

Stare at the Son

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Preacher: Jeremy Martinson

[0 : 00] Psalm number 19. To the choir master, a psalm of David. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

! Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard.

Their voice goes out throughout all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them 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 end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat. The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul.

The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.

[1 : 21] The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever. The rules of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold, sweeter also than honey, and drippings of the honeycomb.

Moreover, by them is your servant warned. In keeping them, there is great reward. Who can discern his errors?

Declare me innocent from hidden faults. Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins. Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless and innocent of great transgression. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

[2 : 31] Good Father, we are grateful to receive your word. Thank you for preserving it for us.

Thank you for David and for the inspiration of your spirit that moved him to compose this psalm. Thank you for the privilege we have to be together now. And hundreds, thousands of years later, to reflect on this psalm, to consider what it has to say to us, to wonder the way that David wondered at creation, and to consider your word.

Please help us as we continue in this time of worship. Please help me as I continue in worshiping by serving your people in preaching. And please help all of us as we continue in worship by sitting under the preaching of your word.

We want to hear what you have to say to us. We want, know we need, to be comforted and encouraged, reminded, spurred on in our faith, motivated to greater gospel ministry, called away from sin, invited back to repentance.

[4 : 01] All of these things, your word and your spirit do for us. And so please help us as we continue now in this time. We ask all of this in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. What motivates you to spend time reading or listening to the word of God?

When I was growing up, at least part of my motivation was pressure. Reading the Bible every day was just the right thing to do.

It's what you did. And reading through the Bible every year was not just encouraged. It was expected. Perhaps you had a different motivation.

Maybe there was a reward. Finish reading a book and you get a prize. And if you read enough, all of the gospels or all of Paul's letters or maybe all of the minor prophets, maybe there is some monetary gain involved.

[5 : 12] For others, I think reading is just an obligation. Maybe there is a school assignment that motivates you to read.

Maybe a youth group commitment. Maybe you just love checking the box on the daily reading plan. Here's the thing.

There is nothing wrong with any of these motivations. Pressure, reward, obligation. All of these motivations can help get us into the word.

But they rarely cultivate our taste for it. They may help us form habits, but not hunger.

They can help us to build spiritual disciplines, but not desire. They can, to press the metaphor, put food on the table.

[6 : 18] But these other motivations can't teach your soul to savor that meal. In Psalm 19, David sings about a better motivation.

Not pressure, not reward, not prizes, not check marks or completing a reading plan. Something deeper, something stronger, something more satisfying.

Psalm 19 doesn't just tell us that we should read Scripture. Psalm 19 shows us why we should want to.

Are you ready? Look with me again at the first eight lines, starting in verse number one. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

Day to day, pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words whose voice is not heard.

[7 : 20] Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. The sun, the moon, the stars, every planet, they call humanity to worship their creator.

Think about this. Every mountain, and comet, and national park, and waterfall, and constellation, and ocean, and volcano, they don't merely exist.

They declare. They proclaim the glory of God. They teach us he is infinitely impressive.

I wonder if you've had this happen to you. You go up to the fountain pop dispenser at the fast food restaurant, and you begin pouring soda pop into your cup, and as you withdraw your cup, the dispenser keeps spitting out pop.

It's a mess. It makes me crazy because you're trying to make it stop, and it won't stop, and you have to go and tell someone, look, the pop dispenser's broken. It just keeps wasting pop here, going down the drain.

[8 : 40] This is the picture that David gives us next. Day after day, creation's testimony is gushing. Their voice, he says, goes out.

It gushes out like a broken fountain pop dispenser. You can't stop it once it starts, and then night after night, creation's testimony bursts forth again.

It's like excited fans at a football game repeating the same cheer over and over and over, and if you're one of the fans, you are ill in, all in on that cheer, and if you're an opposing team fan, you're like, please make that stop.

Creation just keeps on chanting. There is a God, and he is great. And who gets left out of this message?

Well, no one. No culture, no language, no remote corner of the world escapes it. Notice all of the words that David piles up, all words in that range talking about words.

[9 : 58] Look in your Bible through those first three verses. Declare, and proclaim, and speech, and reveal, and voice, and words. He piles up all of these words about speech, and then comes this surprise in verse number three.

There is no sound. Creation isn't making noise at all. Creation speaks without syllables.

It talks to your eyes. It addresses your mind. It presses on your heart. It tugs at your conscience.

This is what Paul writes about in Romans chapter one, verse 19.

What can be known about God is plain to them because God has shown it to them for his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world in the things that have been made, so they are without excuse.

after these first eight lines, David narrows his focus, and for six lines, he fixes our attention on the sun.

[11 : 18] The sun, David sings, is like a bridegroom stepping out of his chamber after the wedding night, beaming, beaming with radiant joy, radiant delight in anticipation of this new life with his bride.

And the sun is also like a strong man, like an athlete, maybe even like an Ironman triathlete, because the sun runs this race daily, not out of duty, but for the sheer joy of running.

Look at verse four, right at the end of it. In them he has sent 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 end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from his heat.

All along its course, from east west to west, the sun gives light and heat. At times, it gives warmth, warmth that makes life flourish, and at other times it brings oppressive heat that reminds us of judgment.

[12:50] Either way, you cannot escape the sun. nothing, David says, nothing is hidden from its heat. And as he has slowed down, I think, his thoughts in reflecting on the sun, his attention begins to shift.

Because as powerful as this witness is, written across the heavens, day by day by day, night after night, there is another way that God's glory is revealed.

His glory is not just revealed above us in the sky. It is also revealed before us in the scriptures.

It's worth noticing, and if you're taking notes, you might enjoy this. In verse one, David uses a generic word for God. It's the Hebrew word El.

But when he turns his attention to God's law, his language shifts, and over and over again in these next several verses, he uses God's personal covenantal name, Yahweh.

[14:09] You'll see it in your Bible in all caps, likely, the Lord. The God whose glory fills the sky is the same God who reveals himself in his word.

Look at verse seven. The law of the Lord, the Torah, God's instructions for the good life.

David says it's perfect. It's perfect. It is not flawed. It is not fragmented. It's coherent. It's complete. It's unblemished.

It's perfect. perfect. And notice this because I think it's a little bit ironic. The law does not merely inform.

It gives life. It restores the soul. In other words, God's word just doesn't tell us what is true.

[15:08] It retrains our appetites. the testimony of the Lord, still in verse number seven. In other words, the written expressions of his will, they are sure.

They are reliable. They are trustworthy. You can rest your future and your eternal destiny on God's promises. And when you do that, when you rest your future and your destiny on God's promises, something wonderful happens.

You move from being simple, uninstructed, untaught, to being wise. Verse eight, the precepts of the Lord, his authoritative words, they are right, they are straight and not crooked, and because sin always would lead us into misery, obedience to God's authoritative words, to his precepts, leads us to rejoicing.

Our bathroom has two light switches. One controls the main lights, one controls a fan and a small light that is over the shower.

Every morning, the first thing that I do is flip on the smaller, it's like the moon in Genesis, the lesser light. I flip on the lesser light.

[16:55] Why? Because my eyes need time to adjust. This morning, I walked in there and unthinking, just banged my hand against the light switch and both lights came on and it was radiant in my eyes.

Too much. That's the picture that David offers us next. The commandment of the Lord is pure. It is radiant.

It's matching his word earlier for the sun. God's commandments wake us up. they brighten our eyes.

They help us see clearly again. And when God's people respond to him with reverence and awe, we call that the fear of the Lord.

It's down in verse 9. We call it the fear of the Lord and this fear, this reverential awe of God leads to additional convictions.

[18:04] Notice them in verse 9. God's word will last forever and his rules, his determinations about what is right and what is wrong, good and evil, his rules, they are reliable and just.

And over time and through experience, we learn that God's rules really are always good. They are altogether righteous.

They are always for our good. With these thoughts about God's law on his mind, it is no wonder that David sings in verse 10, more to be desired are they than gold.

even much fine gold. Sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is your servant warned, in keeping them there is great reward. Did you notice? David doesn't talk about scripture as an assignment to keep, a box to check, an external obligation. [19 : 24] something else is motivating David. He finds God's word to be desirable, valuable, craveable.

The law of the Lord is more valuable than gold, even a mountain full of it, if you like the Hobbit movies. But it's not just a treasure that you possess.

did you see it? His word is also a sweetness that you savor.

Scripture satisfies the soul's sweet tooth. Do you have a sweet tooth? Oh man, I love cinnamon rolls.

I can pass up on a lot of things. But cinnamon rolls, so good. Scripture satisfies the soul's sweet tooth.

[20 : 30] love. When God's word becomes valuable, and when you begin to savor its sweetness, then you will not ignore its warnings.

You will listen, and in listening, and in heeding what God has said, you will receive the spiritual reward, the blessing that comes with obedience. David wants that kind of life.

And so he continues, verse 12, who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from hidden faults. Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins.

Let them not have dominion over me, and then I shall be blameless and innocent of great transgression. sin is a harsh taskmaster, and David does not want to be ruled by it.

And so notice, he prays, but not first for strength. He prays for God's restraint.

[21 : 46] He asks God to keep him back, hold him back, the ideas that David might run after these sins. And he wants God to hold him back, to restrain him from deliberate, willful rebellion.

But David goes even further. He asks God to declare him innocent of sins he isn't even aware of yet. Do you see that in verse 12?

Sins he isn't even aware of. He wants God to declare him innocent of those sins as well. Hidden faults, unexamined impulses, the instinctual pull of our sinful nature towards temptation.

transgression. And if God will forgive David for what he cannot see, and if God will restrain him from what he might otherwise choose, then David can say with confidence in the middle of verse 13, then, then, I will be blameless and innocent of great transgression.

In other words, free from the proud self-reliance that leads to presumption and death, and instead shaped by a humble dependence on God.

[23 : 28] The kind of faith that leads to life. as if to underscore both his confidence and his humility, David closes with these beautiful words.

Number 14, let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight. O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. David acknowledges God as his rock, representing power, protection, refuge, but also as his redeemer, like Boaz in the book of Ruth, the faithful relative who steps in to rescue and to restore.

God is both David's protector and deliverer. And it is through his word that his people find guidance and restoration and lasting satisfaction.

If this were the end of the sermon, there would already be much to reflect on to our benefit in Psalm 19.

[24 : 58] 13. But for those of us who live on this side of the birth and the life and the death and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, the Spirit of God has more to show us.

because we remember that like the sun that David focuses on in verses 5 and 6, the Lord Jesus Christ is, John 1, 9, that true light which gives light to everyone.

And if we weren't quite convinced, we remember that at his transfiguration, Matthew 17, his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light.

And again, in the book of Revelation, John turns to hear the voice speaking to him, chapter 1 and verse 16, and his face was like the sun, shining in full strength.

brothers and sisters, the Lord Jesus is the son of righteousness from Malachi chapter 4.

[26 : 24] And if he is the son of righteousness, then he is also the bridegroom, beaming with joy over his bride, the church.

And he is the strong man who ran his course, for the joy set before him who by his death and resurrection plundered our adversary the devil to rescue and to redeem his people from their sin.

If the word of God revives the soul, then how much more the word made flesh who dwelt among us. If the law of the Lord can instruct us in wisdom, how much more the words and the ways of Jesus who perfectly fulfilled the law by always doing the Father's will.

If the Lord's authority in the Old Testament could bring about so much rejoicing in David's heart, how much more should we delight in following Jesus Christ God who makes the Father known in every word, every action, every response, every impulse of his heart throughout his time on earth.

[27 : 49] If the Lord's commandments are pure and awaken our eyes, how much more should the radiant gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ get us out of bed every single day.

I am grateful for creation that declares God's glory and proclaims his power and majesty, but I am even more grateful for his word, which by the Holy Spirit's power and illumination reveals to us the Son of God.

God. So let me invite you, as we begin this new year, to prioritize regular time in God's word.

Let it open your eyes and fill your mind. Let it tune your conscience and guide your decisions. Let it revive your soul and shape your desires and nourish your faith.

Let it strengthen your hope and motivate your endurance and stimulate your witness. If you have tried reading the Bible by beginning at the beginning and stalled out somewhere in about a month, then let me invite you to try starting in the New Testament this year.

[29 : 26] maybe the New Testament still feels a little overwhelming. Pick a gospel. Pick a gospel and read through one of the gospels and let it show you the beauty of your Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you've tried reading and you say, well, I just don't remember what I read, then let me invite you to choose a short book and then read it over and over and over again for the next 30 days.

Enjoy it. Reflect on it. Meditate on it. If you truly do that, you will memorize parts of it. Don't look at the sun in the sky.

If you do, you will burn your eyes, but you can stare at the sun in scripture all you want.

Psalms 19 begins with creation declaring God's glory. The sun, the moon, the stars, all testifying without words.

[30 : 43] There is a God and he is great. Creation reminds us that God is powerful, majestic, worthy of our worship. But scripture takes us further than creation.

And scripture's revelation is clearer because it points us to Jesus Christ. He is the word made flesh, the true light shining in the darkness.

He is the bridegroom who rejoices over his church. He is the strong man who finished the race for our redemption, obeying on our behalf and dying for our sins.

So look at creation and worship God for it. But feast your eyes on the sun whose radiance never fades and whose love and whose love never fails.

Expectation and obligation and pressure and reward, they may start us reading. Some reward may train us to read.

[31 : 56] But listen, only sweetness will keep us coming back. so savor the sweetness of your savior.

Let your soul's sweet tooth be satisfied by the sun, your rock and your redeemer. Let's pray.

Father, we are grateful to receive your word.

Would you help us to desire it more than gold and to savor it more than cinnamon rolls?

Would you help us to spend time in your word to be a people devoted to your word? Because we understand that your word is training us in righteousness and godliness and peaceable witness, peaceable reasonableness.

[33 : 06] That your word is giving us promises to anchor our faith. That your word is encouraging our hope. That your word is stimulating our witness to a world that is desperately needy and chasing after anything they can and so many things that will not satisfy.

Father, would you please help us to commit to being people who spend time in your word? Would you please help us to be people committed to sharing and testifying of the promises, the good news, this radiant glorious gospel that we find here in your word?

We love you. We love you, Lord Jesus. Thank you, Holy Spirit, for opening Psalm 19 to us.

Help us to savor it and to savor the Savior that it points us to. We ask all of this for your glory and for our good.

In the name of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.