

February 25, 2024

## “God’s Revelation through His Word” Psalm 19:7-14

FCF: Our struggle in consistently reading the Scriptures

**PROPOSITION:** (anchor) The LORD is speaking through His word.  
(magnet) We need to hear its message.

### **SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION:**

I started off a few weeks ago by alluding to our tanking New Year’s resolutions. Let’s go back to that. I’ve noticed that the crowd at my gym is a bit smaller in late February than early January. Why is that? It could be flawed expectations, not knowing what we got ourselves into. Perhaps. But I think it has to do with something deeper - not just what but why. Why bother? If you don’t have that worked out, it won’t take much to stop you from actually working out.

Which brings us to this mini-series on “Reading the Bible”. We’ll get to the “how” but first we need to think through the “why”. And part of that means understanding just what we are reading and its potential impact on us. Which brings us to the second part of this ancient poem.

**SCRIPTURE READING:** **Psalm 19**

### **PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

### **SERMON INTRODUCTION:**

You may have heard there’s a big show in Las Vegas these days - U2 at the Sphere. From what I gather, it’s a grand audio-visual experience. I’ve been a U2 fan for decades. So here’s a thought experiment. What if I want to get to know the band? There are a few ways to go about this. I could listen to their work. I could study the lyrics. I could go to the shows. All of which would be helpful. But limited. Yes, I would learn about the band. But I wouldn’t know them. I need to hear from them. They need to open up to me, reveal something of themselves to me.

The same is true with God. We learn things about Him through creation, through what He has made. But there are limits to that. If we stop there, we only know true things about Him. We don’t know Him. We need to hear from Him. He needs to open up and reveal Himself to us.

And so, our text. C. S. Lewis said of this it is (**READ**), “the greatest poem in the Psalter and one of the greatest lyrics in the world.” Regarding the shift from vv.1-6 to vv.7-14 (**READ**):

First he thinks of the sky; how, day after day, the pageantry we see there shows us the splendour of its Creator. Then he thinks of the sun, the bridal joyousness of its rising, the unimaginable speed of its daily voyage from east to west. Finally, of its heat...The key phrase on which the whole psalm depends is “there is nothing hid from the heat thereof”. It pierces everywhere with its strong, clean ardour. Then at once, in verse 7 he is talking of something else, which hardly seems to him something else because it is so like the all-piercing, all-detecting sunshine.

God’s revelation through His world. Then, God’s revelation through His word. That’s what we have here. And we need to hear the message. What would that mean with God’s word?

Let’s look at this in two parts. First, the way God is speaking. Second, our response.

## **I. GOD SPEAKING**

First, the way God is speaking. What is the Word? What does it do? There’s a rhythm.

### *A) The Law of the LORD*

#### 1. What it is

(**READ Psalm 19:7a**) The “law” here is God’s instruction, His revealed will. And how is it described? It is “perfect”. Meaning that is sound, blameless, without any flaw or defect.

2. What it does

And so it “revives the soul.” It heals, restores, refreshes, brings us back, gives newness to life.

*B) The Testimony of the LORD*

1. What it is

(**READ Psalm 19:7b**) This “testimony” is the truth attested and the witness given to us by God. And it is described as being “sure.” Meaning it is firm, faithful, reliable, and truly trustworthy.

2. What it does

And so it “makes wise the simple.” The psalmist is not speaking here of unintelligent no-nothings. The word here refers to those easily led astray – us! And how we can have stability.

*C) The Precepts of the LORD*

1. What it is

(**READ Psalm 19:8a**) The LORD’s “precepts” are His declarations of our obligations. And they are said to be “right.” That is, they are morally straight, leading to what is right and straight.

2. What it does

And so they “rejoice the heart.” And how can they not? They are reflections of God’s character, of what He is like. And given we are made in His image, there is a deep fittedness here.

*D) The Commandment of the LORD*

1. What it is

(**READ Psalm 19:8b**) As a “commandment,” this speaks to the authority behind the words. And they are described as being “pure” - clear and radiant, much like the warm glow of the sun.

2. What it does

And so they “enlighten the eyes.” The Scriptures are able to bring a deep alertness to our hearts.

*E) The Fear of the LORD*

1. What it is

(**READ Psalm 19:9a**) The reference here to the “fear of the LORD” is still to His Word. This is the revealed way we properly revere God. And it is “clean,” pure, without any contaminants.

2. What it does

And, as such, it “endures forever” – as opposed to all false and foolish ways of relating to God.

*F) The Rules of the LORD*

1. What it is

(**READ Psalm 19:9b**) The “rules of the LORD” are His judgments, His decisions and decrees. And, proceeding as they do from a just God, they themselves are “true” – just and enduring.

2. What it does

Which means that they are “righteous altogether.” No reproach of wrong can ever be brought.

So we have six these descriptions of both what the Word of God is and what it does.

*Application:*

David sings and concludes (**READ Psalm 19:10-11**). What a treasure. God's heart for His people here revealed. So here's the question. Why do we have such a low view of the Bible? Why do we struggle to take time to read it? Why is there so little coherence between our lives and its message? I ask that not to shame or embarrass but to get us to think and consider.

Given what we know, why the struggle? The unholy trinity of the world, the flesh, and the devil. The world says there is no one truth, no one book. The flesh finds the Word to be an affront to our self-ruling, self-dependent, self-righteous desires. The devil would keep us in the dark - not only of our need but the life-giving message we find in these pages. Put those three together and we have a fight on our hands. But fight we must. So let us take up and read.

To hear the Bible is to hear the Word of God. We need to tune our hearts to its message.

## **II. OUR RESPONDING**

Which takes us from God's speaking to our responding. What would that look like? David shows us. Our response to God's speaking is to be one of prayer - a threefold prayer.

### *A) Prayer for Forgiveness*

He begins with what could be described as a prayer for forgiveness (**READ Psalm 19:12**).

#### 1. The Word as a Map

The Scriptures, the Word of God, operate as a map in our lives – guiding and showing the way.

#### 2. The Word as a Mirror

But they function not only as a map for the path but a mirror for our hearts. And that is the effect David is feeling here. He is saddened by what he sees, by what he knows of himself. But he is also sobered by what is unseen, by what is lurking within. And so he prays for the Lord's mercy.

### *B) Prayer for Protection*

But David prays not just for forgiveness but for protection (**READ Psalm 19:13**). He has seen what he is capable of. He knows he is vulnerable, susceptible to attack and compromise.

#### 1. The ugliness of presumptuous sins

Sobered by this realization, David pleads to be kept back, to be guarded from a falling into "presumptuous sins" – sins committed in a flagrant, arrogant disregard for God's commands.

#### 2. The enslavement of presumptuous sins

Knowing that the longer we are on that path, the further we go down that road, the more enslaved we become, the more dominion those sins have over us – not us over them but them over us.

### *C) Prayer for Consecration*

He lifts up prayers for forgiveness, protection, and consecration. He wants to live up to his profession. He longs to be who God has made and declared him to be (**READ Psalm 19:14**).

#### 1. The language of sacrifice

There is the language of sacrifice here, echoes of priests and the Old Testament ceremonial law.

## 2. The heart's desire

The heart's desire of David is to be "acceptable" – consecrated, dedicated, given over. Starting from deep within - his motives and thoughts made new and overflowing in his words and deeds.

Our response to God's speaking has to be that of this sort of praying. It really does.

### *Illustration:*

For the further we mature, the worse things look. Put another way, the more we grow, the more we see. I think back to my early days as a Christian. I was God's gift to everyone. Little wonder the problems with college roommates. Little wonder much of the early marriage strife. The fact is I'm a mess. Here are the ABC's of my life - anxious, bitter, and covetous just as much as anyone here. And over time, the Lord has helped me to see that. A bit. Sometimes.

### *Application:*

What I mean is that the further we go, the more we grow in spiritual maturity, the more aware we become of our own sin and our own need to pray for forgiveness and protection and consecration every day. The more the Word of God brings its warmth and light into our lives, the more that sun shines into our dark hearts, the more we see how foolish our self-governing, self-depending, self-righteous impulses are. Which is sometimes really hard but always really good.

So God speaks. How are we to respond? A life of dependency - looking to Him, leaning on Him, learning from Him. Ongoing prayer for forgiveness, protection, and consecration.

### **CONCLUSION:**

And how will all this help you? Put another way, how do you know if a message is worth listening to? Think national intelligence. You receive intel - some sort of chatter, the word of an informant, or the analysis of a colleague. How do you know if it's worth listening to? Or think personal relationships. You receive input - the review from a boss, the report from a doctor, the criticism from a peer. How do you know if it's worth listening to? You consider the source.

You consider the source. It's worth noting that the first part of the psalm speaks of God. That is, the Creator. The second part speaks of the LORD. That is, the covenant God of Israel. What is described here is not just having come from our Creator but our Redeemer. We are His by right. But we are also His by love. These aren't just rules. This is life's path, His gift to us.

Consider the source. That's how you can know if this is worth listening to. Which then tells you that this is so well worth hearing. So well worth accepting - all of it and every part. So well worth studying - working at it over a lifetime. So well worth submitting to. We'll surely be challenged at every turn. So well worth asking Jesus for His Spirit's help in seeing Him on every page. And so well worth expecting - prepared for the change and transformation that will come.

My friends, the LORD is speaking through His word. We need to to hear that message.

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