

11/9/25

Psalm 19 – Revelation and Response

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Good morning. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are in Psalm 19 this morning.

Whenever we have something important to say we generally have some kind of idea of what response we hope to get. Or at least we kind of have in mind a range of responses that we expect. So, if you are apologizing to someone, maybe you send them a long text explaining and apologizing and laying out how you hope to do things differently next time. Like you really pour over this message, you're really heartbroken over how you let this person down. Then a few minutes later they send you back a thumb. And you just don't know what to do with that. Do they accept the apology? Are they so mad they won't even acknowledge it? Not the response you were hoping for.

Or, some young guy finally gets up the courage to go and ask the girl out. He has certain expectations for how she might respond. Surely he hopes she says yes, but he understands there is always the chance she says no. But when he finally goes and talks to her, and she starts laughing at him... not exactly what he would have expected!

Or, maybe you have something hard you need to say to a friend. You're concerned about their drinking habits, or the way she talks about her husband, or whatever. So you go to talk to the friend, and you know you really lay it out – "hey I love you, I want what's good for you, I'll always be your friend, but I need to say something about this habit of yours. It's not good, it's bad for you, it's dishonoring to God, I really think you need to change." Right, really lay it out,

and she goes – “wow, that was beautiful. I’m so glad you said that to me. Those words mean a lot.” You’re encouraged, so you ask, “ok, so are you going to change? Are you going to stop doing that.” “No, no, I’m going to keep doing it, but what you said was really moving.”

When we say something that matters, something important, there are certain responses that we have in mind that would be appropriate – that would show us that our words weren’t wasted. That the other person heard them, and really took them to heart.

And that’s true for God’s Word too. There are a few places in the Bible where God’s Word kind of steps back and reflects on itself a bit. In these places the Bible reflects on the Bible itself. It lays out what God’s Word is, how it should be used by us, what it should do in us and for us, things like that. This Psalm, Psalm 19, is one of those places.

God too has certain expectations for how we should respond to what he says to us. He doesn’t want us to read the Bible and give it a big thumb emoji. He doesn’t just want us to piously respect the Bible. He doesn’t just want us to read it a bunch and memorize little bits of it. He has very concrete expectations for what we do with his Word.

Here’s my roadmap for you. Psalm 19 has three major parts. The first two are all about God’s Word – God’s Revelation. Then the third part is all about our response – how we should respond to God’s Word, to God’s revelation. The first part is verses 1-6, that is a celebration of God’s General Revelation. The second part is verses 7-11, which is a celebration of God’s Special Revelation. Then the final part, part 3, is verses 12-14, a godly response. General Revelation – 1-6, Special Revelation – 7-11, then godly response, 12-14.

Let’s pray, then work through the text.

Jesus our Shepherd – please help us this morning. My words are so silly and trivial, confused and lifeless. But your Word is life and light. Help us this morning. Help me to be clear, to honor you, and to speak what is true. Help the hearers to listen, to hear, to believe, and to obey. Help us all to stay focused. Fix our hearts and our minds on you. Help us. Amen.

Ok, verses 1-2, **“¹The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. ²Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.”**

Here David lays out the basic contours of what is called the doctrine of General Revelation. General Revelation is the idea that God has revealed himself to mankind in ways that are generally available to all people at all times. Here David points to the sky. The majesty and beauty of the stars, the rhythm and wisdom of days and weeks and seasons. David says, to those with eyes to see, all of this says something about God. In other words, wherever people can see the sky, God has revealed his beauty, his majesty, and his wisdom.

Skip verse 3 for a second, I want to hit verse 4 first.

Verse 4, **“⁴Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.”**

So here he just underlines that last point. The heavens declare the glory of God wherever they are... which to be clear... is everywhere. There is nowhere that is without a witness to God, without a revelation of God.

Ok, so now look at verse 3. **“³There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard.”** This is a hard sentence. There are a lot of negatives here so it's a bit hard to trace out precisely. Based on what's going on with the Hebrew under this sentence there are basically two ways to take this sentence. Either it is explaining verses 1 and 2, basically saying that the

declaration of the heavens is a silent testimony. They speak without words, they sing silently. Something like that.

Or the other take is that here the “speech and words” should be understood like how the New Testament talks about tribes and tongues and languages. In that case it is basically saying the same thing as verse 4 – there are no tribes, tongues, or languages who have not heard the testimony of the stars.

Both are plausible, both could fit with the passage, but I think the first option fits the text better, both linguistically, and in substance.

Which means that David is doing two things here. One, just making obvious that he’s using a metaphor – the heavens sing silently, the testimony of creation is a silent testimony. But then, with that last phrase, **“whose voice is not heard,”** he’s pointing out the fact that most people are totally deaf to the song that surrounds them constantly.

Every starry night sings of the beauty of God.

Every blazing sunset trumpets the majesty of God.

Every crashing wave and breaking hurricane thunders the power of God.

Every successful harvest is a testimony of God’s kindness.

Every change in the seasons is a reminder of God’s wisdom.

And yet, almost everyone totally misses it. Almost no one hears.

Ok, General Revelation isn’t just about the stars and the sky. The Bible points us to three sources of generally available revelation that teach us about God: creation, conscience, and history. The biggy is creation itself, that’s what David is talking about here. What does the creation itself say about God? The Apostle Paul touches in this in Romans 1:19-20, **“¹⁹For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. ²⁰For 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.”

So, the creation itself clearly reveals the power and divinity of God.

Second, General Revelation is available in the human conscience. Some theologians have called the conscience God’s prosecutor. Paul gets at this in Romans 2:14-15,

“¹⁴For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. ¹⁵They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them.”

Everyone knows, no matter how hard they want to deny it, that their moral sense of right and wrong points to something real. When someone wrongs you, or you do something you know you shouldn’t have, or whenever you hear about some horrific war-time atrocity, you know, and everyone knows, that feeling that something *evil* was done isn’t just a trick of evolution.

Your conscience, and the conscience of everyone you will ever meet, testifies constantly to the justice of God – especially when that justice is violated. You must do certain things, and you know this. You must not do other things, and you know this.

If there is no God, then morality, your sense of right and wrong, the wrongness of murder and the rightness of selflessness are illusions. Convenient instincts that help us survive but that point to nothing real. If we’re all just chemicals in a cosmic petri dish, then morality is meaningless.

If there is no God, then there is no such thing as right and wrong, no such thing as good and evil, no such thing as good people and bad people, no such thing as good deeds and bad

deeds. But it's at this point that the conscience testifies about God. There is a moral standard, a moral law that we are all held to that stands above biology, above human law. You can't protest unjust laws if there is no such thing as divine law above human law.

The conscience testifies that there is such a thing as good and evil. And this is precisely the point that secularism and atheism need to deny. If the universe is just blind natural law then a big asteroid crushing a small asteroid, a lion killing a gazelle, and a mugger killing someone in an alley are all morally meaningless.

Christians have the challenge of *explaining* the existence of evil, secularists have the much harder challenge of *denying* the existence of evil.

The third form of General Revelation is God's providential working in history. So, the three forms are creation, conscience, and history. This gets hinted at throughout the Bible, but the prophets, especially Ezekiel, lean into it quite a bit. The basic idea is that we are able to learn about God based on how he judges and blesses nations and individuals through history. Ezekiel consistently underlines his prophecies against Israel by saying that once God's judgment falls on them, then they will know that God is the Lord. In other words, God will reveal himself in his judgment of an idolatrous nation.

Taking all that as a whole, one thing that you will notice is that the messages of General Revelation are pretty simple. General Revelation is not the fine-tip precision pen of God. General Revelation is the sledgehammer of God. God isn't being subtle with it. It's either ringing the gong of God's glory, or dropping the hammer of God's judgment. General Revelation is meant to humble us and convict us.

General Revelation is enough to convict us, but not enough to justify us. General Revelation is enough to bring us to our knees, but not enough to pick us back up again. General Revelation gives us all law, but it gives us no gospel.

This is the basic idea of verses 5 and 6. Read those, starting in the end of verse 4, **“⁴In them he has set a tent for the sun, ⁵which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy. ⁶Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat.”**

Ok, so notice what this suggests about God. Remember the sun here is being held up as a little mirror reflecting the glory of God. What is true on a small scale of the sun here, is true on the large scale of God. So here David uses the bridegroom to suggest beauty and joy, he calls the sun a strong man, suggesting a warrior, and an athlete who runs his course with joy. So, the sun, as a mirror, every day proclaims the beauty, joy, strength, and might of God.

Notice then verse 6, this may have slipped by you, so the first part again just reminds us that the sun is a testimony for the whole world. But then notice the last phrase, **“there is nothing hidden from his heat.”**

Now remember, Israel is a desert climate. So don’t read that like a northerner soaking up some rays on a sunny but chilly November afternoon. Read that like you grew up in the desert. **“There is nothing hidden from his heat.”** That’s a warning.

This is a reminder of God’s holiness as experienced by sinful man. The sun is needed for life, but if you’re not careful, it will take it away. In the same way, God is the source of all goodness, truth, and beauty, but for sinful man that actually poses a problem for us. God’s glory, that should be the apex and pinnacle of our delight, is the very thing that condemns us in our sin.

Every day the sun rises and shouts “behold the beauty and power of the God against whom you sin.” And every starry night sings “behold the beauty of the God whom you offend.”

So, like an ancient Israelite desert dweller we need a cover, a rock of refuge, a fountain in the desert. This is where Special Revelation comes in.

SPECIAL REVELATION

General Revelation is available to all people at all times – you couldn’t avoid it if you wanted to.

But Special Revelation is God’s more precise revelation of his person and purposes to specific people in specific times and places. Special Revelation also comes in three different forms. It includes miracles, the Scriptures (that’s the big one), but also the incarnation, God’s revelation of himself in the person and work of Jesus Christ – that’s the apex, the grand climax.

Here, David has God’s written word in mind. The Scriptures, the Bible.

Look at verse 7, “**⁷The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.**”

So, just notice this transition. Notice what just happened. What was the final effect of General Revelation? Like the sun, beautiful and life-giving, in the desert of fallen humanity it leaves you exhausted and on the brink of death. But then Special Revelation finds you as a cool spring, restoring you, reviving you. General Revelation crushes you with the glory of God and the weight of your sin, but then Special Revelation raises you up with the mercy of God and the work of Christ.

Now, to be clear, the Bible has a lot to say about the glory of God, and the Law of God. Whatever General Revelation says about God, the Bible says it too, maybe not so loud, but

certainly more clearly. But what the Bible does that General Revelation does not do, is preach the gospel. Where the sun and moon say, “behold the glory of the God whom you offend,” the cross of Christ says, “behold the glory of that same God who died to save you from your sin.”

And this is what David is getting at here. When he talks about ‘the law,’ he doesn’t just have the moral code in mind, ‘the law’ or torah in Hebrew, is the name for the first 5 books of the Bible, and can be used as a stand in for the Bible as a whole.

Even just there in those first five books you don’t just get rules and commands – which you do get – but you get promises, and demonstrations of God’s saving grace. He promises a son who will crush Satan and undo the curse. He promises a man from Abraham’s line who will bring universal blessing to the world. He promises a prophet like Moses who will supersede Moses with a new covenant.

So, it isn’t doing the Law – as a moral code – that revives the soul, but believing the promises of the Law, which all point to Jesus. The Law revives the soul, not as a list of rules, but as an invitation into the covenant of Grace held out to you in and by Jesus Christ.

Ok, I want to point out a progression here. In verses 7 and 8 we see four steps in a comprehensive picture of how the word of God saves and transforms us.

So first we see that the law revives the soul. The soul that was killed by sin and judgment is made alive by grace received through faith in God’s Word. There we see regeneration, justification, adoption. The dead man is made alive. The enemy is made a son. The guilty man is acquitted.

Then next, notice what happens, here is where the practical rules come into play. **“The testimony of God makes wise the simple.”** You aren’t saved by the rules and laws of the Bible,

but they aren't just filler either. To the soul who has been made alive by grace through faith in Christ, the word of God teaches you how to actually live rightly, how to live wisely.

You are saved by grace through faith, but the kind of faith that saves always leads to substantial life change. So, after Justification, we see sanctification, life change, godly wisdom.

Now, then notice the first half of verse 8, **“the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.”** Even within sanctification, within growth in practical holiness, there is a movement from doing God's will to delighting to do God's will.

There are basically two components to the process of sanctification, the process of growing in holiness. There's the component of *knowing* what God wants us to be doing, and *knowing* how to do it. This is what David means here by wisdom. God's Word gives us wisdom to know how to live lives that are pleasing to God.

Then the second component is the delight component, where not only do we know what God wants us to do, we actually delight to do it. For ease of memory you would call these the duty and delight components of sanctification.

The order that David puts them in here is helpful, it's important to get this straight. Delight follows duty. If you are waiting to obey God until you can do it out of delight, if you are waiting to obey God until it is easy, you will never actually do what he tells you to do.

You have to stop looking at porn long before it gets easy. You have to stop sleeping with your girlfriend even while you still want to. You have to start respecting your husband before it feels easy. You have to start loving your wife while it's still a challenge. You have to stop gossiping even while it still feels good.

It is as you are striving to live by godly wisdom that God will give you godly delight. It is as you are living to please God that you start to find that God's commands are pleasing and good.

The Word revives, the Word gives wisdom, the Word gives delight. The Word is God's tool of justification, and the Word is God's tool for sanctification, both for duty and delight. But then last, the Word is God's tool for glorification, the final end-goal of salvation.

Second half of verse 8, **"the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes."**

This is a picture of full and final glorification. This is a quick reference to what I talked about at the end of my sermon a couple weeks ago: the beatific vision, the blessed vision. The final apex of salvation, the endpoint and goal of human life is to behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. I want you to just see a few passages that bear weight on this theme.

Psalm 36:9, **"For with you is the fountain of life; in your light do we see light."**

Matthew 6:22, **"The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light"**

Then last, note the parallels between Psalm 19:8 and Matthew 5:8, **"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."** So, the commandment of God, the Word of God can make us pure in heart because it itself is pure, which then enlightens our eyes to behold God.

So, the Bible is God's tool to give us life through faith, to sanctify us, and in the end, the Bible is God's tool to glorify us, to prepare us to see his face in glory.

In the rest of this section, verses 9-11 he moves into celebration of the word in and for itself. Verse 9, the word is clean, it endures forever. The word is true, it is righteous top to bottom. Clean, enduring, true, righteous. In other words, if we find something in the Word that we want to change or that we wish were different, or that we think our culture has outgrown, it's us that needs to change, it's our culture that has something wrong with it, not the Bible.

Verse 10, the Word is better than gold and it's better than honey. It's better than money and it's better than pleasure. **“What does it profit a man to gain the whole world but forfeit his soul?”**

Then 11 is more or less a summary of what he's covered so far. The Scriptures show us the path of life, and help us stay on the path of life, both with carrot and stick.

RESPONSE

So that's revelation. This is what God has said to us. Verses 1 through 6 is General Revelation. He has revealed his glory and majesty in creation, and he's also revealed our sin and fallenness. Then verses 7 through 11 is Special Revelation. In the Bible, he has reiterated those things but also taken us a layer deeper, into his heart of mercy and grace, and held out for us the path of life. He's shown us the person and work of his Son to redeem us by faith, and offers us his Holy Spirit to walk this path of life.

In creation God has revealed the blazing sun of his holiness and justice. In the Bible God has revealed the cool springs of the water of his grace.

General Revelation reveals the glory of God. Special Revelation reveals the grace of God.

So, what should we do? What should you do? How should you respond?

Verses 12 through 14 map out a really good response to all of this.

And notice this. Notice this. This is really important. Notice how he responds, but also how he doesn't respond. His response is basically two-fold. “Forgive my sin,” and “help me practically live in godly ways.” His response isn't despair. His response isn't self-righteousness. And his response isn't self-indulgence.

He's humbled by the glory of God, so he doesn't respond with a big puffed up chest in self-righteousness. But he's also held up by the grace of God, so he doesn't just bury his head in his hands in despair. And even while he's held up by God's grace, God's glory keeps him from drifting towards a self-indulgent, "I can do whatever I want now" type of foolishness.

Look at David's response.

Start in verse 12 – **"Who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from hidden faults."**

He asks for forgiveness. And this is courtroom terminology. He's asking for God to acquit him, to justify him. And not because he's innocent, but because of God's covenant promises.

God's revelation – general and special – should humble us, it should convict us, it should drive us to our knees to ask for mercy and forgiveness.

But then note this, verse 13, **"¹³Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me! Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression."**

After forgiveness he asks for sanctification, renewed heart, renewed action, renewed fear of God. Hidden faults are the sins that we barely even notice. The heart postures and little oversights that betray our little heart idols. But presumptuous sins are the "I know this is wrong but I'm gonna do it anyway" kind of sin. Another way to translate that word could be 'insolent sins.' Just flagrant disobedience.

Two things we should note here. First David has a strong grasp of God's grace and forgiveness, and yet, he sees that self-indulgence, just giving himself over to these insolent, presumptuous sins is not an appropriate response. But second notice it's an ask not a promise.

He's not saying, "I'll keep myself back from presumptuous sins." He's asking – "change me, change the way I do things."

We are justified through faith by the completed work of Christ, and we are sanctified through faith by the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit. Salvation is all of God – beginning middle and end – justification, sanctification, and glorification all of God.

Then verse 14, I think this is really beautiful, 14, **"¹⁴Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer."**

This is the closing summary thought. "In light of all of this – your glory in creation, your law and your grace in the Word, your forgiveness, your help for sanctification – in light of all of this, would my life be comprehensively pleasing to you."

A few notes. He's been talking about his actions so far, here he drives it to the heart. Biblical religion has always been a matter of the heart. This was as true in the Old Testament as in the New. Actions and heart go together. Actions flow from the heart, actions reveal the heart.

Note this too. David says, "may my life please you *because you are* my rock and my redeemer. Because I have found shelter from the blazing sun of your glory in the shadow of Christ may my life please you."

First, we are accepted, then we strive to live lives that please our God.

Don't get that order wrong. Christ will accept you just the way you are, but he loves you too much to leave you the way you are.

One last note, notice how this Psalm begins with what the highest heavens are saying, and it ends with what your heart is saying. The revelation of God to all peoples at all times demands a response from the heart all peoples at all times.

So, what do we do? Let me give you two simple application points. Really just one – listen to what God is saying, hear what God is saying. First, listen to what God is saying in creation. Second, read the Bible.

Don't ignore what God is revealing about himself all around you.

If you're not a Christian yet, let creation convict you. God's Word says that **“all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”** None of us can stand on our own two feet before God. All of us need the blood of Jesus to wash us from our sin. So, if you're not a Christian yet, let the sun teach you about God. Let every sunrise remind you of all the good gifts that God has freely given you – life, and breath, food and shelter. Let every blazing noon remind you of the all-searching judgment of God – he sees every sin, of word, thought, and deed; let its heat remind you of his coming judgment. No one escapes the judgment of God, and without Christ you stand condemned. And let every blood-red sunset remind you of the blood of Jesus Christ that stands ready to wash you and save you from your sin if you will only repent and believe.

Then second, very simply, for everyone, read the Bible. The Bible will do no good for you sitting there on your shelf. Read it. It's hard. But everything worth doing is hard. And you can do it.

If you've ever learned anything worth learning, you know that there is a long stretch of confusion and frustration before anything starts to click. There is just no replacement for hours and hours and hundreds of hours of just reading your Bible. There is no shortcut. This is God's Word to you. The creator of Heaven and Earth wrote a book. Don't you want to know what it says?

If you want to start reading your Bible but don't know where to start, or are looking to get more serious, I put together a reading plan that I think will help you. If you are interested, I

put it up on our blog on our website for you to download and print with a brief description of it. If you would like me to print you a copy, I'd be happy to do that for you. There are two speeds to the plan, a more intense and less intense, but they still coordinate together so you and a friend could be on different speeds but still in the same passages. I highly recommend that you have some kind of plan to keep yourself moving. Ideally you could find a few friends here at the church to work through the plan together.

God has revealed himself in creation all around you, and in that Bible sitting in front of you. How will you respond?

Do you want your soul revived? Do you want to be made wise? Do you want your heart to rejoice? Do you want your eyes enlightened? Then read the Bible, believe it, and live it.

Almighty Jesus, please help us. Help us to see and to hear the song of the stars. Would your creation fill us with wonder, with humility and with gratitude. Lord, those who are not yet walking with you, would you speak to them through your creation. Would they be haunted by your presence, your glory, your holiness, and your mercy every day until they find peace with you.

Lord, would you work in this church through your Word. Would you help us to be in the Word and in the Word together. Revive us, make us wise, make us glad, and enlighten our eyes.

In Jesus name we pray.

Amen.

