

God Speaks

[00:00:14] And then morning everyone. See if I can get this right here. All right guys.

[00:00:27] Good morning. Great to see you all this morning. Got a little sun shining out there. It's a good day to come together and praise the Lord. And what a privilege we have just as we come together and worshipping together. And you know I was reflecting again just during that beautiful worship music that we have. Those of you that serve in various ways and volunteer and spend your time rehearsing and leading us in worship and running the tech team and ushering us in we're really really grateful for all that you do and making our worship services happen and all that just yeah. Thank you for taking the time to do that and to point is to God. Well we're going to look at Psalm 19 today and it's a psalm that overflows with praise for God and His glory his majesty David's reflections on that so I'd invite you to turn there we're going to jump right into that into the text and get a few verses to lead off here. But if you have it on your phone or you have your Bible with you I'd encourage you to just to read along. My notes says here. Psalm 19 I don't know if you have this note but mine says this is for the director of music and so this is really intended to be a song that David has written lyrics to. She is a little bit better. Versed one.

[00:01:54] The heavens declare the glory of God the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech night after night. They reveal knowledge they have no speech they use no words no sound is heard from them.

[00:02:14] Yet their voice goes out into all the earth. Their words to the ends of the world. And the heavens God is pitched a tent for the sun. It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber like a champion rejoicing to run his course. It rises at one into the heavens. And makes its circuit to the other.

[00:02:35] Nothing is deprived. Of its warmth.

[00:02:41] Just want to take some time along with David this morning the author of the song to just revel in who God is a little bit this morning. It takes some time to reflect on the things that he has made and what he's done what he's created. I feel like oftentimes we walk around and our eyes are on earthly things were consumed with things happening at this level and our eyes are down as we walk around. And we need to lift them up occasionally lift up our eyes to the heavens that are loudly proclaiming God's glory. David tells us he says there's a message in the heavens and the stars and it's not a whisper it's not a quiet voice just trying to get your attention or in the sun as you see it crossing the sky as we're seeing it today. At least for a little while but it's a loud message it's a voice that shouting. And it's talking about who God is proclaiming declaring God's glory declaring his handiwork and his majesty just want us to think about that for a little bit. Even in this little slice of the title slide the Milky Way galaxy as we look at it we're kind of out more toward the edge and this is sort of the middle clump of stars that we see there magnificent incredible right. If you've ever taken the time. To just look up in the night sky when's the last time you did that I remember as a kid as a teenager doing that even sleeping outside and just being able to lie on my back and look at the things that God had made. But you know as our cities have gotten brighter and they've encroached on our light a little bit it's hard to see that kind of view of the sky now isn't it. We don't often get that view. But in fact in Pennsylvania there are a couple areas that are designated dark sky areas. I guess if you get back in the in the woods there.

[00:04:24] There are a couple of places where the city lights don't make the stars fade and you can see the full glory of God ablaze in the skies. And if you've ever seen it you know how magnificent it is. And David says that's just shouting to us and speaking of knowledge speaking of God's creation this hour Russian flow a he is. I want to show you another picture of the heavens.

[00:04:50] This is one that only our technology has allowed us to see but this is a picture that was taken by the Hubble telescope. Actually several pictures that were taken by the Hubble in several of its orbits around the earth. I think it took 10 or 11 days to compile this this picture and it uses actually different wavelengths of light some of which are visible to us and some of which are not and then put it together in this composite and a computer rendering which allows us to see what's here. But this is a little slice of the night sky that God has made. And what you're seeing here there's a few stars but most of this is not stars. Actually you're not individual stars these little little points that are sort of crossed hash with light. I think that those are stars but this is an area that's actually relatively dark so to speak. When we look at it with the naked eye. And as the Hubble image this and then the computers and the scientists looked at this they said you know what in this photo field there are 10000 galaxies in this picture. So these are galaxies you can see a couple of them that are closer to us collections of stars like our own these spirals our own galaxy has they say I don't know why this range is so big but somewhere between 100 billion and 400 billion stars they estimate it must be a hard estimate to make with that kind of range. So they're getting a little bit but hundreds of billions of stars in our galaxy alone.

[00:06:13] This picture has ten thousand galaxies in it and some are no brighter than little specks of dust. I'm sure you'd probably have to have like a jeweler's loop to be able to see all of them in the photo.

[00:06:27] And as you look at this I love this photo so much I think this one was published in 24. I love it so much because you think wow you know we must be looking up into the sky there and the broad expanse of sky and picturing those galaxies that are.

[00:06:40] Home. Who knows how many millions and billions of light years away from us.

[00:06:43] Some of them but you discover when you read the information that this is actually an expanse of sky that's about a millimeter by a millimeter a millimeter square if you were to squeeze a millimeter between your fingers and then hold your arm at arm's length and look through that little millimeter square that you were holding.

[00:07:02] This is the size photo field. That's that's what you're seeing in that one millimeter by one millimeter square 10000 galaxies. It's like taking a drinking straw and looking up at the sky for that drinking straw. And that's what's contained in that little tiny piece of our sky. Is that a mind boggling.

[00:07:21] I just it just boggles my mind. And I think David as he was maybe lying on his back and looking at the firmament and just imagining what was out there seeing what God has created he just resonates with this God. The heavens are declaring your glory because God has made all this and he fills all of this. He inhabits all of that.

[00:07:42] That's the God that we worship. And it is truly incredible. The amazing. The apostle Paul picks up on that same theme actually in the book of Romans just running right along the track of where David was going with his thoughts. And he says since the creation of the world. God's invisible qualities. His invisible qualities his eternal power and divine. Nature. Have been clearly seen being understood through what has been made. So Paul is picking that up and saying you know what God we through what you've made we understand who you are.

[00:08:20] Your qualities your eternal power your divine nature. No one but God can make things like this.

[00:08:26] No one but God hangs the sun is a blazing ball in the sky that gives light and warmth everything that it touches. Paul says your qualities are on display. Their voices speaking even though they're not using audible words. Their voice is going out into all the world and we hear that. And Paul adds the note. They're speaking so clearly. That all people are without excuse. He says God's qualities are so clearly seen that we have no excuse for saying I don't see God. You see God I haven't seen God.

[00:08:59] There on display for all to see. And David it just revels in the magnificence of what God has created. Staggering picture. Then David goes on. And he kind of moves this thought from considering the creation to the law that he has God's words God's decrees to him to the people of Israel. And so let's reflect on that is David moves further and begins to look at that and verse seven. He says the law of the Lord is perfect refreshing the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right. Giving Joy to the heart the commands of the Lord irradiance giving light to the eyes the fear of the Lord is pure enduring forever the decrees of the Lord are firm and all of them are righteous.

[00:09:59] So you hear the superlative words that David uses to describe the law of God as he picks up. I don't know his scroll he reflects on the law that has come to him. David is really he's definitely thinking here about the Mosaic law the laws that were given to Israel by Moses. He looks through those all of those starting with the Ten Commandments. But as he reflects you can see the way that his heart has also enlivened by looking at these things to along with God's creation. He's got the same kind of response and let me just go over some of those words let the sink in again. David is talking about God's laws and he says God your words your laws are perfect. Trustworthy.

[00:10:39] Right. Radiant pure. Decrees or firm.

[00:10:49] So he's just resounding with the highest praise about God's law and God's words as he considers those things. Well let me ask you do you when you think about laws do you really resound with that kind of excitement. Do you find speed limits say to be really life giving life affirming. Or how about this one. Here's a timely example. The Internal Revenue Code pretty soon you going to be sitting down and delving into your taxes. Did you just find when you look at those laws that your heart just burst with the joy and the righteousness and the perfect ness of the IRS code. Not really. Right. We don't think of laws that way but when David looks into the law in the words of God he said God your laws are life giving they're exciting. They're eternally establish their firm. They're amazing as amazing as the night sky above us. That's ablaze with billions of stars. That's the kind of reaction that he has. And I wonder as I look at David's thoughts and words on that should we really should we really experience more of that kind of wonder when we consider the words of God.

[00:12:01] That have come to us. I mean it's truly amazing the words of God that God has revealed himself in his thoughts in his words and his decrees and his statutes and that those things have come down to us and you know are our. Access to the Scriptures.

[00:12:19] The amount of scriptures that we have at our fingertips it's an embarrassing wealth of riches isn't it. I mean our shelves have Bibles and we have a Bible. Well we don't have the pews in here but we have Bibles everywhere we have on our phones and our tablets. We have the word downloaded maybe you've got a devotional or like the Kingstree daily reading that's pumped in your e-mail every day. We just have an incredible wealth of riches in terms of the word of God. But does it lead us to say like David God your word is amazing.

[00:12:51] Your laws are incredible your precepts are right and the fear of the Lord is pure. So I just want us to feel that again this morning take a moment and try to get to where David was in that. The

words of God have come down come down. To us.

[00:13:12] And maybe we're not all that excited when we think about them as laws and commands we tend to feel like even for God's commands that somehow those things. This is the human problem right. Those things really limit our independence. They limit our spirit our ability to do what we want.

[00:13:29] And that has led us into trouble almost from day one that kind of spirit. Right so we're not that excited about laws but do we understand the value that comes to us in those things. And what about this idea of. The law really does that apply to us as New Testament believers. Today.

[00:13:51] There is David as he's he's talking about the laws of Moses the laws that Moses gave Israel their ceremonial laws and that there are certainly a lot of moral precepts in that as well laws about cleanliness. How do those things apply to us. Isn't David really in a different sphere here. How are we to understand those things. That's a very that's a complex topic right. And we have a complicated somewhat relationship with the old testament with the old testament law as New Testament believers in Christ. There is a lot there that you can explore or you can get all the commentaries that you want on that topic. You can spend hours discussing and listening to sermons and lessons on that.

[00:14:28] But despite the complexity there are a couple of things that we know about that old testament law for sure this morning and I want to highlight those because they really speak to God's goodness to us. Again we know for sure that we will not be justified by observing the law. The Mosaic law any moral code. The New Testament clearly teaches that we will not be justified before God. We will not be declared moral righteous worthy of glory before God. By observing those codes right and the reason is is that we cannot do it. We can't do it perfectly we can't do it flawlessly. Who is equal to the righteousness of God that's revealed in his Laws his commands and his precepts. Clear message of scripture. No one is. But the other thing that we know for sure about the old testament law was that even as it became a yoke to Israel and the people that it was laid on we've been freed from the yoke of that law from the penalty of that law through Jesus. Through the sacrifice that he took upon himself and laying down his life. He became a curse for us. The New Testament says and he took the penalty of that law and he removed it from us.

[00:15:43] So those are two things that we know for sure and I hope that those resonate with you and a new testament faith based church era kind of away right that we're not going to be justified for the law. No one can be bought into that oppression where the law says you're not good enough. You will never attain to the glory of God. Christ has redeemed us from that.

[00:16:05] And he has become the penalty of the law for us so that we might become his righteousness and we can be reconciled back to God through Him.

[00:16:14] The law is not bad. Even Paul as he writes about the law in different places and he goes into some of those complexities he says is law bad then. It's not even Jesus said what his role in relation to the law.

[00:16:25] He didn't come to abolish the law. He abolished the penalty of the law in US but he came to fulfill the law and its requirements for us and in us. So I think even though that relationship is a little bit complex and we wonder exactly what was in David's mind as he was reflecting on God's laws and commands.

[00:16:47] We know that the law is still a window into the mind of God. I think it's a template for helping us understand God's thoughts on what is righteous action and deed. And of course many of

those those laws were there were affirmed by the New Testament writers and even in the teaching of Jesus himself Jesus surpassed the law.

[00:17:06] He fulfilled the law and he in some ways he brought the law to a higher moral standard for us didn't he. And so he didn't set aside the law. But we were under the law of grace and under the law of the spirit.

[00:17:18] But the law is a window on understanding God's desires for us his truth for us. And so I think as we understand that we begin to see that God's words are still life giving to us. They still tell us old testament and new about the character of God. And as we take some time to dwell on his Excellencies and his glory we see a new revelation of who God is and the righteousness that exists within him. Truly amazing. We see God speaking in his creation his wisdom made manifest in what has been made and we hear God in a more specific kind of revelation of his very heart and his thoughts in the world that he's given to us. And what an amazing thing of value that. His words have come to us and we're able to read and hear and understand.

[00:18:13] So God is speaking and as David reflects on all this he asks himself I think he gets the point and he says God as I understand who you are. And I see that your creation is speaking and I hear the words that are enshrined in your law and in your commands and your precepts for me how do I respond. And that is the the main question isn't it. When God speaks when God speaks.

[00:18:41] It's incumbent upon us to listen and respond isn't it. We have to listen when this God speaks. There is no other response that we can have. Are we listening are we hearing as his people. I would hope that we would resonate. More than anyone. With God's words with what he's saying and even in worshipping him through what's been revealed in his creation. Let's go on and read some of David's personal response. Now to this to the revelation that he's been viewing in the meditations that he's been swimming in on God's word what's his personal response as we go on here to verses 10 through 14. As he thinks about God's decrees and his statutes he says God these things are more precious than gold. Then much pure gold. They're sweeter than honey. Than Honey from the honeycomb. By then your servant is warned and keeping them there is great reward. But.

[00:19:44] As he thinks about this he says who God who can discern their own errors. As I look at your law you can discern their own errors.

[00:19:51] Forgive my hidden faults keep your servant also from willful sins that they may not rule over me. Then I will be blameless innocent of great. Transgression. Doesn't want to get outside the laws but let me back up after you. He's contemplated all this and he finds that that he must resign. Then he ascribes to God's words and his laws these labels of incredible high worth doesn't he he says God your laws to me either like they're worth more than a lot of gold.

[00:20:27] And I imagine David as he assumed his kingship over Israel he had a lot of gold probably to play with right. Probably could have slept in the stuff if he wanted to sleep in a pile of gold and he says you your words God are worth more to me than much pure gold.

[00:20:43] They're that valuable to me and he says and they have a certain flavor got a certain satisfaction to me as well when I think of them. They're like honey sweeter than honey. From the honeycomb.

[00:20:56] And I wondered this morning if you were to kind of put your own labels of value and worth on the words of God the revelation of God this morning. What words would you use. Just think about that in your own head what words would you use would you use gold and honey or would it be something else.

[00:21:13] Mint chocolate chip ice cream flavor. God your you know your words are more satisfying to me than that than that flavor that I love so much. Someone shared with me after the first service that she thought about gods the worth of his laws and his decrees being like a diamond. Nothing more pure than a diamond and only a diamond can cut a dime. And so. The hardest penetrating substance that there is the purest the most beautiful. I like that I thought that was a great analogy. So what what words would you put on it as you think about them maybe something you can think about as you go through the day. But then it gets to the why. Why. Why does David see God's Word as being so valuable. Why does he give them such worth and he points to the benefits he says. God this is so worthy to me because by then your servant is warned. That's interesting isn't it. Your servants were warned by them and in keeping them. He finds a great reward. Think about the value of a timely warning.

[00:22:19] If you will and maybe think back in your life experience maybe you can think of a time when when you received a timely warning before you were about to step into something before you were about to go ahead with some plans maybe either grandiose or maybe just in the normal course of life and someone or something said Hey what you need to watch out for this.

[00:22:39] You're getting into dangerous territory. Maybe it was an investment you were about to make. Maybe it was a relationship you were entering into. Maybe it's just your plans for a picnic on Saturday and thunderstorms are rolling in. But how timely how worthwhile is it to have a warning at the proper time. Or think about it on the flip side. I think unfortunately many of us recognize the value of a warning and we can think of situations where. We didn't receive a timely warning or maybe we did but we didn't heed the warning. Can you think of some of those times in your life. And then you look back and you think if only I had known. If only I had known in advance what Hardik this was going to bring to me. Or to the people around me. If only I could have been warned it would have saved me so much. And I think a lot of us probably have instances that we can think of where a warning would have been so applicable. Just imagine David we know that. As much as we value the law and treasured it he got complacent about that didn't he. In a big way. In a big way.

[00:23:46] And so before the whole episode with Bathsheba in your riot took place. What if you could have received the warning from the prophet Nathan beforehand. I'm sure he thought of that later and thought what if Nathan had come to me and said Stop what you're doing. David you're about to lead yourself and your family and the entire nation of Israel into a path of lasting pain and destruction. And I thought If only I could have heard that message beforehand instead of afterwards when Nathan came and said.

[00:24:16] You're in trouble with God because of what you've done.

[00:24:21] Warnings can be so valuable and they come in all shapes and sizes. We think about them maybe we see them all the time when we drive around right driving here this morning. You might not have seen this sign. But if you do see this sign today I want you to slow down and be cautious because that's not a good situation. The warning signs are everywhere but how valuable are the ones that come through us from a trusted friend a trusted adviser or even something that God puts on our way to keep our minds until you know what. There's going to be a problem if I if I go forward with this. So when David says God value your decrees more than much gold. I think he's saying when I hear them they keep me on the path that you've laid out for me and how good how valuable is that warning to me. Even though we tend to think of those things as restrictions on us in another place. David said the boundaries for me have fallen in pleasant places.

[00:25:15] They let us be free they let us enjoy the goodness of God and the peace of mind that he gives when we're in the path that he lays out. That's the value of the warning that David sees in the

law. And reward in keeping them there is a great reward he says. I'm sure he came back to those words.

[00:25:34] But you know even recognizing that there's an issue that David points to in Psalm that we have to deal with. It's applicable to us all and he says you know there's a there's a pitfall here even when we're valuing God's words and striving to do our best to live to please him. There is a pitfall and it's dangerous because we don't see it and it's one that we can fall into so easily. I want to come back to this phrase he says he says but who can discern God there are hidden errors who can discern in themselves the tendency to walk away from the path that God has laid out and the good words that he's given us to live by. That's a problem that we all struggle with isn't it. If you've been around people very long you probably recognize that people don't do a good job of seeing themselves objectively. Now I know you do and you do and I do. But there are some people out there right that just don't do a good job of seeing themselves objectively and that's the problem that David is pointing to who can discern their hidden false god.

[00:26:37] How do we even know we're about to step into that trap.

[00:26:41] Because that one is there waiting for us as I thought about this and kind of our cosmic theme for this morning. I wanted to bring maybe a telescope in but they tend to be a little bit ungainly and I didn't have a good small one. So you're just going to have to work with my pantomimed here. But but this is the problem that we have with objectivity when we work at other when we look at other people and their lives.

[00:27:03] It's like we open a telescope right nice brass one maybe the captain's scope and it's like if I were to stand up here with a scope then you know what I can see your flaws really clearly. I mean wow they stand out so your shortcomings. I mean it's amazing right. We can put a telescope on other people and it's so clear to us where they're wrong where their wayward they need to fix this they need to fix that.

[00:27:27] But when we look at ourselves how does that go. It's like we take that telescope. And we just turn it around.

[00:27:35] Right. Have you ever. Some of you have looked through a telescope the wrong way right as a kid did you ever try that. So you have the big end up to your eye and the little end is out here and then what happens then the image of that little end it's like that's a million light years away from you. It's so tiny it's so far removed. It's amazing the effect and it's like we take that telescope and we turn it around and we look in the mirror and we examine ourselves that way and we say hey it all looks good. I can't see any problems there at all.

[00:28:04] That's the problem of perspective that we have when we look at ourselves who can discern there hidden flaws or errors that lead them out of God's way and living by his word. So what are we to do. What's the solution.

[00:28:19] The solution is right here among us this morning and I want to point us again to that the idea that God has brought us into the family the community of the church for one purpose one of the purposes being that we can be a sounding board for each other so that we can provide some objectivity to each other. Community is wonderful community is uplifting communities should encourage us and should drive us forward in our faith expressed love and good deeds right for and those things we should be able to walk or walk with other people. But it also is there.

[00:28:52] To call us to account. And those are things that we have trouble hearing sometimes but that's God's goodness to us and community that somebody could say you know what you're off the

path. And so that's really the main application of this text this morning that I want to give to you. If you walk away with something saying what do I do. I want you to walk away with this. Are there people in your life today.

[00:29:19] That know that they have the freedom to come to you and say some difficult things to you about your life. People that know that they have the freedom to be honest with you about things that are happening in your life but they know this for sure that their relationship with you is not at risk if they share those things with you.

[00:29:38] Now I'm not talking about people that you find to be critical of you and you know people that would gossip her back. What about you. No no I'm talking about. Do you have your closest friends people that you love. Do they know that they have that permission and ability in your life to speak truth into your life. Because if you don't have people that would fuel the freedom to come and say look you're not going to want to hear this but I have to tell you where I think you're headed with this and if if they don't know that you will at least listen to what they have to say. And take that to heart and that that won't. Harm their relationship with you then you are walking blindly on a catwalk in the dark with a thousand foot drop on either side. That's what David means when he says who can discern the hidden errors we can but the community that God has given us. Maybe it's brothers and sisters right in the church family maybe it's people within your family or close friendships but you have to have people that know that they can come and say Jay you need to hear this about what you're doing about where you're headed. And I have to be able to say man I don't like hearing that but I'm gonna listen to that. Solomon one of the wisest the wisest man. Who lived his thoughts are recorded in the book of Proverbs had this to say about that very process. Wounds from a friend can be trusted. But an enemy multiplies kisses. I think we look at that and we say way wounds from a friend. Friends are For wounding friends well wound you write. Oh yes Allman says yes they do. They need to but you know what when they do. You can trust them. Because a friend is going to have your best interest at heart. We need to trust them. We need to be able to take those wounds and to examine ourselves in the light of that objectivity. Otherwise we risk wandering far far away. From the words that God has given us. Think about that. Reflect on that you don't need people around you telling you all the time how great you are. I mean every once in a while little encouragement is nice right. But wounds from a true friend. Those are trustworthy. Those are useful ones those are valuable. I think that's the value that David sees as he looks into the law and he says God how precious to me are your words. Buy them your servant is warned and we can all say with David if only in that instance I had listened to the warning but maybe through that we learn to heed the words of God in a deeper way. Wounds from a friend seek community. Seek community seek those people that can speak into your life.

[00:32:30] As we look at that this morning. We've seen the greatness of God. As David was just taken in by that and the skies both day and night God's manifest wisdom made clear the message shouted out to all of creation and then he considered the words of God and their life giving qualities like like springs in the desert. He said Your words are to me like that god they give me life. They give me joy because they're so valuable to me they're so precious to me they keep me from great danger. But you know as great this morning as God's revelation is of himself in the heavens as great and as precious are his own thoughts that we have in his word to us.

[00:33:11] Those are matched by the greatness of God's mercy toward us. And I want you to really leave with that thought this morning. The greatness of God in creation. All that we can see the greatness of God in the revelation of his thoughts to us. We have the very words of God entrusted to us. Those are matched by the grace.