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**Series: Summer in the Psalms**  
**Message: The Amazing Word of God**

**Transcribed Message**  
**July 16, 2023**  
**Psalm 19**

Wednesday of this past week was the one-year anniversary of the James Webb observatory telescope sending back pictures to us here on earth. Around here we just call it the Jim Webb telescope. But nationally it is known as the James Webb telescope. But you remember more than a year ago in 2021 that satellite observatory lifted off into space. Now, 1 million miles from Earth, it is sending back these amazing depictions of what this outer space looks like that the psalmist speaks of. God's glory is seen and realized. It is an amazing thing to understand and to grasp a little bit of the magnitude of the universe that we find ourselves living in, having a greater appreciation with David in Psalm 19 as he reminds us of the glory of God being seen in the heavens above.

We're returning to the Psalter again in chapter 19 and it is this psalm, this 19<sup>th</sup> Psalm that CS Lewis said, "It is the greatest psalm in the Psalter and one of the greatest lyrics in the world." Not bad for a professor of poetry and literature to give such a high praise to this psalm. Spurgeon said, "He is the wisest who reads both the world book and the word book as two volumes of the same work and feels concerning them, 'My Father wrote them both.'" So in Psalm 19 we have a psalm that is often referred to as two books. The psalm that is the word that is before us in creation and the psalm that is the word before us in Scripture. The big book it's called and the little book. The big book of the world and the little book of the word. Our idea this morning is simply that God has spoken. He has spoken in both of these. He has spoken to us in his world. He has spoken to us in his word. We do well to listen to both of them.

Let's jump in and look just as a way of introduction at this 19<sup>th</sup> Psalm. The background. We come to this and once again we're told that David is the author. David wrote it. We don't know the occasion. This particular psalm is a combination both of a praise psalm and of a wisdom psalm as we'll see it declared for us in just a little bit. The superscription does tell us it's David who had written it. He tells us it's written to the

choirmaster. A song, as all of these were, that was going to be sung. When you think about that, think about this. It is a song and it's a song to be sung. Did Jesus sing this song as a young man, as a boy, as a teenager? The idea that Jesus himself would be standing in the synagogue with his parents and with his friends and singing about the heavens declaring the glory of God and all the while the creator is standing there with all those and singing together. It's an amazing thing.

I want to say secondly something about the necessity of revelation because that's what this psalm is really pointing us to. The necessity of divine revelation. When we think of revelation, we're talking about simply the idea of unveiling. The word "revelation" means unveiling. When we think about the last book of the Bible, we call it the book of Revelation. *Apocalypsis*. Apocalypse. That means unveiling. It's the word revelation. God has revealed himself to us.

What is the necessity of God revealing himself to us? First of all, it falls to the fact that the very nature of God demands it. The very nature of God demands that he reveal himself to us. If I said to you this morning God is ... and I stopped there and there's just a blank. God is ... if I asked you to give me a word there would be hundreds of words because there's all kinds of ways to fill in that blank. One of the things that we could surely say is God is incomprehensible. God is, as we have said more than once even in this summer series in the psalms, God is the transcendent one. One can say that. In saying that, we also have to quickly add yes, he is transcendent and yes, he is incomprehensible, but He is also knowable. That's the whole point of his revelation. Listen to the psalmist in Psalm 145 verse 3: "Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised and his greatness is unsearchable." It is unsearchable. Job 11 verse 7: "Can you find the deep things of God? Can you find the limit of the Almighty?" what is the answer to those questions? Of course, naturally we say no, you can't and then we have to come back and say well yes, you kind of can. We can never fully know God. We will never fully grasp the magnitude of God. The whole point of revelation is God making himself known. God, this transcendent one, God the one whose glory is above the heavens as we saw last week is also the one who has made himself known. We are finite. He is infinite but he has revealed himself.

Secondly, the necessity of revelation simply is because of the very nature of fallen man. The very nature of fallen man. Our fallen condition demands that God reveal himself to us. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2:14 the natural man can't grasp, can't know spiritual things. He can't know them because he is spiritually discerned. Apart from the work of the Holy Spirit opening our eyes to this revelation, we look at it but we don't understand it. In Romans 8, we talked about the fact that the natural mind is at enmity with God. If we're going to know this transcendent God, this God who is on one hand unsearchable, then we certainly have the necessity of divine revelation. That's what God has done. He has revealed himself to us. God in other words is not hiding from us. He is not hiding from us. He has revealed himself to us. Then we of course are going to have to determine what we're going to do with that revelation. He has made himself known.

Let's do that. Let's look at this 19<sup>th</sup> Psalm. God's revelation of himself in two volumes. Volume 1. God reveals his glory in creation. We call that general revelation. Now why do we call that general revelation? Because it's general. We call it general revelation because it's general. The first six verses of this psalm are dealing with general revelation. God's revelation of himself to us in creation. God's revelation of himself to us in the world that we find ourselves in. Notice it begins by calling on us to be looking up. Verse one again. "The heavens declare the glory of God and the sky above proclaims his handiwork." That is a common, common theme not only of the psalms but of Scripture. I would encourage you as you're reading your five psalms a day all the way through the month (we'll start over again on August 1) but as you're reading through here is just an additional side note assignment. Just note every time the psalmist calls on you to look up or says something about God and the necessity of looking up at his grandeur and his glory and his greatness. You'll be surprised how many times the Scriptures call on us to cast our eyes up. There's a reason for that.

Our natural tendency is to be self-consumed, to be looking at ourselves and what's going on in our life. obviously at times we have to do that, but even then we need to always be looking up. Here he is calling us to look upward. Last week in Psalm 8: You have set your glory above the heavens. Above the heavens. Isaiah 40:26. Lift up your eyes on high and see who created these. Lift up your eyes on high. That's where

you see the glory of God revealed. It is also a consistent refrain. From Genesis to Revelation, God is establishing himself as the creator God. Again, as you read through the Psalms, just note how many times the psalmists speak of God as being the creator God, speak with clarity and explicitly about the handiwork of God because that's what he does all through Scripture. The Holy Spirit is revealing God as creator.

The very first book of the Bible. Genesis. The very first verse in the Bible. What does God do? He says I want you to know in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. God did it. It's the work of his hands. He is the sovereign one. He's the owner. He's the master. He is the designer. Right off the bat in Genesis 1, what have we done with that? Sadly, Paul tells us in Romans 1. He tells us that all of this glory is revealed and humanity has looked at it and then turned away from it. They have rejected it. There is the glory of God on full display and Paul says yes, but they have turned away from this consistent theme and consistent refrain of God as Creator.

Now notice that this creation itself is speaking. Creation itself is speaking. Look again at these verses: "The heavens declare the glory of God, the sky above proclaims his handiwork, day to day pours out speech, 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." It's creation itself that is speaking. Here's the deal. Creation is speaking but the speaking is without words. The speaking is without words. Even though he is described in this way, creation is personified. Creation is personified, which is to say creation is given a human voice. Creation is described in ways that we would describe humanity. While it is personified, it is never deified. Creation is speaking and it is speaking to us without words.

There is a paradox here. There's almost an antinomy, an apparent contradiction because he's telling us there is speech. There are sounds going up but there are no words. There's a cry that goes out. It's not a whisper. We don't have to listen intently and barely hear something faint about the glory of God. No, he's telling us God is declaring. He is shouting about his glory to all who will listen. Creation is saying God is great. God is big.

There's a song we've sung many times. This is not a criticism of the song but there's a song called "Bigger Than I Thought You Were", or something like that. I have

to tell you every time I sing that song, and it's got good words, and I think I'm pretty sure what the author of those words wants from us and I think it's in keeping with what we're reading here. But every time I sing that song I find myself asking the question: How big did you think your God was? If you're saying he's bigger than you thought he was, how big did you think he was? He's gargantuan. He's bigger than you can ever imagine or think. Of course, he is bigger than we thought. We want to have that great, huge, big understanding of the greatness of our God because the very heavens themselves can't contain the glory of God.

Now notice secondly. The speaking is to all people. It is in all places, and it's all the time. Isn't that amazing? This is what the witness of God's Spirit is telling us through his word about this first volume that is communicating to us in the world of nature and creation. It's to all people so it's multilingual. You don't have to train up any missionary to learn a language and go out to a remote village to speak to people this previously unknown language. No, they are hearing this message that is shouted every day about the glory and the greatness of God. So it's multilingual. It's to everybody. Notice it is in all places. It's going universally across the globe. There isn't anybody who is missing out. An executive walking down a Manhattan street with his briefcase or some remote tribe in China. It is universal. It is in their language. Then you notice it's all the time. It's all the time. it's continuous. You don't have to tune in at some point to hear some message and if you don't, you miss it. It is actually being delivered all the time. It's unceasing. It's unlimited. It's abundant. What's the implication? What is the observation that you make in light of what David says about the glory of God being broadcast 24 hours a day into every language group into every people group all over the globe all the time? It's very simple.

There's no excuse. There is no excuse that can be offered. No one has an excuse. One of the basic questions that gets asked in the field of apologetics: Why do you believe what you believe? What about your Christian faith? What does your Bible say about thus and so? One of those questions is what about those people who have never heard? What about those people who are so isolated that they've never heard of this Jesus? They've never heard of this gospel. They've never heard of the God that we're looking at and studying from this book. What is the answer? Well at least in part,

it's not the full answer but if you don't start here you have an incomplete answer to them. The reality is God has told us that there isn't anybody. That is exactly what Paul is establishing in Romans 1. You can write down Romans 1:18 to 23 and you go back to what Paul said. We looked at it a long time ago. Paul said they look and they see the glory of God and they turn away from that glory and they worship themselves or they worship something in creation. God says these words. They are without excuse. so in part the question is answered by asking what have they done with the revelation they've received? That's the key. I believe that God in His grace and mercy, if we respond to the revelation that we've received, He gives us more revelation. He gives us a further understanding. and we know that to be the case in many regards to people who live even in isolated areas.

Thirdly, it's a revelation of God's glory. It's a revelation of his glory. Verse 1 talks about the glory of God. The glory of God speaks of his weightiness. It speaks of his significance. It's the idea of the word heavy. Back in the 60s, I'm told this, people would say something that they thought was significant. They thought it was something weighty. People would say man, that's heavy. What were they saying? That's significant. That's weighty. That's what glory is. The glory of God says to us our God is significant. Our God is weighty. Our God is heavy.

David focuses in this section on the sun. Look at the sun. Then, look at the earth in comparison to the sun. little teeny spot that God has created, yet he has created all of them. It is probably a polemic very likely against people in David's day who worshiped the sun. The sun was what they worshipped. Here's David saying my God created your god. Yeah, that's right. The God of glory, the God of heaven, he created the sun. He placed it in its course. It's running its course with all of the other planets. Ask a scientist why is it that these heavenly bodies are doing what they're doing. They don't know. They don't know unless they're reading the Scriptures. God says He has established the circuit upon which all of these things move. It is his amazing design that is on display. The sun 93 million miles away from the earth positioned perfectly to keep us this week nice and warm. A bit later it'll feel like it's moved away from us and we'll want it to come back closer. But here he says God is the one who has established the circuit of the sun.

Notice in that statement at the end of those words. There's a word of warning. Nothing hidden from its heat. Nothing is hidden from its heat. So you come to the end of that first section and there's a word of warning. Then there's going to be a word of warning when we come to the next. There is volume 1. General revelation. God has declared his glory in the world around us every day. All you have to do is stop long enough to look up and say the heavens are declaring the glory of God. O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is your name in all the earth. You have set your glory above and beyond even the heavens. So now we're back in Psalm 19 and we see God's revelation in volume 2 and it is his glory revealed in Scripture. We call this special revelation. This is special revelation. This is revelation that comes to us through the written word and through of course the living word. The contrast between verses 1 through 6 and 7 to 14 is rather stark. There is a contrast in everything between these two books. There's a contrast in the theme. There's a contrast in the language. There's a contrast in the style.

One of the very first things we notice by way of contrast has to do with the names of God. The names of God. In the first six verses, there is one reference to God. One occurrence in verse 1 when he speaks of the fact that the heavens declare the glory of God. Here it is the word "El". It is not even Elohim. It's the most generic word for God that we have. The heavens declare the glory of God. When you come to 7 through 14 in this section the word is LORD, all of it in caps which signifies to us that it is the word Jehovah. It is the word Yahweh. It is the covenant keeping God. It is a personal God. It is the God who has revealed himself. It is Exodus 3 again. I am who I am. I am the self-existent one. I am the self-revealing one. The God of special revelation reveals himself in the written word and he reveals himself in the living word of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here we are focused on the book and what a book it is.

Look at this. In this set of verses, verses 7, 8 and 9, we're going to see six different titles that are given with regard to the Bible. The beauty and the nuance speak of the worth and the value of the word of God. Then we're going to see six different adjectives that David uses to try and describe it. And then we're going to see six different effects that it is to have on our life. Let's look at the book. Six descriptions.

The first one is the law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The word "law" could bring to mind any number of things in relation to Scripture. It could bring to mind

one singular law of God. It could bring to mind the 10 Commandments. It could bring to mind (it most certainly was in David's experience) the Pentateuch – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The Torah. The law. But for us it is all of Scripture. The law of the Lord is perfect. It is without error. It does not lie or lead us astray. There are no mistakes in this book that we have to be watching out for. It speaks to us of the sufficiency of the word of God. Mark that. The sufficiency of the word of God. It is sufficient for everything and anything that comes into our life. there isn't any exception to that. The sufficiency of God's word and what does it do for us?

It revives the soul. What a great way to start. What a great way to highlight what it is that God's word does. God's word comes to us as the law of God. It comes to us because it is perfect. It revives the soul. It refreshes. As you're reading this psalm, I trust your heart is just being refreshed as the word of God washes over your heart, your mind, your soul. God reminds you of who he is and what he is doing and what He has done. In whatever circumstance we may find ourselves, we are being changed. The reason we gather like this, the reason we read God's word, the reason we go to community groups and small group Bible studies, the reason we dedicate ourselves to reading God's word on a daily basis is not to check a box. It is to have our soul revived, renewed, refreshed, to be changed. It takes us right to Romans 12. Don't be conformed to the world. How am I going to keep that from happening? The only way you're going to is by this word. By this book refreshing and renewing your soul every day.

Secondly, the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. Think of that. The testimony of the Lord. The witness of God himself. The witness of God himself who has sworn by himself that he is always truthful. God is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent. Has he not said and will he not do it? Has he not spoken and will he not make it right? Of course he will because he is a God who bears witness to the fact that he keeps his word. He is a God who is true to himself. His word is sure. It is not arbitrary. It is certain. It is not changing. In a world of change, in a world where we get up every day and we check and see what's gone on crazy in the world. We just to know what has happened overnight. We live in a world of constant change but the Bible is the unchanging book. It's a reliable book.



What he says – it is making wise the simple. Don't retract from that. Don't pull back from the fact that it makes wise the simple. He is talking about those who are naïve. It's good to be naïve about some things. In fact, it is good to be naïve about a lot of things. He's saying here though God's word is sure and it makes wise the simple. It simply means it's for those who are teachable. Are you teachable? If you're teachable, God's word will equip you. It's the wisdom literature of Proverbs how to live life well, how to live life skillfully. Folks, we know we can look around and we can see people who struggle every day of their lives just in making choices that are not the way of the fool. That's because they're not equipped and renewed and strengthened with the truth of the word. If you are, it makes wise the simple. Have a teachable heart.

Third. The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. That word "precepts" is used only in the Psalms. It simply means principles. It means guidelines. They're right, not so much in contrast to wrong, but they're right in that they're straight. They're right in that they're level. They're not crooked. They're trustworthy. God's word is trustworthy, rejoicing the heart. Where do you find joy? Where do you find peace? Where do you find the ability to overcome sorrow? Where do you find the ability to overcome anxiety and worry? Right here. He tells us. Rejoicing the heart. The precepts of the Lord. Jeremiah 15:16. Thy words were found and I did eat them and thy word was to me the joy rejoicing in my heart for I am called by your name, O Lord God of hosts. What a great picture. Your word was found and I ate it. Your words were found and I did eat them. I took them in. I consumed them. I desired them. It is 1 John when John says in chapter 1 verse 4 I'm writing these things to you, my little children, that you might have joy. You might have joy.

The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. Commandment speaks of authority. It speaks of authority. God's word is not helpful hints. God's word is not inspirational thoughts. God's word is not a tip for living. God's word is thus saith the Lord. God's word is decreeing, guiding us, directing us in his truth. We naturally resist that, but that's what God's word wants to do because it's pure. It's radiant. It's illuminating. Your word enlightens my eyes. Your word is the lamp to my feet and a light to my path. That's what it's doing.

The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever. The fear of the Lord is clean. There is a reverence for the word. There is a sense of awe. I love Isaiah 66 verse 1: Thus says the Lord, heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool. What is the house that you would build for me and what is the place of my rest? All these things my hand have made and so all these things came to be, declares the Lord. But this is the one thing to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.“ Do you tremble at God's word? Do you realize the authority that God's word is over our life? It's clean. There's an absence of impurity. There's no corruption.

Maybe you saw the story a couple months ago. Utah. Small school district. Some upset parent came to the school board and said we need to take the Bible out of the school library. There are things in that book that children should not be exposed to and should not be reading. The school board caved and took the Bible out of the school library because the guy said there were terrible things in that book that people shouldn't allow children to see or to read or to know. Are there things in the Bible that might fall within an R rating in some settings? Yes, there are. There are things that are very true to life, aren't there? True to fallen humanity living life. here's the thing. When David says the word is clean and it's pure, he's not saying that it isn't telling the truth about life. but every time God tells the truth about life in all of its avenues and in some cases in all of its degradation, God never does it in any way that is appealing. He always does it in a way that is honest. There is no salacious detail. There is simply the reality this is life in a fallen world and this is what it looks like.

I've just got to throw this in even though I don't have time. This movie Oppenheimer that is coming out is based on the 700-page volume about the life of Oppenheimer. I was so looking forward to seeing it. I thought it would be a great movie. and then I read and I find out that they've decided to add all kinds of garbage: nudity, sex scenes, perversion about this man's life. I don't know what his life entailed but that's what is going to be in the movie. It's like that's what the world does. It contaminates stories. The word of God simply tells us this is what a fallen man, a fallen woman may involve themselves in. but there's no appeal there. Very often God is giving us very clear warnings in that regard.

Now the rules of the Lord are true and righteous. The rules or judgments. They're decrees. God's evaluations, his decisions are true. They're totally right. Righteous altogether. Derek Kidner says this about all of it together: "These terms show the practical purpose of revelation to bring God's will to bear on the hearer and evoke intelligent reverence, well founded trust, detailed obedience." It's this book that is going to bring us back. It is this book that is going to make us wise. This book is going to give us joy and help us to see. It is this book that will last forever. And it is this book that is never going to lead us astray.

So what do you do with revelation? What do you do with the disclosure of the glory of God in nature and in the book? God says you have to respond. There's a response that is necessary. What do we do? We look up at creation. We look into the book. Now we look inside our own soul. Look what he said. This revelation demands a response. What will we do now?

First, desire the word. Desire the word. That is verses 10 and 11. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold. Not just gold but even much fine gold. Sweeter than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover by them is your servant warned in keeping them. There is great reward. When I was a teenager, our family was in Kentucky on a trip and we stopped at Fort Knox. and we got to go in to Fort Knox to see gold bars. We got to see stacks of pallets of gold. He's basically saying go into Fort Knox, take your Bible with you, lay it on top of the pallet of gold and tell me which one you want. Which one do you want more? Do you want the pallet of gold bars? Or do you want this book? That is what he is challenging us. More to be desired than gold, and not just gold even much fine gold. That's how badly we're supposed to want this. That's how much we are to desire it. The simple question is what has more appeal to you? Does the world have more appeal to you? Or does the word have more for you? You don't have to verbally answer that because the priorities of your life are answering that every day.

Secondly, he says repentance of sin. Verses 12 and 13. "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." He is aligning himself with the desires of God. That's

the stanza just before this. God, what do you want from me? You want me to desire your word.

Now he comes to the only one who can forgive him and he says forgive me from my hidden fault, my hidden sins and keep me from presumptuous ones. Hidden ones might be things that we don't even know that we're sinning in those ways. Another way to understand that is they're hidden in the sense, not that we can't see them, but that they're so much a part of our life that we aren't even aware that they're sins. We've just been doing it and we have no consciousness before God, failing in that regard. But then keep me from presumptuous sins. Keep me from those sins that I boldly walk into like, lifting up a double garage door and just walking right in. You may stumble into pornography on occasion because of a lack of discernment or awareness as to what you're doing. But if you're walking through that double door into pornography every day, that is presumptuous sin. David is saying keep me from that. If you have trouble controlling your mouth and speaking about people in inappropriate ways and in ways that are judgmental and condemning and unkind and you know it, it is walking through a double garage door. That's presumptuous sin. God, keep me from that, he is saying. Remember the old saying: either sin will keep you from this book or this book will keep you from sin. That's David's prayer.

The last one. Pray this prayer. Pray this prayer. Verse 14. Lord, let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer." Let's pray that together right now. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my Redeemer. He is our Redeemer. He's our Redeemer. John chapter 6. Jesus was teaching some hard things. Many of his disciples were leaving him. He turned to his disciples and he asked are you too going to leave? Remember Peter spoke up about verse 68 and said Lord, we're not going anywhere. You alone have words of eternal life.

This, my friend, is God's word to us about how we can have eternal life. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. The wage of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. My heart for everyone here, everyone listening, everyone watching is that you would have eternal life. eternal life isn't something you get when you die. Eternal life is what you step into the moment you trust

in Christ alone by faith alone in what he did alone. And you say that's all I need. Thank you, Jesus.

Let's pray. Father God, by your grace, by your spirit, you have made yourself known to us in this incredible book. We are so very thankful. We are thankful for your mercy, your grace, your kindness. Lord God, right now if there is someone in the hearing of my voice who is not absolutely certain that if they were to die today that they would live with you forever, we pray that by your Spirit you would open their eyes to this glorious gospel that what Jesus did he did for each one of us. You are not asking us to do anything for you. You're asking us simply to trust in what you have done for us. Give somebody, Father, the ability to see their sin, to see that what Jesus did is enough and to trust you right now in these closing moments this morning and put their faith in you alone to receive the forgiveness of sin and the gift of eternal life. We pray in Jesus's name, amen.