

The Glory of the Word

Psalm 19

Does life ever seem mundane? Your days like reruns? Kids, laundry/work, dinner, bed. Repeat. How can we see more beauty in life? This morning we're looking at what Martin Luther called "a highly finished and beautiful ode." Psalm 19. Its cumulative beauty is part of its persuasion. We're meant to surrender to the poetry, *and* be gripped by the truth. It shows us a world of glory, a way of living, and personal encounter that changes how we see.

World of Glory

Scholars have debated the composition of this psalm for years. I'll tell you why. There's an abrupt shift from first half on God's creation to the second half on God's word. So commentators suggest that two independent psalms were put together at some later date. But I actually think it's important we see how they belong together. Along the way I'll show you why. The psalm divides nicely into three poetic speeches: Creation's speech, God's speech, Our speech. The opening line of Creation's Speech: "[The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.](#)" This is right at the top, so it's meant to set the tone for the whole psalm. And he reaches for heavens and the sky, a poetic device meant to refer to everything up to the sky and beyond the sky. While we consider New Year goals, creation declares its life mission. What is it? *The glory of God*. What is glory? Weightiness. Beauty. Permanence. The glory of *man* is more ephemeral: weightlessness. Like fretting over how many people follow us on FB & Twitter? In the place of beauty, attraction. Do they think I look pretty, hip, godly, professional? But creation is preoccupied with something greater. Have you ever heard it, out in the woods, on top of a mountain? The heavens declaring *the glory of God*? I went snowboarding in the Rockies over the holidays and snapped this picture at the top of a ski lift. Look at it. #Nofilter. What do you see? What do you hear? The sound of glory, creation's *glorious speech*, weight beauty permanence in the mountains and the skies. Do you have to climb a mountain to hear it, creation's voice? The poetry continues. [Day to day](#) pours out speech. This means *continual* speech. The voice is heard all the time through all the earth not just on mountains. The night, we're told, [reveals knowledge](#). What is it about the night? The Bortle scale ranks visibility of stars on a dark scale, how dark the night is. In 1600s Galileo made observations with a telescope that had less power than household telescopes today. Yet, he discovered mountains on the moon and that Milky Way is actual stars, not a continuous milky substance. How? He had a 1 on the Bortle scale. New York city is 9. Most cities and suburbs 4 or 5. The brilliance of stars popped in David's nighttime sky, but not in ours. Why? Light pollution. LP is excessive artificial light that obscures our view of the heavens, of glory. Do you have light pollution? *Trained your eye for lesser lights*? **Your kids, car, career, ministry, community, calendar, or just plain fun? Lesser lights can pollute our view of Glory.** Fog settles in and we can't imagine what David sees and hears, creation's words [a tent for the sun, which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber \(picture a groom riveted on his bride on the wedding day\), like a strong man runs his course with joy \(a warrior charging into the glory of battle\)](#). Creation's speech contains all of this... and yet, "[There are no words](#)" (3). A wordless speech. How do we hear what the psalmist hears, see

what the psalmist sees, a very world of glory? The fog parted, eye retrained, heart unpolluted?

A Way of Seeing-Living

The way of seeing, a portal into the world of glory, is in the second half of the psalm. God's Speech, his holy Word. How does God's word take us into a world of glory? Verses 7-11 we see the words law, testimony, precepts, commands, & rules which all tell us this is God speaking, his very own word. That it possesses authority, insight. Imagine staring at a famous painting, unmoved. You don't get it. But then a knowledgeable person explains how the artist used lines, captures light, and defies the cultural moment. All of a sudden appreciation and wonder are unlocked. You get it. Similarly, an active knowledge of God's Word unlocks a world of glory. We hear creation's voice. **Knowing God's word unlocks wonder**, it parts the fog. That's one reason the psalm belongs together. Word unlocks wonder. How? There's a lot here. Verse 7: "The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul." What does he mean by "perfect?" Complete or **sufficient**, lacking in nothing. So complete, so perfect that it revives the soul. The word is actually "turns" the soul, the word for repentance. Repentance brings life. Its perfection turns us from lesser lights to the greater light. It's wholeness gets down in your soul and makes you content. Family, entertainment, romance don't do that. (ILL) Remember the law of the Lord is perfect; we're not. Some people try to improve upon God's Word with philosophy, prophetic words, dreams, and impressions. All of these should be judged by the word of God. The word, not impressions, is a lamp to our feet. It fits us "for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16). It is complete. Next "the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple" (8). The word "sure" means firm, or confirmed, utterly **reliable**. When we rely on our own experience, or just the wisdom of friends, without *first* relying on the word of God we're on unsteady ground. A simple person is an infant, someone open to anything, a person who lacks Word-shaped convictions. Where do you get your views? Conservative people might just take their parents or pastor's word for it, and not wrestle with the Bible itself. Liberals claim a ground higher than God's word, lifting themselves above his timeless truths. But wisdom comes to those who rely word of God. The Word is also **pure**. You know those people who tell you something but just can't be sure their motives are pure? A white lie to impress, gossip to use you? You don't ever have to question God's motives, wonder if his heart is pure. In Christ, his intentions toward you are always good, so pure they put light in your eyes. The sparkle of life. Now that doesn't mean Scripture won't be hard, difficult to understand, or challenging to what we believe. But whose intentions can you trust more? Yours or Gods? David questions Self when he says, "Who can discern his errors?" (12). He opens himself to the purest light around. It's also **true**. **The Word of God isn't opinion; it's revelation.** God's words are true dependable, lacking deceit. God tells the truth even when it hurts. Often we'd rather lie or not tell someone the truth because it might hurt. Like confronting a friend who is dating someone who not committed to the truths of the gospel. But God is a faithful friend who always tells the truth: "*Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy*" (Pv 27:6). She doesn't speak, just shows support. When you get around someone who loves God's Word, you get the sense they're living in a world you don't inhabit or frequent. Here's the second reason the two halves of the psalm belong together. If we rely on God's Word, *the same thing that happened to creation will happen to*

us. Knowledge, deepen in wisdom, flush with joy, bathed in light, and we see the world differently! The reruns become fresh episodes of grace. *God's Word opens a world of glory.*

Personal Encounter

How? Personal encounter with God. Listening to God's speech. Verses 10-14 show us four ways to encounter God, to see the glory. **First, we need changed desire.** Many days I wake up and just don't desire God or want to read his word. I need changed desires. After all, his words are "[More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.](#)" Changed desire requires a change in discipline. You have to choose God over sleep, work, and play. I can tell you how valuable reading God's Word is, but if you read it, you'll find out for yourself. Young kids don't grasp the value of money. My three year old thinks quarters are 100s. But my nine year-old is counting and saving money. You know why? He's held bills and spent them. He knows their value. He knows what its like to "hold the gold." Think about the first time you held a 100 dollar bill. You were thrilled. To know the value of God's word, you have to hold the gold. It's not enough for me to tell you its priceless. You have to dig into its treasures. Read the book. You might say, "I'm not a reader." Oh really? How did you learn about all those bands, how to craft, how to cook, how to buy a home, how to drive a car, how to raise a child? We read what we need, what we desire, and we need the Word of God. **Second, we need to realize what's on the line:** "[Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward](#)" (11). God's word warns us from danger. Like a good Father, he tells us to avoid things so we wont get burned. You might say, "I already know the Bible." Really? It's not a textbook; it's a living word. You don't read it once and move on. **You return to it for fresh warnings and fresh grace because our memory fades.** Light pollution creeps in and we lose sight of Glory. We lose an ear for creation's song. But if we keep God's word there is greater reward. It's not just for reading; it's for keeping. Reward is in that, in obedience. Jesus said, if you love me you obey me. **Obedience isn't legalism; its love.** I was talking to a friend recently who confessed he hadn't read God's word much recently, was out of Christian community, and that as a result he's fallen to sexual temptation and poor management of time, chasing experiences not Christ. There was disappointment and regret in his eyes. Other friends have done the same thing and never confessed and now they are far from God and have lost the reward. There's a lot on the line. Untold riches, awful peril. **Third, passionately pursue outside perspective.** David says, "Who can discern his errors." My wife and friends can tell me about a personal flaw, but when I encounter it *coram deo*, Latin for "before the face of God," in his presence. Through his Word, I get a perspective, an encounter, that changes me, produces resolve, creates character, wins repentance, fills me with hope. His reliable, true, and pure Word changes me. **Sin becomes a threat not an accommodation:** "[Keep me back from presumptuous sins. Don't let them have dominion over me!](#)" The Hebrew is emphatic. Passionately pursue God's perspective in your life in his Word. **Fourth and finally, make your reading personal.** God does. In the first half of the psalm we see "God" mentioned once. In the second half, his personal name LORD/YHWH appears seven times, the number of perfection. The Perfect, personal God wants to meet with you. As the cumulative force of this poem, God's word unlocks wonder, how does David respond? MY rock or my relic? How does he know God's a rock? He's holding the gold. MY Redeemer or my judge?

Redeemer, he's spent time with the Reward. God becomes personal for us in Christ. Christ is our rock and redeemer. Why do the two halves of the Psalm belong together? Because God's word unlocks wonder but also his Word is Christ. Jesus is all the things attributed to the Word: sufficient, reliable, pure and true. Reading God's work isn't merely a rational experience; it's personal encounter with Christ. Hebrews 1 tells us Christ upholds the universe by the *word* of his power, and speaks to as the *Word* of God, made flesh. God's word shows us a world of Glory, and the glory is Christ. **He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power**" (Heb 1:1-3). Jesus speaks into life creation and new creation. In the Word we encounter Christ the Word. Weight, beauty, permanence. Will you clear the fog this year by looking to the Word over and over? In it there is great reward.