְצֵחַ מְזֻמֵּר לְדָוִד:

Translation: For the choir director; a melody of David

📖 NIV - For the director of music. A psalm of David.

- לְמַנְצֵחַ - This term is found in the superscription of 55 of the Psalms. It comes from נָצַח, which means “to act as overseer, superintendent, director,” either in building or repairing the temple or in the ministry of the temple. It seems that the definite meaning of this word is unclear. NIV translates, “for the director of music.” This seems to be a thought that many experts agree on—in part. Something like, “for the choir director” would fit the use of the verbal.

1

הַשָּׁמַיִם מְסַפְּרִים כְּבוֹד־אֱלֹהִים וּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדָיו מִגִּיד הַרְקִיעַ:

Translation: The heavens are continually recounting the Glory of God and the work of his hands the expanse is continually telling.

📖 NIV - The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

📖 KJV - The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

- מְסַפְּרִים - Piel pt. “to declare (in Qal)” the Piel intensifies the meaning of this verb to “recount, rehearse, declare” - “to score with a mark as a tally or a record.” (Strong’s) This verb is a participle, reminding us that this “declaration” goes on continually, day and night, every time we glance up to the heavens.
- כְּבוֹד - “glory” The word literally means, “to be heavy.” Perhaps an English equivalent would be “to carry a lot of weight,” i.e. influence. It reminds us that when we look at God or his Creation or any other work of his hands, it ought impress us deeply (heavily) with awe. We are not to walk away thinking, “That was no big deal...” Rather, we are to fall upon our knees in reverence, saying, “My Lord and my God!”
- אֵל - used to express the incredible power of God.
- מַעֲשֵׂה - “work”
- מְגִיד - from נָגַד - hiph pt. “to declare, tell” - This word means “to announce as a messenger.” In other words, the skies are God’s messenger to tell us that he was the one who created them, and he was the one who made them so awesome! Just by looking at them, we are told all kinds of things about God. This verb also means “to explain or reveal something one does not know.” Again, this verb is a participle, reminding us that this “declaration” happens continually, every time we look at the heavens.
- הַרְקִיעַ - “an expanse, the firmament” - This is the same word which is used in Genesis 1:6, “And God said, ‘Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water.’”

By the use of the heavens and the firmament, David is stressing the glory of everything that is above us, both in the atmosphere and outside of it in deep space. He is talking about the clouds and the clear blue sky, the sun, the stars, the planets and the deep empty splendor of space.

2

יּוֹם לְיוֹם יִבְיַע אִמָּר וּלְלַיְלָה לְלַיְלָה יִתְּנָה דְבָרָתָּ:

Translation: Day after day it continually pours out words, and night after night it continually declares knowledge.

📖 NIV - Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.

📖 KJV - Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

- יִבְיַע - Hiph impf. “to cause to bubble (of water), to pour out, to belch forth” - What a beautiful word for making this text come alive (as if it needs any more help). This is a beautiful picture to remind us of the constancy of heaven’s testimony. Like a mountain spring continually bubbles up, furiously babbling without a rest, so the testimony of the heavens continually speaks; never a moment does it stop. This idea can be seen in Psalm 18:4, “The words of a man’s mouth are deep waters, but the fountain of wisdom is a bubbling brook.”
- יִתְּנָה - Piel impf “to tell, declare, make known” This word is Elihu’s word of choice (e.g. Job 32:17) as he rebukes Job. In fact, out of the six uses of this word in the verb form in the OT, four of the uses are made by Elihu. The word itself, however, seems to have no special significance.
- דְבָרָתָּ - “knowledge”

My translation is a little stilted in this verse (as in many others, I know), especially because of all of the times that “continually” is written in, but it is that way for a reason. David is deliberately using every tool he can to make us understand that this testimony of Creation is endless and constant. From the tiniest slug, to the human brain, from morning to night, from dark to light, from century to century, this testimony continually pours forth its unchanging message: “The Lord, he is God; the Lord, he is God, and he created all of this! So, seek him, find him and believe him!” This is the greatest group of passages which prove the existence of a

Natural Knowledge of God. They remind us that Atheism is not natural; it is completely contrary to our human nature. That's why David wrote, "The fool says in his heart there is no God (Psalm 14:1)." All of us by nature can look around and see that there must be a god who put Creation all together.

Finally, all of this silent, yet ever-speaking testimony condemns the unbeliever and leaves him without any excuse for his ignorance. Paul backs this up in Romans 1:18-24 when he writes, "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, 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 men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another." Because of the testimony of the heavens, people have no excuse not to believe in the true God. He gives people plenty of marks that he exists and that he demands allegiance to himself from all human beings.

3

אין־אמר ואין דברים בלי נשמע קולם:

Translation: There is no speech and there are not words where their voice is not being constantly heard. Keil translates, "There is no speech and there are no words, whose voice is inaudible."

📖 NIV - There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard.

📖 KJV - There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.

- בְּלִי - "wearing out" - but it is also used to negate an adjective. Then it means, "not" or "without."
- קוֹלָם - "Voice" - This word is sometimes used of inanimate things in the OT. For example, Abel's blood cried out (Genesis 4:10). Here the voice belongs to the heavens and the earth (the works of God's hands). Voice gives them a human quality, as though they speak a testimony to God's creative power, and certainly they do. Their awesome beauty in the stars, planets, galaxies, the plants, trees and animals tells us that there must be an awesome being who made this all, an awesome being who made us, too.

The voices of heaven and earth make our world look so foolish because they speak of God's glory; our world speaks of evolution and the chance-happening of this great Universe, as though all of the stars, planets and galaxies are the result of a universal fart called "the Big Bang." How ludicrous. How could a fart produce something so beautiful and so intricate? If you went to college and lived in a dorm, you know that it cannot. The heavens testify to the presence of a god and the mighty power of this God. Evolutionists claim that animals came about by chance, that fish eventually turned into amphibians, into reptiles, and then into birds! How ludicrous! How in the world do you make a snake scale which is a fold of the skin, evolve into a feather? It is impossible, short of a miracle. It is myth; it is foolishness. The works of God's hands speak for themselves. They are too complex to have developed by chance. Certainly a mighty God created them!

These words remind us that the voice of the heavens is a universal voice; it speaks to all languages and all cultures of all time. We call it the voice of the Natural Knowledge of God which tells our consciences that there is a God to whom we are responsible. People don't need a revelation of Scripture to know that there is a mighty God who created all of this. That they can plainly see for themselves because, the heavens and the works of God's hands speak a universal language which all cultures and peoples from all around the world can understand. We see this revealed in the fact that every culture has gods whom they worship and religions which they strictly follow. Many people could see that there must be a God, but they either didn't have, didn't listen to or forgot God's revelation about himself in Scripture, and they made God in their own image. Yet, through all of their ignorance, there was always that Natural Knowledge that God must exist.

There is a bit of a question in this verse. You will notice the variety in the translations. Even the NIV gives a footnote which reads, “They have no speech; there are no words; no sound is heard from them.” Both translations offered are legitimate. Either this verse means that there is no place where people cannot hear the testimony of the heavens, or it is pointing out that the heavens do not speak at all, and yet, as verse four adds, “Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world,” in a silent testimony. The first translation emphasizes verse four by saying the same thing; the second translation also emphasizes verse four by saying the opposite thing. Either way, the message is the same: the heavens speak a silent testimony to the glory and power of God.

4

בְּכָל-הָאָרֶץ יֵצֵא קוֹם וּבְקֵצָה תִּבְל מְלִיָּהֶם לְשֹׁמֵשׁ שָׁם-אֹהֶל בְּהֶם:

Translation: In all the earth, their measuring line has gone out and their words, in (to) the extremity of the world, he has placed a tent for the Sun in them.

📖 NIV - Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun,

📖 KJV - Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun.

- קוֹם - “their line” - This word signifies a measuring line, like a yard-stick or a tape-measure. The NIV does not translate “line,” rather “voice.” “Line” is interesting to note, however, since it used primarily of a measuring line. How will you measure up God? The heavens and earth measure him up and show the incredible power of the Lord—like when a little boy gets his height taken at school next to the chart. He is measured up and shown how big he is now. God is also measured up by the heavens and earth and shown how big he is. Only someone the size of God could have created these wonderful things!
- בְּקֵצָה - in + “end, extremity, border” - the verbal form of this word means “to cut off,” hence, “the end.”
- תִּבְל - “world” - interestingly enough, this word comes from a root which means “to flow.” As a result, it seems to be speaking of living nature of the globe.
- מְלִיָּהֶם - “word, speech, utterance, discourse” + suffix - plural
- אֹהֶל - “tent, tabernacle”; can also mean “house, dwelling”

David now begins a brief discourse on the Sun, for the Sun which is couched in (tented in) the heavens is also a great testimony to the glory of God. In fact, it is the most obvious, the most brilliant and powerful testimony in the heavens. In the next verse he will speak of this great Sun in all its glory, glory which attributes itself to God.

5

וְהוּא כְּחַתָּן יֵצֵא מִחַפְּתוֹ יָשִׁישׁ כְּגִבּוֹר לְרוּץ אֶרֶץ:

Translation: And he is continually going out as a bridegroom from his (wedding) chamber; he continually rejoices as a mighty man to run the path.

📖 NIV - which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion, like a champion rejoicing to run his course.

📖 KJV - Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race

- כְּחַתָּן - as + “a daughter’s husband, a relative by marriage, a bridegroom”
- מִחַפְּתוֹ - from + “canopy, chamber (of the bridegroom)” - signifies a time of great rejoicing for the young husband has finally consummated the marriage with his wife after a long period of waiting. He has the glow about him and the goofy smile which accompanies all newlyweds.

- **יָשִׁיב** - qal impf “to be bright, be cheerful, to exalt, rejoice” - The great man rejoices in an opportunity to stretch his muscles and run; it is so exhilarating. So the Sun seems to rejoice in its race across the sky. It is filled with life, with vibrancy. Perhaps the idea is one that is transferred. The Sun is spoke of as being joyful, but really it brings joy when it shines on a clear day.
- **כְּגִבּוֹר** - as + “Hero, mighty man, proven warrior”
- **לָרוּץ** - to + “run”
- **אֶרֶץ** - “way, path, a well-trodden road” - in this context, taking into account the “mighty man,” we can safely say that this means “race,” although it does not have this meaning anywhere else in the OT that the author can find.

We see the Glory of God in the Sun, which bursts forth in the morning joyfully as the bridegroom after his wedding night and races across the heavens like a mighty runner. How could such a marvelous and vibrant ball of fire get there? Only if a marvelous and vibrant God put it there. The Sun reminds us that God is the awesome Creator of all things.

6

מִקְצֵה הַשָּׁמַיִם מוֹצְאוֹ וְתִקְוָתוֹ עַל־קְצוֹתָם וְאֵין נִסְתָּר מִחֶמְתּוֹ:

Translation: From the extremity of the heavens, the place of its going out and its coming round to their end, there is no hiding from its heat.

📖 NIV - It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is hidden from its heat.

📖 KJV - His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

- **מִקְצֵה** - from + “extremity, end” - see verse 5 - Here it represents the sunrise or the eastern horizon.
- **מוֹצְאוֹ** - “place of act of going forth, issue, export, source, spring” + suffix - This word can refer to the sunrise or a spring of water in addition to physical “going forth” of beings.
- **וְתִקְוָתוֹ** - and + “coming round, circuit” (of the sun) - from the verb “to surround, to circulate”
- **קְצוֹתָם** - “end” plural + suffix - Here it represents the sunset or western horizon.
- **נִסְתָּר** - niph pt. “to be hid, concealed” by covering (In Psalm 51:5 God “hides” his face from my sins.)
- **מִחֶמְתּוֹ** - from + “heat” + suffix - This word is used five times in the OT, and every other time, it refers to the Sun itself, not just to its heat. But here it is definitely referring to the Sun itself, probably with an emphasis on its heat, that its heat is felt everywhere on the earth. It reminds us that the heat of the Sun is everywhere on the earth (except in Collins from December through April) from east to west, from sunrise to sunset. It is such an awesome, glorious creation that it can touch the entire world everyday with its heat. It is so marvelous that it declares the glory of God. It proves that there is a God and that this God is awesome.

The heavens (and the Sun within them) can tell us a lot about God. He is obviously powerful and wise. If he created all things, then all creatures are responsible to him. Indeed, he has given human beings an inbred conscience which tells them that God is holy and expects certain things. That is all a lot to know about God just from looking up and inside.

However, there is something that the heavens and the conscience can never tell us. They can never tell us who the true God is, as Paul writes, “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him—But God has revealed it to us by his Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:9,10).” There must be another revelation which tells us about the true God and shows us the way to be reconciled with him when we fall into sin. And that revelation is God’s Word in which he also reveals his glory.

תּוֹרַת יְהוָה תְּמִימָה מְשִׁיבַת נְפֹשׁ עֲדוּת יְהוָה נְאֻמָּנָה מְחַפֵּימַת פְּתִי

Translation: The Law of the LORD is complete, restoring the soul; the testimony of the LORD is trustworthy making wise the simple.

📖 NIV - The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

📖 KJV - The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.

- תּוֹרַת - “a law, a precept or statute” or “the Law,” especially the Decalogue or Pentateuch. It can also mean “instruction.” In the Wisdom literature, when it is found without the definite article, it is translated, “direction, teaching, instruction.” Here, since the word is singular and in construct form in connection with the LORD, it may refer to the Pentateuch or to the specific Laws/Commands of the Lord. So, it may refer to instruction, the Law of the LORD (sometimes called, “the Law of Moses” (narrow sense) or the Pentateuch. Context might move us to take it more as the Law (as opposed to gospel) of the LORD. However, this word is so often used of the whole Pentateuch, it would be hard to separate the two. It is probably wise to speak of it as the entire body of the Pentateuch or perhaps even of the entire Bible (instruction).
- יְהוָה - the LORD, the God of free and faithful grace. The God who keeps his promises because he does not change. The God who will never fail us because he is eternal; his love for us never changes! He is the one who is giving these laws! Right away that ought to tell us something. Even though we are going to hear a lot of words that have to do with the law, we are reminded that the God *who* gives them is the LORD, a God *who* is filled with love and the desire to save all of mankind.
- תְּמִימָה - “complete, sound, entire” - The nuances of this word and the true meaning behind it are found in Leviticus 3:9: “From the fellowship offering he is to bring a sacrifice made to the LORD by fire: its fat, the entire fat tail cut off close to the backbone, all the fat that covers the inner parts or is connected to them,” Also, Leviticus 23:15: “From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks.” God wanted the “entire” tail cut off, and he wanted seven “full” weeks after the wave offering. In other words, God didn’t want anything less than what he required. He wanted his command obeyed completely. This word reminds us, then, that God’s Word is complete. It addresses all aspects of life. It is not missing anything of importance, but addresses everything that is necessary to know for salvation and life. It gives us a full knowledge of God This words occurs again in verse 13. There I treat its basic meaning a little more.
- מְשִׁיבַת - high pt. plural - “to bring back, restore, to cause to bring back, to revive” - When the soul is down, when the faith is weak, when the mind is filled with doubts, the complete word of God addresses all of those things. Here the KJV has “converting,” but I think that this word is misleading; We are not talking about the Holy Scriptures as a converting means of grace here, specifically, although we could certainly say that, in a sense, the Word of God is always converting us by its power through the Holy Spirit, strengthening us in our faith and molding us more and more into the image of God. Every day that old man is being drown in daily contrition and repentance as we study his Word in faith. The meaning here is “revive.” This word is also used in the same sense four Psalms later in Psalm 23: “He restores my soul.” Obviously, David is not talking about conversion there because he speaks of himself. So, the idea seems to be that the Word of God restores, returns life and vigor, to the soul for the Christian. It would, of course, also convert the unbeliever by God’s power, but the word is not used that narrowly here.
- נְפֹשׁ - refers to the “essence of life” - “the act of breathing, taking breath”—Refer to Vine’s notes for nuances of this word (see appendix below). Here the only idea is that the Word of God revives our entire lives, body and soul, our entire essence.
- עֲדוּת - “testimony, witness” - singular - the code of the law in general (BDB); it is used of the ten commandments.

- נֶאֱמָנָה - niph pt. “to be verified, confirmed, supported, certain, trustworthy, firm or enduring”; “to believe, trust” - continual action. This is the word from which we get “Amen,” and is used as such thirty times in the OT.
- מְחַכֵּמֶת - hiph pt. “to make wise” - Psalm 119:98
- פְּתִי - “simple-minded, lacking, silly”- from פָּתַח - “to open, to be roomy, usually in a moral or a mental sense.” - hence, “an air-head” - Refers to those with a simple-faith or with no faith.

8

פְּקוּדֵי יְהוָה יִשְׂרִים מְשֻׁחָחִי לֵב מִצְוֹת יְהוָה בְּרָה מְאִירַת עֵינַיִם:

Translation: 7 the precepts of the LORD are upright, giving joy to the heart; the commands of the LORD are pure giving I fight to the eyes.

📖 NIV - The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.

📖 KJV - The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.

- פְּקוּדֵי - plural only; “precepts, mandates” - The New American Webster Handy College Dictionary c 1981 gives this meaning for “precepts”, “a rule for moral conduct; maxim.” - This word is from פָּקַד - “to visit”, by analogy “to oversee, look after, visit, number, punish, muster” This verb is sort of a catch-all; it is used in many different contexts in many different ways, kind of like the Smurfs used to use “smurf” for every word they couldn’t think of. The noun itself is used 21 times in Psalm 119, and only three other places beside. In most of its uses the context seems to stress that these “precepts” are commands that must be obeyed lest the punishment of God be visited upon those who disobey. Brug says that this word, “describes God’s Word as the supervisor of our lives (Brug, p. 193).”
- יִשְׂרִים - “straight, right, straightforward, just, upright, pleasing”—the verbal form means, “to be straight, even.” - God’s commands are like a straight path, which, if one follows it, he will not fall, he will not err.
- מְשֻׁחָחִי - piel pt. “to cause to rejoice, gladden”—Vine’s: “...usually refers to a spontaneous emotion or extreme happiness which is expressed in some visible or external manner.” Now, this word makes everything difficult. Without a doubt, David is talking about commands, precepts, rules, etc. in this verse. We usually consider rules constrictive and burdensome (especially when our sinful nature is in full-swing.) We don’t usually think of them bringing joy to our hearts. This is especially true when we take Paul’s words into account in Romans 3:19,20, “Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God.” The law generally silences the proud, self-righteous heart within us and puts us miserably in our place. However, David here specifically states that the precepts of the LORD bring joy. How is this possible? According to our New Man. Paul also writes in Romans 7:22, “For in my inner being I delight in God’s law;” With our conversion, a new man was born again within us. That new man delights in God’s law. It knows that law perfectly; it finds joy in musing over it (Psalm 1:2) and obeying it to please God and the fellow Christian. It desires to keep God’s law in every point (Psalm 40:8).
- מִצְוֹת - “commandment” plural - only about ten percent of the uses of this word in the OT refer to people giving these “commandments.” The rest of the time, this word is reserved for God giving “commandments.” It is only used of laws and commands, not of instruction, etc. Plus, it seems to the author, that since the context of this word almost always involves God, the stress is on the divine source and nature of these commands, although, that is merely speculation. However, Brug seems to support this by saying that this word, “...emphasizes the *authority* of this word (Brug, p. 193).”
- בְּרָה - “pure (as in clean), clear” - comes from the verb בָּרַר - which means “to clarify (as in “brighten”), examine” - Here it has a figurative moral meaning of “purity.” Certainly, the commands of God are “pure,” without mistake or moral flaw in themselves. Therefore, as was said before, they are trustworthy. You can put

your full weight upon them, and they will never fail you. NIV translates “radiant” in anticipation of the next verb, “to brighten.” This is possible, since this same word is used to describe the radiance of the Sun in Song of Solomon 5:10. However, it is possible that this translation misses the nuances of “purity” which are found in this word. The emphasis is not that the commands of the LORD shine out, but that they are completely pure, without flaw. The parallelism makes that clear by comparing “pure” with ‘ upright.

- מְאִירָת - hiph pt. “to give light, to light up, to lighten” - This is the same word that is used when Jonathan took honey to eat after a long day without food on the day that his father had forbid eating. It says, “his eyes brightened (1 Samuel 14:27).” Surely, after a day without food, Jonathan’s eyes were sunken in and tired. But when he got a taste of that good honey, his eyes lit up. So, David says, the laws of the LORD make the eyes light up with energy, with joy, with satisfaction.

9

יְרֵאָת יְהוָה טְהוֹרָה עוֹמְדָת לְעַד מִשְׁפָּטֵי יְהוָה אֱמֶת צְדָקוֹ יִחְדָּו:

Translation: the fear of the LORD is pure enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are truth; they have been altogether righteous.

📖 NIV- The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous.

📖 KJV -The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

- יְרֵאָת - “fear, reverence” - BDB says, “the fear of the LORD = the law as *revered*.” - *The phrase “the fear of the Lord” is used in many different ways, but many uses that the author found seem to revolve around two ideas which are really intertwined. 1) The fear of the LORD is the obedience of his commands (see Psalm 111:10). 2) The fear of the Lord is saving faith (Proverbs 14:27; 19:23) or, at least, 3) an acknowledgment of our obligations to him because he is almighty God (Genesis 20:11). In this verse, it seems to be indicating obedience for his commands because of the context. However, because of the parallelism, it would seem that we should take this also as an objective idea or ideas which proceed from the LORD, as though the “fear of the LORD” was actually being used as a title for his commands or his writings. For example, you have “law, statutes, precepts, commands, ordinances, and fear.” With all those other words around it, David seems to be using the Fear of the LORD as a designation for God’s law. Two other contextual notes seems to support this. First of all, David says that the Fear of the LORD endures forever. If this phrase was being used subjectively of our obedience, one would hardly say that it endures forever. However, if it is being used objectively to denote the law of the LORD in some form or another, then it would endure forever (Matthew 24:35). Second, if you take a greater parallelism into account by including the previous verse, we were told that “the commands of the LORD are pure, brightening the eyes.” David, here could very well be drawing a parallel between this verse and the last which would lead us to believe that the phrase “the fear of the Lord” is being used objectively to denote the Laws of God.*
- Professor Brug of the Seminary agrees with this idea. He writes, “‘The fear of the LORD’ is an unusual name for the word of God since the term normally refers to an attitude the word produces in the believer. This name is apparently a figure of speech which uses the result the word produces as a name for the word itself (Brug, p. 98).” Keil also agrees with this assessment. He writes, “[it] is not the fear of God as an act performed, but as a precept, it is what God’s revelation demands, effects, and maintains; so that it is the revealed way in which God is to be feared (34:12),—in short it is the religion of Jahve (cf. Prov. 15:33 with Deut. 17:19) (Keil, p. 179).”
- טְהוֹרָה - “clean, pure” - 1) ceremonially clean; 2) ethically pure, clean - The verbal form of this word means to be bright, to be pure, etc.” This word is used of things or people that are unflawed. For example, this word is often used with “gold” to designate “pure gold,” gold without any flaws or blemishes. Psalm 12:6 tells us that the words of the LORD are flawless, etc...”

- עֹמְדָת - qal, pt. “to stand upright;” then, “to take one’s stand, to continue, abide”
- מִשְׁפָּטִים - “judgment, divine law” plural - this word is used many times in the Pentateuch and in Psalm 119 to refer to God’s commands. It doesn’t seem to have any special distinction from any of the other words in the “command” family, although Brug adds this thought to this word, “The ruling and statements of God’s Word have binding power over us (Brag, p. 193).”
- אֱמֻנָה - “firmness, faithfulness, truth” - from the verb in verse 8 (7 in the English).
- צְדִיקוֹ - qal pf - “to be just, righteous” - “it is a legal term which involves the whole process of justice.” - Vines.
- יְהִיְדוּ - “a unit, together, all together, all at once” - from the verb “to become one” - Vine’s says it denotes, “plurality in unity.” - It is a reminder that while all of God’s commands address different aspects of life, they are all righteous; they are altogether just and true.

No real new thoughts are added in these words, just a few nuances. With these words, David seems to be trying to speak from every angle so that we don’t walk away from here with any misunderstandings. He wants us to be sure that we understand all of these great qualities of God’s Words and that all of God’s Word is precious and “useful for teaching... “ (2 Timothy 3).

Here is a little chart which divides these verses describing God’s Word.

The Law	Of the LORD	Complete	Reviving	The soul
The testimony (ten commandments)	Of the LORD	Trustworthy	Making Wise	The simple
The precepts	Of the LORD	Upright	Giving joy	To the heart
The commands	Of the LORD	Pure	Giving light	To the eyes
The fear	Of the LORD	Pure	Enduring	Forever
The judgments	Of the LORD	Truth	--	--
[The judgments]	[Of the LORD]	Altogether righteous	--	--

It is extremely important to take note of three things in these words. First, that everyone of the words describing the Scriptures is followed by “of the LORD.” That is significant, because it reminds us that behind every law, condemnation and judgment is the God of free and faithful grace, who is filled with love and faithfulness to his promises. Behind every law, condemnation and judgment is a God who sent his one and only Son to this earth to be our redeemer. The Word of God is not just a set of rules, it is also (and primarily) a revelation of God’s eternal love in Christ Jesus.

Second, it is also important to note that every verb in the fourth column is a participle. That is extremely significant. Obviously, David is reminding us that the Word of God continually brings us great benefit. Every time we pick it up and meditate on its message, the Holy Spirit is going to fill us with truth. Every time we meditate on it, we are going to hear about our sin and about our Savior, we are going to be reminded of God’s wrath and his love. And every time we open it, we will be confronted with a continual outpouring of truth. God’s Word is continually effective. That is something we, as ministers of the gospel, must remember at all times. After we go through a season of Lent and Easter, we may feel a little burned out on the gospel because we have preached it so much.. But, at that time, we need to remember that the gospel is always effective, always working. We can never preach it too much. Furthermore, we are tempted to get down when we can’t see immediate results following our preaching. We want to see results because we are influenced by our society. God gives his promise here that, even if we can’t immediately see (or if we don’t ever see it), his Word is busy at work in the hearts of his people. We simply need trust in those participles – God’s work in his Word goes on constantly, even while we are not aware of it, just as the kingdom of heaven grows without our knowledge (Mark 4:27).

These words, then, are also a reminder of the great need and benefit for pastors to study God’s Word devotionally. We continually sin, and God’s Word continually speaks. Every time we open the Bible, we are

going to be filled up with encouragement, with that eye-brightening truth that God didn't just send Jesus for the members in our congregation, he sent Jesus for us, sinful men who are in desperate need of forgiveness, peace and assurance. Those participles remind us to continually dig God's truth for ourselves with the guarantee that we will benefit by it for eternity.

Third, although the words used here are primarily law-oriented words, we should not think that David has forgotten the gospel, because he has not. Remember that in wisdom literature, the word "Torah" is also used for "instruction." Instruction doesn't only include law; it may also include plenty of gospel. Granted, the words in Psalm 19 seem to focus primarily on the law portion of the Bible, but there are hints of the gospel in here as well. Brug comments, "The terms "law," "statutes," "precepts," "commands," "fear" and "ordinances" make us think of God's law, in which he commands what we are to do and not to do. However, in the psalms such terms can refer to the whole word of God, even the gospel in which he announces salvation." It is important to remember that the Old Testament writers often used the word "law" in a much broader way than we usually do. In fact, even Jesus and the New Testament writers use law in this broad way as well. Jesus says, "The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it (Luke 16:16)." Jesus is certainly using "law" in a broader way to denote the writings of Moses. Paul does the same thing in Romans 3:21, when he writes, "But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify."

So, if one were to preach on this text, he would not be restricted to speak just of the law, but he should speak of the Word of God in its fullness, both law and gospel. He should tell how the gospel "revives," "makes wise," "gives light," etc. to the heart of the Christian. At the same time, he can also tell how the law "makes wise," "gives joy," "gives light," to the New Man who delights in serving the LORD day and night. He can tell how both the law and gospel "endure forever," how they are both truth and righteous. In short, he can apply any of the participles to both law and gospel in order to impress upon God's people that God's Word reveals his glory in it fullest!

10

הַנְּחֻמָּדִים מְזֻהָב וּמְפֹז רַב וּמְתוּקִים מְדַבֵּשׁ וְנֹפֶת צוּפִים:

Translation: They are continually more desirable than gold, than much pure gold, sweeter than honey and the dripping of the honey comb.

📖 NIV - They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb.

📖 KJV - More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

- הַנְּחֻמָּדִים - niph pt - "to be desirable" - qal = "to delight in"
- וּמְפֹז - "pure gold" - the Verbal form means "to refine"
- רַב - much, great, many
- מְתוּקִים - "sweet" - The verbal form of this word means "to suck," thus by implication, "to relish or be sweet."—certainly the gospel is sweet to the hungry soul and the commands of God are sweet to the taste of the New Man who delights in God's law and looks for opportunities to put it into effect.
- מְדַבֵּשׁ - honey (Psalm 119:103 is very similar).
- וְנֹפֶת - "dripping" of honey from the comb; thus it is also translated "flowing honey"
- צוּפִים - "comb of honey" - the verbal form means "to overflow." It is a great reminder that God's Word, is overflowing with admonishment, encouragement, forgiveness and promises, all of which fill up the soul!

11

גַּם־עַבְדְּךָ נִזְהָר בָּהֶם בְּשִׁמְרָם יַעֲקֹב רַב:

Translation: Moreover, your servant is instructed by them; in the keeping of them [there is] a great end.

📖 NIV - By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

📖 KJV - Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

- נִיָּהַר - niph pf. “to be instructed, admonished, warned” “to gleam, to enlighten”—the majority of the uses of this word are found in Ezekiel and are used there to denote warning a person. But the word does not have to be always used in the sense of “warn.” “Instructed” is also a legitimate translation. It seems that that David is appealing to the desires of the New Man, how he delights in God’s Word, both the law and the gospel. As a result, it is probably not necessary to translate as the KJV and NIV both do, with “warned.” The New Man isn’t “warned” by anything. Technically, the New Man doesn’t need to be instructed at all when it comes to the law because it is ingrained in him. But he still delights in the truth of it and putting it into action. Truly, if we want to talk about the Old Man, we must talk about warnings, because the Old Man will not obey unless he is compelled to obey. But here, it would probably be just as appropriate to translate “instructed” or “enlightened.”
- עֵקֶב - “consequence, the last of anything, result, compensation “ - In Psalm 119, the NIV twice translates this word, “to the end,” as in, “My heart is set on keeping your decrees to the very end (Psalm 119:112; see also verse 33).” But, the word doesn’t seem to fit here in the same way. But you can probably translate “in keeping them there is a great end,” which would indicate that there is a reward awaiting those who keep God’s commands or also to those who trust the gospel—heaven, the greatest reward, is waiting for them above.

David wraps up his commentary on the Glory of the Lord found in his Word, by reminding us that there is a great reason to follow that Word. It directs our pathway in life, and it is the key to eternal life. Those who make use of this glorious tool will certainly benefit from it forever.

For eleven verses, David has written to us about the Glory of God as an objective statement both in Creation and in his Word. Now, David turns us to the subjective: the Glory of God revealed in our lives. That is certainly a fitting way to end this Psalm. Once God has revealed his incredible goodness in creation and in his gospel, it is an appropriate time to speak of our response.

12

שְׁגִיאוֹת מִיִּיָּכִין מְסַתְרוֹת נִקְנִי:

Translation: Who discerns (can discern) my errors? Acquit me (hold me innocent) of (my) hidden things.

📖 NIV - Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults.

📖 KJV - Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.

- יָכִין - Qal impf. - “Discern, regard, notice” - If this word is used with the parallelism, it seems to indicate that we have so many faults and so many of them are unintentional, almost reflexive, that we could not notice or discern them all even if we tried.
- שְׁגִיאוֹת - “Errors;” “a moral mistake, a straying” - It is straying from the path that God has laid out; it also has the idea of sinning unintentionally in Deuteronomy and Ezekiel (at least that is how it is translated with the parallelism.) It is talking about all the countless times that we, like ignorant sheep, begin to stray from the path that we are supposed to be following and wander toward the cliffs of death. That’s how it seems to me. As a result, the idea of “unintentional” seems to be there in the background; it would also be supported by the parallelism in the second half of this verse. The verb from which this noun comes is almost always translated “straying.” Again, it doesn’t have the idea of willful, intentional deviation from God’s path; it has, the idea of incognitively wandering off like a sheep or a little child in the store.
- Yet, while it is only considered “straying,” it is nonetheless extremely dangerous. Straying for a sheep could mean death over a cliff; straying for a child could mean drowning at the lake or hit by a car on the road. It is a reminder to us that all sin, even unintentional sin is a danger to our faith. Ignorance of the law or a “slip-up” is no excuse. “I didn’t mean to,” but you did, and that is no excuse. While these sins may be spoken of as

unintentional, nowhere in the Bible does God say that any sin is excusable. Rather, he holds us responsible for every “little” one.

The psalmist isn't asking God to forgive what is hidden from God; he is asking God to forgive what is hidden from him. How many times do we slip right into sin without even realizing it? We think of the “big, horrible” sins that we fall into, but we forget that our minds constantly race with “concealed, lightening” sins that occur all of the time, every second, every minute of our lives. An example would be when someone cuts you off; we yell, we wave our fists, perhaps and drive on in unrighteous anger. We glance at that lady in the short skirt without even realizing it; we gossip about someone and ruin their reputation without a second thought. We hardly even notice or later remember that we fell into sin.

We may consider these sins small because we barely think about them and they may seem like natural inclinations or knee-jerk reactions, but they are damnable sins. Consider the words that Jesus spoke, “Men will have to give an account for every careless word they have spoken (Matthew 12:36).” Or, in Matthew 24:35 Jesus says, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my word will never pass away.” God takes every sin very seriously, and considers it a breach of his commands, a damnable trespass.

13

גַּם מִזְדִּים חָשָׁה אֶל־יְמִשְׁלוּרֵי־בִי אֲזַיְתָם וְנִקִּיתִי מִפְּשַׁע רָב׃

Translation: Also, keep your servant from arrogant things; (so that) they will not rule over me. Then I will be complete (devout) and I will be cleansed (innocent) from great transgressions.”

📖 NIV - Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then will I be blameless, innocent of great transgression.

📖 KJV - Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

- זְדִים - צְדִים - “arrogant, presumptions, proud” - This word is used many, many times of arrogant people who stand up against God’s law because they think they know better than him or just don’t care about doing what is right before him. The arrogant are also people who deliberately try to trap God’s people because God’s people are doing what is right (see Psalm 119). This word seems to be used especially in this latter sense of the arrogant attacking God’s people and oppressing them. The meaning of the verb behind this word brings out the idea of knowing God’s commands and deliberately doing otherwise. It is used of the insolent Israelites, who deliberately went against what God had to say. That is why arrogance fits perfectly into this word. If you know what God wants but you go the opposite way, you are showing that you are arrogant and presumptuous.

In this context, David is asking that God would keep him from deliberately breaking the commands of God. He had already done this before with disastrous results. Remember? He had taken another man’s wife and lay with her. He had impregnated her and then tried to cover it up by having her husband killed. Knowing full well what God has to say about adultery and murder, David deliberately and arrogantly did the opposite. As a result, he had completely fallen from the faith; his sin was allowed to “rule over him,” and then destroy him so that, if he had died during that time period, he certainly would have perished in hell. As a result, he didn’t want that ever to happen. So he asked for the Lord’s help.

The application for us is a good one. We must realize that without the Lord’s constant help, we would certainly stray and die. It is the Holy Spirit who keeps us alive in the faith. Without him we would be lost. See Ephesians 2:1 ff. I don’t care who you are, how long you have been a Christian, or how often you come to church; you can fall away. There are people who were pastors or preparing for the ministry, who made it their life to study God’s word and they fell away from it. They walked head-on into sin and fell away. Just think about David; he is the writer of many wonderful psalms; he was a man “after the Lord’s own heart (1 Samuel 13:14).” And yet, this great Christian fell into unbelief

So this is a good prayer for us everyday. Not only forgive all my sins (part one), but keep me, a weak, mortal, sinful man, in the faith so that I don't fall away and miss out on the marvelous resurrection to eternal life.

David was praying to the right guy. God certainly could help him. God is our rock and our fortress, an every present help in trouble. He is our forgiveness and our hope. He is our peace and our comfort when we fail. He is ready, whenever we fall, to lift us back up again with his gospel so that we might not despair and fall away.

- אֵתְּם - from תָּמִים - This word does not mean “blameless” as the NIV so often translates. It means “complete” or “devout.” It is expressed well as “well-rounded.” It talks about the well-rounded nature of a Christian who gives his life over to the Lord in every aspect - not that he commits no sin, but that he knows how to handle the sin he commits with repentance; he knows how to put his faith into action as a response to God's forgiveness. This word has the sense of “the whole thing, the entire thing.” For instance, Noah, although he was guilty of many sins, his *whole* life revolved around God, and what God had to say. He served God as best as he could in *every aspect of life*.

David prays that he might be forgiven of his hidden sins and kept from rebellious, arrogant sins so that he might be a “whole” Christian, not one without sin (Although this would also certainly be his desire), but one who is dedicated to God in all aspects of life and isn't hampered by sins which keep him from serving God faithfully as his child. With these words David points us ahead to the next verse already.

David was concerned about great transgressions for three reasons. 1) for the sake of his faith and his eternal welfare. That is obvious from the words of this psalm. 2) for the sake of those around him. He wanted to set a great example of his faith to others, believers and unbelievers (2 Samuel 12:14) alike. 3) for the glory of God, an aspect that we observe in the final verse of this psalm. David wanted God to be praised by his life. So he couldn't afford to be sinning great transgressions. These, whether done in the open or done in secret, would not bring glory to God as David wanted to.

David also returns to the thought: “God if you keep me from willful sins, then I will be kept from them.” David recognizes that he cannot do what is right on his own. He cannot please God unless God gives him the strength to do it. So again, he turns to the Lord in prayer for strength to be the Christian he wants to be and he knows that God wants him to be.

14

יְהִי לְרָצוֹן אֶמְרֵי־פִי וְהִגִּיוֹן לִבִּי לְפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה צוּרִי וְגֹאֲלִי:

Translation: (May) the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be accepted (or “be as a favor) to your face, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

📖 NIV - May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

📖 KJV - Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

- “Words of my mouth and meditation of my heart” - This is what is inside and out, what is public and what is private. The “words of my mouth” are all those things that I say, things people can hear. What do they say about me? What do they say about my God?
- הִגִּיוֹן - “Meditation;” This word can be directly looking at God's word; it can also be reflection on the beautiful truths we have learned in God's Word and marveling at God's blessings and Creation.
- The “Meditation of my heart” is the whole thought process that takes place within me.
- רָצוֹן - “accepted, favor”

- צוּרִי - “rock;” “cliff, rocky wall, mountain, boulder” - it is not a little pebble. God is our rock who is always there to hold us up and to protect us from the storms of life. With these final names for God as David closes this Psalm, he is reminding us again that the strength to serve God comes from God alone.

David was praying that his whole life, inside and out, might be acceptable to God. That meant receiving forgiveness for hidden sins and the ability to conquer willful sins so that nothing might stand in the way of bringing God praise. He didn't want anything to hinder him from bringing glory to God.

Really this whole concluding prayer of Psalm 19 is a prayer for God's Glory. We exist for him, we exist to bring him glory in all that we do. We exist to make his name known throughout the world. So often today, people are only thinking about “me;” they have no time for others, especially not God. Things were never different in the past; In David's time, people were only looking out for themselves, too. But David shows us the proper way to think with these words, here.

As pastors, this is a marvelous, daily prayer. Because of our training and our knowledge of the Scriptures, we can be very tempted to become arrogant, to believe that we know better than everyone else, including God. That is when we fall. With this prayer we ask God to help us stay away from this sin. Because we are sinful human beings, we fall into countless transgressions every day. With this prayer, we seek God's help to fight sin. At the same time, we ask God to round us out as believers so that every aspect of our lives might be handed over to him, so that we might not keep some remnant of evil for ourselves, so that we might not be selfish with any of the gifts that God has given us. And finally, we ask that God would make every word and thought acceptable to him. Whether we are preaching, teaching or studying, we seek God's power to make it all worthy of his name.

Why all of these prayerful thoughts? Because, like the Universe and the Word of God, we want to bring proper Glory to our God. After all, he knit us together in our mother's wombs to be exactly how he wanted us to be for our good and his glory; he redeemed us from all of our sins by the death and resurrection of Christ as recorded in his Holy Word. We have ample reason to bring him glory. And once we realize that, our mindset becomes that of Martin Luther who prayed, “[Dear Father], thy divine honor and will are dearer to me than all my peace and comfort, temporal and eternal.” Once we understand the glory of God as David and Luther did, we will pray that we may bring glory to him as well in every aspect of our lives. May God be glorified among us!

Division of the Text

See God's Glory

- I. In Creation
- II. In his Word

God's Glory Reveals...

- I. His Incredible Power/His Power
- II. His Incredible Love/His Will

A Prayer of Confession

- I. Forgive ALL my sins
- II. Strengthen me to fight temptation or to serve God

The Glory of God is Revealed

- I. Natural Knowledge of God
- II. Revealed Knowledge of God
- III. Reflected Knowledge of God

Appendix

A

נַפֶּשׁ - “soul; self; life; person; heart.” This is a very common term in both ancient and modern Semitic languages. It occurs over 780 times in the Old Testament and is evenly distributed in all periods of the text with a particularly high frequency in poetic passages. The basic meaning is apparently related to the rare verbal form, *napash*. The noun refers to the essence of life, the act of breathing, taking breath. However, from that concrete concept, a number of more abstract meanings were developed. In its primary sense the noun appears in its first occurrence in <Gen. 1:20>: “the moving creature that hath life,” and in its second occurrence in <Gen. 2:7>: “living soul.” However, in over 400 later occurrences it is translated “soul.” While this serves to make sense in most passages, it is an unfortunate mistranslation of the term. The real difficulty of the term is seen in the inability of almost all English translations to find a consistent equivalent or even a small group of high-frequency equivalents for the term. The KJV alone uses over 28 different English terms for this one Hebrew word. The problem with the English term “soul” is that no actual equivalent of the term or the idea behind it is represented in the Hebrew language. The Hebrew system of thought does not include the combination or opposition of the terms “body” and “soul,” which are really Greek and Latin in origin. The Hebrew contrasts two other concepts which are not found in the Greek and Latin tradition: “the inner self” and “the outer appearance” or, as viewed in a different context, “what one is to oneself” as opposed to “what one appears to be to one’s observers.” The inner person is *nepesh*, while the outer person, or reputation, is *sheen*, most commonly translated “name.” In narrative or historical passages of the Old Testament, *nepesh* can be translated as “life” or “self,” as in <Lev. 17:11>: “For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for [yourselves]...” Needless to say, the reading “soul” is meaningless in such a text. But the situation in the numerous parallel poetic passages in which the term appears is much more difficult. The Greek Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate both simply use the Greek and Latin equivalent “soul,” especially in the Psalms. The first occurrence is in <Ps. 3:2>: “Many are saying of my soul, There is no deliverance for him in God” (NASB). The next occurrence is in <Ps. 6:3>: “And my soul is greatly dismayed; But Thou, O Lord—how long” (NASB). In both passages the parallel contrast is between *nepesh* and some aspect of the self, expressed as “him” in <Ps. 3:2> and not expressed but understood in <Ps. 6:3>. There is no distinction as to whether it appears as an “A” or “B” word in the parallelism. However, since Hebrew rejects repeating the same noun in both halves of a poetic line, *nepesh* is often used as the parallel for the speaker, primary personal subject, and even for God, as in <Ps. 11:5>: “The Lord trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence [he himself] hateth.” Such passages are frequent, and a proper understanding of the word enlightens many well-known passages, such as <Ps. 119:109>: “My life is continually in my hand, Yet I do not forget Thy law” (NASB). The versions vary widely in their readings of *nepesh*, with the more contemporary versions casting widely for meanings. B. Verb. *Napash* means “to breathe; respire; be refreshed.” This verb, which is apparently related to the noun *nepesh*, appears 3 times in the Old Testament <Exod. 23:12; 31:17>. The other appearance is in <2 Sam. 16:14>: “And the king, and all the people that were with him, came weary and refreshed themselves there.” (from Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words) (Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

B

Sample Sermons

Psalm 19:1-11

What God Tells Us

Introduction

Do you remember those old E.F. Hutton commercials? There were a bunch of people talking, and all at once they became ultra-silent. The announcer would say, “When E.F. Hutton talks... people listen.”

They were trying to convince you that E.F. Hutton was worth listening to because they knew what they were talking about. They tried to imply that everyone could see that, and you should also.

Well, when God speaks, he is also worth listening to, because he really knows what he is talking about. Today, we are going to hear what God tells us in Creation and in the Bible. It is my prayer that we may silence the other thoughts on our mind and concentrate on this important message. Listen to David's words in Psalm 19.

Psalm 19:1-11 I The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. 2 Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. 3 There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard 4 Their voice goes out into old the earth, their words to the ends of the world In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun, 5 which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion, like a champion rejoicing to run his course. 6 It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is hidden from its heat. 7 The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. 8 The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. 9 The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. 10 They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold, they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. 11 By them is your servant warned: in keeping them there is great reward. (NIV)

In His Creation

David starts this psalm by talking about the heavens. Where did these marvelous heavens, the sun, the moon and the stars come from? Where did the earth and all its creatures come from? People who believe in Evolution think they have the answer. They say that billions of years ago, all of the matter in the Universe got smashed together into a tiny ball. They don't know how that matter got there in the first place, and they aren't quite sure how it got all stuck together, but it was all smashed together, they say. Suddenly there was this giant "bang," and big lumps of molten rock blew all over the Universe; those big, ugly lumps became beautiful stars and planets filled with life. The whole idea is sort of like blowing up a bushel of apples with a stick of dynamite, hoping that the pieces will form a replica of the Statue of Liberty.

On one of these molten rocks, little amoebas evolved into fish, which turned evolved frogs, which turned into snakes, which turned into birds, which turned into horse-like things, which turned into ape-like things, which turned into human beings, implying that you are ultimately an ape which swings from trees and scratches its behind when thinking. Few of them realize how silly it is to believe that a snake's scales (which are folds of the skin) would eventually turn into feathers on a bird.

David has a simple answer to all this nonsense. He writes in verse 1, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands." Instead of believing that a giant explosion made the Universe and that snakes turn into birds, look at the heavens; you will see that *God* made them.

Dig into it

Just watch the intricate dance of the stars over your head at night. Gaze upon the beauty of the moon! Even though covered with craters, it is one of the most marvelous sights in the Universe. David tells us to look at the Sun in its glory. What a beautiful ball of gas lights up our world, heats our bodies and brings us hope after gloomy days. How perfectly positioned it is! Any closer or any farther from this planet, and nothing could survive here. Only God could have created such beauty, such perfection; a cosmic mistake certainly couldn't have done it.

Now look at yourself. Lock at your hands; touch your skin; think about your eyes. Reader's Digest once wrote this about the eye: "Light passes through the protective outer coating (the cornea) and continues via a self-adjusting aperture (pupil) to a similarly automatic lens, which focuses it on the back of the retina. Here 130 million light-sensitive rods and cones cause photochemical reactions that transform the light into electrical impulses. These are then transmitted to the brain at a terrific speed. How is it possible that thousands upon thousands of lucky mutations happened coincidentally so that the lens and the retina—which cannot work without each other—evolved...?" Even Reader's Digest recognizes that Evolution couldn't produce the wonders

in our Universe! Only a mighty God could do such awesome things! Even the eye tells us that there must be a powerful and wise Creator somewhere!

Apply it

Now, if we came about by chance, because some big rocks exploded billions of years ago, or because snakes evolved into birds and eventually into human beings, then we aren't responsible to anything or to anyone. I can do whatever I want with my life. If I want to live entirely for myself without one thought of others, who are you to tell me otherwise; I am just a product of chance. If I want to destroy my body with alcohol or drugs, or disobey every law ever written, then I can do that; who are you to tell me otherwise? You are really just an ape and so am I.

But if God is the one who put us together, then things are different. Then we don't belong to ourselves; we belong to him. Then we had better listen when he talks; we had better jump when he calls, and we had better obey when he commands. If he sets up a thousand rules, we had better keep them perfectly, as Matthew writes, "Be Perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect (5:48)." Whatever he says, goes, and we had better listen without mistake because we are responsible to him.

Sometimes, when the pastor is around, someone will say a really bad word or do something considered "unchristian." Suddenly, he will become all apologetic and start blabbering on about this and that. Why? Because the pastor is around. Hey, ultimately we are not responsible to the pastor; he's just another human being; he will not judge us on the Last Day. But we *are responsible* to the powerful Creator who put us together and who sees all. He doesn't care who is around, we had better listen to him! That goes for all of us! That's what God tells us in Creation: we are responsible to him for every thought, word and action.

In His Word

But God doesn't tell us everything about himself in Creation. He doesn't tell us what he really thinks about us. He doesn't tell us how to get to heaven. That's why God goes on to tell us more about himself in this psalm.

The world generally looks for life's directions inside. It says that if we are looking for answers to life's hard questions, if we are looking for salvation, we should look deep inside ourselves for inner strength and guidance. That's why they say things like, "Follow your heart; do what's right for you; if it feels good, do it." Find direction inside yourself.

But David tells us something completely different. Starting in verse 7 he writes, "The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving 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 ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous." Notice that David uses a lot of words which have to do with the law. Words like, "precepts," "commands" and "ordinances." The Old Testament writers often used words like these to talk about the entire Bible. For example, when the Jews talked about "the Law" or the "Torah," they were often referring to *the Bible*, not just to God's commands. So, what David is really saying is that we should look to God's Word to find direction for life. Notice, he doesn't tell us to look inward; he tells us to look outward, to God's Word.

Dig into it

What is so good about God's Word? Notice that David says in verse 7, "The law of the LORD is perfect." "Perfect" is an interesting word. It has the idea of being "entire" or "complete." In other words, God tells you *everything* you really need to know for life in his Word. David emphasizes this by giving many other descriptions for God's Word. He says that it "revives us," "gives us light" and "makes us wise." God tells us how to become wise for salvation and to find true hope in his Word. That's what Paul meant when he wrote, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is *useful* for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be *thoroughly equipped* for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16,17)."

Apply it

So, what does God tell us in his Word? Well, he tells us everything we need to know for life and eternity. He tells us that we are sinners who desperately need a Savior. But most of all, he tells you about his eternal love for you in Jesus Christ. Jesus himself said, “You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, (John 5:39)” In Scripture, God tells you how he took his holy anger out on Jesus instead of you. He tells you how he raised Jesus from the dead so that you could rise to heaven someday. He tells you that, even though he is your holy Creator who detests sin, he became your *loving Father* who forgave all of your sin when you were baptized into his name. He tells you how you can go to sleep at night in peace because your future is taken care of and your past is erased in his Son. He tells you how you can rest easy because he will always be with you in every situation, good or bad.

This is really everything you need to know, isn't it? I mean, after all, the world can come and go; you can be rich or poor, wise or foolish, happy or sad, interesting or boring, ugly or cute, but if God tells you in his Word that he loves you and that he is going to take you to heaven through Jesus, that's all you really need to know.

So make use of God's Word as often as you can. Continue to come to worship on a *regular* basis. And when you are in worship, truly listen, because God has reserved a message of hope just for you. When you get a chance, pick up his Word or a devotional book, because God longs to tell you that he is your dear Father who sent his Son to die so that you might live. That's all you really need to know for life.

When E.F. Hutton talked, some people listened. Their message may or may not have been worthwhile. But when God talks, whether it is in Creation or in his Word, it is always worth listening to. He tells us that we are sinners. But more importantly, he tells us that he loves us forever in Jesus Christ. So listen to his wonderful voice; it brings true hope!

C

A Spiritual Prayer for Everyday

Psalm 19:12-14

Introduction

There once was a single guy who was serving as pastor for three churches in South Dakota. Because he was single and probably because he didn't have much time, he ate a lot of frozen pizzas; they were quick and easy to make—just as easy to clean up; you threw away your cardboard plate and went back to work.

But, he probably ate too many frozen pizzas, and his body wasn't getting what it needed. His intestines weren't functioning like they were supposed to, and he started to get a little concerned.

He called up a friend who is a bit more health conscious. This friend told him that he had to eat a well-rounded diet. For starters, he had to get more fruit and vegetables into his diet. So, he grudgingly tried this; and believe it or not, his intestines started to work properly again. He started feeling healthy; he had more energy. He was getting out of his rut.

Sometimes we can become a little like that single guy in our prayer life. We don't have a lot of time for prayer (at least that is what we think); so our prayers become a little unhealthy. Instead of spending quality time and praying in a “well-rounded” way, we tend to get stuck in a rut. We often pray only when it is absolutely necessary, like, “Dear Lord, please turn this light green; I am in a hurry.” Or, “Please take away my sickness.” And we tend to pray only about what is physical and temporary, like, “Dear Lord, please send more money so I can pay my bills.”

After having two funerals in a week, we begin to remember that there are more important things in life than just what is here on earth. The spiritual side of life is most important. That's why David, in our lesson today, gives us a prayer that takes us out of the physical rut and put our focus back on the spiritual side of life. It

is my prayer that his example may keep us from getting our prayer life in a rut. Listen to his spiritual prayer in Psalm 19.

Read the lesson.

Keep me in the faith

In verses 12 and 13 you see David praying about two types of sins: hidden sins and willful sins.

Dig into it

First of all, David felt it was extremely important to pray about hidden sins. He realized that he committed many sins in one day. Some of these sins were very noticeable. When he lost his temper and stormed the hallways in a rage, that was noticeable. When he got into a fight with his wife, that was noticeable. But in a day he also committed many sins that he didn't even notice. When a swift hateful thought passed his mind, he barely noticed. When he greedily longed for a pile of money, he barely noticed. By the time he went to bed at night, he didn't even remember that he had committed these sins. That's why he called them "hidden faults."

But David knew that these "hidden faults" can lead a person to stray; they can eventually destroy faith. Besides this, they can turn from mental sins into physical ones; hate could turn into fighting; greed could turn into stealing or swindling. These hidden sins could grow inside him or outside him and eventually destroy his faith.

Judas Iscariot is an example of the danger of hidden sins. He was greedy for money; it might have seemed like a little sin at the time; he may not even have noticed it. He let that greed get a hold of him. Soon he was stealing from the purse which Jesus and the other disciples kept for expenses and the poor. Not long after that, he was selling the Son of God for thirty pieces of silver. That little hidden fault destroyed Judas's faith for eternity. David knew that hidden sins are nothing to trifle with, that's why he prayed about them.

David also felt it was very important to pray about willful sins. He knew that sins deliberately and persistently committed against God are extremely dangerous. They undermine faith and destroy it very quickly.

David knew this from experience. He once slept with another man's wife. That may have been a sin of weakness. But then, in order to cover up his sin, he had her husband murdered. That was a willful sin. It undermined and destroyed his faith completely. If David had died in that state, he would have perished in hell.

David knew that hidden sins and willful sins can destroy faith. So he turned to God in prayer for the help he needed. He asked God to forgive those hidden sins and to keep him from falling into willful sins so that he might not lose his faith.

Apply it

Do we ever fall into hidden sins? Oh, yeah. Think about all those times people have cut us off on the road; what was our reaction? It was often instant rage and nasty words. When that popular girl looked so nice, we looked at her with jealousy. When that brother picked on us, ugly thoughts flashed through our mind. When that lady passed by in the short skirt, we glanced up for just a second. When someone was being slandered, we listened eagerly for a few moments. *We never even thought about it. We never remembered it later.* We fell into hidden sin.

Are we tempted to fall into willful sins? Sure we are. We know God's law, but our sinful nature says, "Come on! God is old-fashioned. Listen to your heart." It tempts not just to fall into sin, but to fall into it without *caring that it is wrong*: drinking too much, sexual immorality, grudges, etc. A Christian might fall into such sins because he is still a sinner. But when he commits them deliberately and persistently, he is committing willful sin.

Praying to God about our hidden and willful sins is a good, spiritual prayer for us everyday. Hidden sins can grow and destroy faith. Willful sins undermine and destroy faith. We pray about these sins because we don't want to lose that faith; we don't want to miss out on God's blessings and his awesome gift of heaven. We need God's help if we are going to stay in the faith and keep all these things.

Make my life an acceptable sacrifice.

As David prayed, he wasn't just concerned about losing his faith, he was also concerned about living his faith. He knew that getting to heaven is the most important part of life, but it is not the only part of life. So, in this spiritual prayer, he also made this request in verse 14: "May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight..." He talked about his mouth and his heart.

Dig into it

What do these two things signify? Well, the mouth has to do with speaking, and speaking takes place on the outside. The heart has to do with thinking and thinking takes place on the inside. The mouth is public; the heart is private. In other words, David was praying, "May my *whole life*, inside and out, public and private, be pleasing in your sight."

Why was David so concerned about pleasing God in every way? He realized that God is the whole reason why we exist. God created us; God saved us; God made us dear children by faith. David realized that his life was not about serving himself, but serving this wonderful God, as it says in Romans 12, "*Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. (12:1)*" God had been extremely merciful to David; David owed God his life. That's why he prayed that God would make his life a pleasing sacrifice.

Apply it

Is pleasing God always our first priority? No. You know that as well as I do. We live in the great "me" generation. Everything is all about "me." And we are tempted to believe that. It sometimes bothers us when God tries to take more of our time than the scheduled weekly hour. It sometimes bothers us when God asks for our time or treasures or talents. We are often tempted to think more of "what can I get out of God?" rather than, "What can I give God?"

That's why this prayer should be our prayer. We need God's help to overcome these temptations, so that we may serve him with trust, so that when people look at us they see God, our Creator and our Savior.

Supplement

So far, this sermon has been a lot about what we are to pray, but David reminds us why we pray to God. In the last half of verse 14, he calls God, "[the] LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer." God is our Redeemer. He not only created us, he loves us. We were born in unbelief and sin. Our selfish lives brought him no praise. Yet, God sent his own son as a Savior for you anyway! He tortured that Son to redeem you, to buy you back from sin and death. But he even went beyond that! He came looking for you, he found you and he washed you clean in baptism. So now you were not only his creation but also this beloved child.

At that time, God promised to be your Rock. Any time you needed anything, he would be there to lean upon. Nothing would ever move him from your side, as it says in Psalm 62, "*My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken. (62:1, 2)*" Through your mighty and loving God, you will never be shaken, you will never be torn from your faith, you will never miss out on the great blessings of being his child; you will never miss out on the marvelous gift of heaven won for you through the blood of Jesus Christ.

So, follow David's example, and let your prayer-life focus primarily on the spiritual side of life. Remember, you are praying to a marvelous God, your Rock and Redeemer, who stands ready at all times to help you and to keep you in the faith until life everlasting.