

Psalm 19 - "The Search for Truth"

Introduction:

- Good morning EPIC! I am so grateful to be up here again and to have the chance to share God's Word with you. My name is Joel Dager and I am the Community Groups Coordinator here at EPIC and I am excited to continue in our series in the Psalms and look at Psalm 19 this morning with you.
- **I always like to take a few seconds while I'm up here to plug our Community Groups and so while you're finding Psalm 19 in your Bible or on your phone, let me plug.** As you saw in the video, the upcoming leader meetings are open to anyone interested in possibly leading a Community Group, even if you plan to simply grab one friend and begin meeting consistently. I hope that you will see that one of the natural applications of any sermon that we preach here is to get involved with a small group of believers studying God's Word on a consistent basis. No one is too busy, manly, shy, and whatever other excuse you can come up with to be in Community. If I can do it... so can you.
- **I would also encourage you to make sure that you listen to any messages that you may have missed this summer.** This series has been incredible as we have looked deeply at the Psalms and seen how each of the writers has grown closer to God as they have celebrated, struggled, and made sense of the world around them.

Build the Need:

- We are going to begin to close out this series over the next few weeks and so today I wanted to pick a Psalm that really hammered home that idea of closer. And I think Psalm 19 is that Psalm.
- I watched a video this week on Facebook about surprise... the election. Most of these videos I don't care for and I actually try to stay away from them but this one was good. The video starts by putting up a few facts in support of Donald Trump. You read it and begin to think, that sounds good, maybe Donald Trump is a good candidate. The producer of the video then puts up a few facts in support of Hilary Clinton. You read those and then switch to thinking, those also sound good, maybe Hilary Clinton is a good candidate. He then put up shocking facts and statistics about both candidates that then makes you question why you ever thought either of them were good candidates only to end the video by coming on and saying that we as a nation need to stop believing everything that we see and read, stop being so reactionary, and actually put in time truly searching for the best candidate.
- I couldn't help but laugh after I realized that I fell right into the trap that the author of the video wanted me to. But isn't that the world that we live in today? We are constantly bombarded by "truth" feeling like we are caught in a strong ocean current being pulled this way and that. And it's not just "truth" that is thrown at us. We are constantly being told who God is and what He is like and often, many of those "truths" are either untrue, unbiblical, or contradict things that we had previously heard. And so you come limping into a church and you say to yourself, even if I wanted to get closer to God, I wouldn't know where to begin.

Scripture:

- The beautiful thing about Psalm 19, is that God, through David, tells us exactly how to find out truth about Him and thus be able to draw closer to who He really is and not who we or anyone else wants Him to be. So without any further ado... let's read Psalm 19.

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

- 19 The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the sky above^[a] proclaims his handiwork.
- ² Day to day pours out speech,
and night to night reveals knowledge.
- ³ There is no speech, nor are there words,
whose voice is not heard.
- ⁴ Their voice^[b] goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.
In them he has set a tent for the sun,
⁵ which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber,
and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy.
- ⁶ 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.
- ⁷ The law of the LORD is perfect,^[c]
reviving the soul;
the testimony of the LORD is sure,
making wise the simple;
- ⁸ the precepts of the LORD are right,
rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the LORD is pure,
enlightening the eyes;
- ⁹ the fear of the LORD is clean,
enduring forever;
the rules^[d] of the LORD are true,
and righteous altogether.
- ¹⁰ More to be desired are they than gold,
even much fine gold;
sweeter also than honey
and drippings of the honeycomb.
- ¹¹ Moreover, by them is your servant warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.
- ¹² Who can discern his errors?
Declare me innocent from hidden faults.
- ¹³ 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.

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.

- Would you bow with me as we commit our time before the Lord?
- **If you're taking notes, the premise for today is that God clearly reveals Himself all around us and when we see this revelation in its fullness it demands a response.** Now, if you know anything about David, you know that much of his early life was spent shepherding his father's flocks. That's what made it laughable when he stepped up to fight Goliath... he was just a little shepherd boy. But see in those years of shepherding, all that David had were the heavens above him and God's word and so David became an expert at both. This man after God's own heart discovered truths about God solely from the Scriptures and the world around him and he then penned his findings in Psalm 19. And what we are going to do is look at those two ways to see what David learned. **We are going to spend the bulk of our time here because there is so much rich truth to be found in this part.** We will then end by looking at the Psalmist's response to God's revelation and see if it is in line with our own response. So let's dive in...

Part I: God Clearly Reveals Truth about Himself

- **A: God Reveals His True Glory Through His Creation**
 - So again, if you're taking notes, the first part of this Psalm is that God clearly reveals truth about himself. And the first part of that revelation is shown in verses 1-6 as God reveals His true glory through His creation.
 - Look back at verse 1... *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.*

Heavens

- Now there are a few words that we need to pull apart in that verse. Let's start with heavens. What does David mean by heavens? Well, he is referring to all of creation on the earth around us, in the sky above us, as well as the universe beyond us.
- **And if you've spent any time looking around you realize that God spared no expense when he created any of it.** Think about the universe... it's a pretty big place right??? Astronomers estimate that it is 156 billion light years wide. Now keep in mind that a light year is 5.87 trillion miles.
- To give some perspective, just think about just our galaxy... I came across a fact in a bunch of articles that I read over the last few weeks that tried to put into perspective the size of our galaxy alone. The gist of it is this... if the Milky Way Galaxy was the size of our continent, North America... all of Canada, the US and

- Mexico for those of you geographically challenged, the earth would be like a quarter placed somewhere in that space. And think... our galaxy is one of the estimated billions of galaxies in our universe, many of which scientists believe haven't even been discovered yet. To take this a little further Scientists estimate that if you were to count the stars in our galaxy alone, it would take you 2,500 years.
- And many scientists have struggled with the idea that earth is the only inhabited planet in such a vast space... it seems like a lot of wasted space. But Louie Giglio, author of the book *Indescribable*, posits another idea. He says, "But what if the universe had a different purpose, other than just to house us? What if it was intended to communicate something to us? If we were to listen, what would it say about us and about God?"

Glory

- Well David answers that question in verse 1 when he tells us that all of that declares God's glory. **In Psalm 8, David goes a little further and says that God's glory is above the heavens. What that means is that as great and vast and unfathomable as the universe is... God is greater than all of that. All of it is under the Lordship of God!**
- **I feel like glory is one of those phrases that is hard to define... it is one of those "Christianese" sayings that I often talk about.** Well when you think about it glory means weight, significance, what is most important to you. As I prepared for this sermon I wanted to think about an illustration to really communicate the strong meaning of significance or weight that glory tries to define. I can certainly go the pastorly route and use my children or family to try and communicate their significance to me... which is certainly true. But I think I found a better story. What is something that is important to all 13 year old boys??? Girls!!! And as a 13 year old I was no different. I was down at the beach with a good friend of mine and his parents had a house on 26th street. Well one night we drove down to 1st street where my buddy's cousin was renting a place and decided to go onto the beach with them for a few hours. Well of course my buddy and I were scouting out girls the entire time and we soon struck up a conversation with two lovely 13 year old girls who were on the beach as well. After a little while it was getting close to the time we had to leave and so we planned to meet up with these girls the next day to hang out down at their beach on 1st street since they were 13 and their parents naturally wouldn't let them go anywhere. The problem was, my buddy's parents weren't going to drive back down to that beach and there is no way that they would have for us to simply meet up with some girls. So we devised this amazing plan to walk all the way from 26th street to 1st street, a short 6 mile round trip. So we came up with some story that we were going to the local convenience store to grab some snacks and we began our trek down to 1st street. Now, I also had to play it cool and couldn't wear sneakers to the beach and so I wore this brand new pair of Adidas slip on sandals. The problem was that they weren't broken in and if you remember,

those were the sandals that had the little rubber finger-like sole. Super comfy for short walks... not great for 6 mile hikes. About a mile in I realized that this wasn't going to be good as the first few blisters formed but we were 13 year old boys and there were girls waiting for us. Who has time for blisters? So we trekked on and finally made it. The problem was the three mile walk down to 1st street probably took close to an hour and our story was that we were only walking to the convenience store. So after about 5 minutes we had to tell the girls that we had to leave... it was an awesome hangout. We then had to make the 3 mile trek back and I'm pretty sure there were open sores on my feet at this point. I walked most of the way back barefoot but that wasn't much better because the ocean ground was giving me third degree burns. We finally got back to my buddies house and needless to say his parents were not happy. This was before cellphones were in the hands of all 13 year olds and so for about a two hour period they weren't able to get ahold of us in which should have been a 30 minute trip to the convenience store.

- **I'll tell you what... even though there was a pretty severe punishment for mine and my buddy's stupidity, along with a myriad of blisters and burns on my feet, I think at the time we would have told you that all of that was totally worth it to spend that 5 minutes with those girls.** At the time, we, as 13 year old boys, glorified 13 year old girls. If you looked at our actions, they were a clear display of our glory for 13 year old girls. They were so important and held so much significance in our lives. **In a roundabout way, that is what David is telling us here is what the universe does. It declares and demonstrates the significance, the importance, the glory of God.**
- *Now... just as a quick aside, I don't know about you... but I just don't have enough faith to think this all came about by chance.*
- See, there have been a lot of prominent scientists over the years that try to make the thought of a creative designer, a god, sound ridiculous. Guys like Stephen Hawking and Lawrence Krauss, brilliant scientists, use theories like general relativity and quantum theory and mechanics to explain how the universe came from nothing. **And it can sound good right? The problem is if you spend any time reading any of their works or listen to any interviews, so many times when they are pressed, they get to a point where they have to admit that their beliefs are truly just leaps of faith as well and not solid facts.**
- **See... no matter what you believe about creation... it is faith. You may call it a theory but it is faith.**
- I love guys like Francis Collins. He was the head of the Human Genome Project and is one of the people responsible for completely mapping the human genome. He is also a devout believer and has written a book called *The Language of God* in which he discusses how science has actually strengthened his belief in God. In it he says, "Will we turn our backs on science because it is perceived as a threat to God,

abandoning all the promise of advancing our understanding of nature and applying that to the alleviation of suffering and the betterment of humankind? Alternatively, will we turn our backs on faith, concluding that science has rendered the spiritual life no longer necessary, and that traditional religious symbols can now be replaced by engravings of the double helix on our altars? Both of these choices are profoundly dangerous. Both deny truth. Both will diminish the nobility of humankind. Both will be devastating to our future. And both are unnecessary. The God of the Bible is also the God of the genome. He can be worshipped in the cathedral or in the laboratory. His creation is majestic, awesome, intricate and beautiful - and it cannot be at war with itself. Only we imperfect humans can start such battles. And only we can end them.”

- I think this is what David is getting at in the first part of Psalm 19 when he says *“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 through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world”*. **What he is saying is that science, the world around us, is screaming of the truth about God... mainly His glory.**
- And even more, again in Psalm 8, it goes on to tell us that God crafted all of this with his fingers, not even his hands, his fingers!
- **And so we have to stop and ask ourselves a question in light of this first truth that is revealed about God... Is your view of God worthy of who the heavens say he is?**
- **If the heavens are shouting the glory of God... if every sunset, every mountain, every crashing wave, every galaxy, and every star are shouting, “I am glorious!” ARE WE LISTENING? DO YOU SEE IT? Are our eyes open to the truth of God’s glory all around us???**
- A.W. Tozer, one of the all-time great preachers, once said, “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us”. He continued... and don’t miss this, “Always the most revealing thing about the Church is her idea of God”.
- What is your idea of God... what is our idea of God as a church? Or more importantly what do our actions demonstrate is our view of God? I would guess that almost everyone in this room today has come in with some sort of fear, or worry, or anxiety, or insecurity. **Do you think that it is possible that these feelings are an indication of a lack of truly seeing and understanding who God is?** See, when we worry, when we are scared, when we stress, when we try to do things on our own, what we are saying is that we don’t trust God. **And don’t hear this the wrong way... I know that many of you come with some very serious issues and events in your**

life but have you cast those burdens on the God who spoke billions of galaxies into existence??? The application for some of you today will be to get rid of distractions and simply look up at the glory of God to deepen your understanding of who He is.

- **B: God Reveals His True Grace Through His Law**

- So the first truth we see about God in Psalm 19 is his glory but David drives deeper into this idea of how God reveals Himself and so should we.
- What we are going to see is that God also reveals His true grace through His Law. Look back at verse 7, he says, *“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; 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.”*
- **So first God created through His word and then we see He had His words, His law, written down so we could know Him. And not only was it written down but what David tells us is that it is perfect.**
- When I think of perfect, I can’t help but think of a documentary that I recently saw on the 1976 Summer Olympic Games in Montreal. There have been a million of these on lately with the summer games but this one came during some of the gymnastic events. Nadia Comaneci was a Romanian gymnast that competed at those games and she is credited with the first perfect 10 in gymnastics history. She earned the perfect 10 on the uneven bars and the routine is all over YouTube and I highly encourage you to check it out. From her beginning mount to her ending dismount, the routine is flawless... almost unhuman! The way she flipped and transferred from bar to bar was graceful and seemingly impossible. And to everyone’s surprise, she was awarded a perfect 10... the first in history. It was thought to be so unattainable that when the scoreboard company was building the scoreboard for the Olympics, they were told to only make three digit columns because no one would score a 10. And so after the score was given, the scoreboard read 1.00 to try and convey a 10.
- **But even as perfect as that routine, and a handful of other perfect routines that would follow were, the gymnastics rule committee recently updated their scoring to make a perfect score truly impossible. By adding in points for difficulty and creativity, they basically said that no routine, even the best anyone can complete, can be truly perfect.**
- But what David is telling us here is that we have the perfect words that clearly tell us the truth of the Lord. And what do they tell us? Well just look at Psalm 19... **it tells us that the Lord is perfect and he revives the soul. He is sure, clean, and enduring forever. He enlightens, brings joy, and is true. And this is just in Psalm 19... not to mention the thousands of other verses full of God’s true character.**

- And we all want the things listed here, right? We all want what is perfect, what is sure, what endures forever, and brings joy. But why is it that we follow so many other paths to try and get there?
- We go down the path of success. That's why we work tirelessly at our jobs, trying to climb the corporate ladder and become the best. Or maybe for you it's the path of pleasure, and you find yourself using all of your free time on things that you want and that make you feel good. Or maybe its money or glory or a boyfriend or girlfriend or husband or wife... the problem is all of those things will let you down or leaving you feeling empty in the end.
- **What David tells us is that the Law of the Lord... His words, His character, His commands, His precepts... His Law is the only right path.**
- You know there is a line that many a well-meaning preacher has used to try to illustrate God's Law, the Bible. They'll say something like the Bible is an instruction manual or a road map to help us navigate life. The reason I never liked that analogy is because when I think about instruction manuals or road maps, I think about something that I pull out every so often when I'm stuck or in a jam. When Kara finally tells me, "Joel, enough, we're lost, seriously pull up Google Maps", that's when I refer to the road map. But that isn't what David describes in Psalm 19. **The Bible isn't just an instruction manual for us. It's so much more than that. It's God revealing Himself, His purposes, how He has dealt with people and His redemption story. How much more wonderful is this than a mere instructional manual or road map???**

Gospel Connection

- **What we see in light of these first 11 verses is that God's glory is clearly conveyed through His creation. But the problem is we aren't saved by God's glory. It is only through God's grace, conveyed through His Word, His Law, that we are saved... that's what David means when he says in verse 11 that by His Words we are warned.**
- **In John 1, Jesus is referred to as the Word. It says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God". John's gospel continues to show the life of Jesus, the Word. And Jesus not only lived a life that modeled and told of God's grace, just like his law, but John and the other gospel writers show us the Jesus became the very grace of God. Jesus, not having any guilt or sin went to the cross, he died the death that we were meant to die and paid the price that we were meant to pay. He became the very grace of God taking our punishment so that as John also tells us, "Whosoever believes in Him will be saved". Do you know Jesus, the Word and very grace of God?**

- In light of this truth and this point church, I think we have to stop and ask ourselves, how do you interact with God's Word? Psalm 19 clearly paints the picture that David treasured God's word... He said it was to be desired much more than fine gold and it is sweeter than honey. Do you treasure God's word?
- **We want truth, right?... it's right here! If God's Law, His Word, is Him revealing His purposes, His promises, His Character, His saving grace... Do we read it, meditate on it, memorize it, discuss it?**
- **Church, this is why we preach the Bible! This is why we tell you to get into a Community Group and study this! You want to know God, you want to know how to deal with life, you want to know how to make important decisions, you want to know what your purpose is??? It's right here!**
- **So why is it that we struggle so badly to dedicate 10, 15, 20 minutes of our lives each day to simply sitting and reading God's Words? We so desperately want to draw closer to God and learn the truth about him and what David tells us in Psalm 19 is God is already way closer than we maybe realized. He is right here in His Word!**

Part II: The Truth of God Demands Self-Examination

- So David sees God revealing His glory through nature and his grace through His Word. How then does he respond? Let's go back to verse 12 to see. He says, *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.*
- **When David sat back and truly saw God's glory and his grace, he became overwhelmingly aware of his own sin.** This is our last point... The truth of God demands self-examination.
- Seeing God called David to repentance. Seeing God for who He truly was, in all His glory and all His grace changed David. **And it should change us too.** It should change our desires because we have seen the real thing. No longer are those empty paths of false truths and false promises appealing because we see them for what they really are... false, hopeless, and empty. When we see God is all of His glory and grace we realize that there is nothing that could satisfy us and meet our needs more than Him.
- And like David, we become keenly aware of how far short we fall of God's glory and grace. **When you realize that God is so big that He spoke the entire universe into existence, you begin to realize that we are so unworthy of Him and His grace. When we see God's character and grace in His Word, we realize even more how little we**

deserve it. We see our sin for what it is... pulling us away from God, the creator of the universe. And like David, when we truly grasp the truth of God we cry out for God's help to keep us from our sinful and depraved heart.

- We become like Isaiah in Isaiah 6 when he says, *“Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!”*
- **My question for you in light of our final point is what sin is keeping you from experiencing the joy of a relationship with God?** Maybe you're sitting here today and you don't know Jesus and it's because there is something you can't get past. You realize that a life aligned with Christ would mean giving up something that you see is fun or fulfilling. You feel that Jesus and the Bible are kind of like a wet blanket. Or maybe you are here and you do know Jesus but you don't feel close to Him. You're not quite sure who He really is or there is a sin in your life that is just driving a wedge between you.
- **I would boldly say to all of you that the answer to your sin problem is to see God rightly.**
- If we, like David, can truly grasp the glory and grace of God then repentance becomes the natural response. And make sure you understand that repentance is turning, not just feeling bad, but turning from our sin. **And I can guarantee you that we won't get to the point of hating our sin and turning from it like David does in Psalm 19 until we truly understand Who and What we are sinning against.**
- One last point for the Christian. Maybe you are sitting here today and you feel like you are pretty close to God. You don't feel like you have a habitual sin that is driving you away from God. I would encourage you to let David be the standard bearer for one close to God. After all he was called a man after God's own heart. Yet see the humility with which he approaches God. Do we approach God with the same humility? Is our cry like David's? *Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.*
- **Church, together, let's stand in awe of the glory of God through His creation but at the same time worship in His grace shown through His Word. Is your view of God worthy of who the heavens say he is? Do you treasure the Word of God above all else?**

...in a few minutes we are going to take communion. Each week here at EPIC we gather together to open up God's word to hear from Him, and having heard from Him we want to respond in 2 ways.

The first way we want to respond is by partaking of Communion together. On the night Jesus was betrayed, He met with 12 of His disciples in a room. In Mark chapter 14 we read:

²² And as [the disciples] were eating, [Jesus] took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." ²³ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. ²⁴ And he said to them, "This is my blood of the^[c] covenant, which is poured out for many...."

Jesus lived the perfect, sinless life that we cannot live...and died the perfect, sinless death that we cannot give. So if you are here this morning and have trusted in Jesus for your salvation – you have trusted in His death, burial, and resurrection to save you from your sins, then we invite you to partake with us in a moment when the trays are passed. And I would encourage you this morning to think on God's amazing glory but also His great grace.

If you are here this morning and have not trusted in Jesus for your salvation, then feel free to let the tray pass and we invite you to use this time to think about the words of Psalm 19, to think about your life, to talk to God, to maybe write some things on the Response Card that was on your chair this morning. And if today you want to trust in Jesus for your salvation, then we invite you to do so as well. Confess your sins to God, ask Him for the forgiveness He gave in Jesus Christ, and trust Him with your life. If you make that decision this morning, then we would love for you to let us know by marking it on your Response Card and you can certainly talk to me, Brian, Daniel, Kevin, or any of our elders if you have questions.

Let me pray for us before the trays are passed.