

## PSALM 19

### DECLARING GOD'S GLORY!

Let's turn the lights off! In the first verses of the first chapter of the Bible, we learn that in the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was "formless and empty," and "darkness was over the surface of the deep." It is not completely dark in here, but we realize that if we are to survive and thrive, we need light. We also realize that we cannot generate inside or outside light by ourselves. Someone greater than us must provide our light. The Provider of all light and all blessing is our glorious God. As we see more light throughout the next few minutes, may his light shine more and more in our hearts, as we discover more of his glory.

(PRAYER)

Now let's turn on one row of lights. In the first several verses of Psalm 19, we read of **GOD'S GLORY IN THE WORLD.**

"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 display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world."

What is all this talk about talk? What about all this proclaiming and declaring and speech and voices? The writer of this Psalm, King David, is using a word picture to help us understand what is happening in the creation. We do not hear God's voice like you hear my voice, but the heavens "shout out" the greatness and glory of God.

Think about a blue sky. Think about the roar of thunder or a flash of lightning. Think about

countless stars on a clear night, and even the amazing sight of a comet racing across that darkened sky. The heavens are like a megaphone, shouting not with words, but with wonder, the greatness and glory of God. Who could have imagined this? Who could have fashioned this? Who can and does uphold this? Only our great and glorious God.

God's glory is in the world, *EVERY DAY*. David writes, "Day after day they pour forth speech, night after night they display knowledge." This is not just glory for Sunday, or Monday, or Thursday, or any certain day of the week. This is not just for the daytime or the nighttime. This is not just for summer or winter, springtime or autumn. The heavens are there 24/7/365, declaring and proclaiming the wonders of our wonderful God.

Now let's listen to two more verses:

"In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun, which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion, like a champion rejoicing to run his course." One example of this everyday speech is the sun. David compares the sun to:

\* A bridegroom. At a wedding, the bridegroom emerges, dressed handsomely, and ready to take his bride as his wife. He will march to the place where he must go, to meet her and greet her, to rejoice in her, and to take her to himself, as his own.

\* A champion. Maybe this is like a horse who emerges onto the racetrack to run in the race with speed and beauty. Or maybe this is like a champion sprinter, who emerges onto his or her racetrack, then runs like the wind to the cheers of the thousands.

The sun is like this, says David. It emerges triumphantly in the morning, majestically marches across the heavens, then beautifully disappears in the evening. Every day, it declares and proclaims the glory of its Creator.

God's glory is in the world, every day, and God's glory is in the world, *EVERYWHERE*.

We read that the voices of the heavens are heard in every speech and language. Do you speak

English? Do you speak German? Do you speak Swahili? Do you speak South Carolina? You can and do understand this voice.

We read that the voices of the heavens go to the ends of the world. You live here - but what if you lived in Europe? Or Asia? Or even Antarctica? The heavens would still declare the glory of God, and the skies would still proclaim the work of his hands.

We read that nothing is hidden from the heat of the sun. No matter where you go, you benefit from the blessings of the sun. I am not a great scientist, but even at the bottom of the sea, the sun is a help, for its light provides for life.

Think about that. As you walk through life, as you bike through life, as you drive through life, as you fly through life, as you ride a skateboard or a golf cart through life, you can always hear the voice of the heavens, declaring and proclaiming the glory of God. You turn your eyes to the skies, and you are reminded of the glory of God.

Sometimes you do this when all is well, and your heart is full, and you want to shout for joy to the Lord. Sometimes you do this when all is hard, and your heart is aching, and you want to cry for mercy to the Lord. Look up. Look around. This declaration and proclamation is as close as the beating of your heart and the flickering of your eye. No matter what this day is like for you, and no matter where you are, God's glory is in the world.

(SINGING OF "GOD OF WONDERS")

Now let's turn on a second row of lights. As these lights begin to shine, we discover **GOD'S GLORY IN HIS WORD.**

"The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving 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 are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the Lord are sure and altogether righteous.”

Let’s first discover *WHAT THIS IS*. Notice the words: law, statutes, precepts, commands, fear, ordinances. They reveal different details about God’s Word, but the details all lead to this truth: God is in charge! God’s Word reveals God’s glory because it is God’s way of telling us, in words that we can understand, what he desires from us and requires of us.

This is good news! Maybe it does not feel that way, because we do not like to be told what we should and should not do. But this great and glorious God is so great and glorious, that we ought to be concerned about what he wants. If the heavens declare his glory, and if the skies proclaim his work, then we are wise to learn his ways.

Now let’s discover *WHAT THIS IS LIKE*. Notice the words again: perfect, trustworthy, right, radiant, pure, sure. Again, each word reveals different details, but the details all lead to this: God’s Word is reliable. God’s truth directs us in ways that are good, better and best. If he desires, if he requires, we can trust that he is never wrong and always right.

This is also good news! When we were away last week, we used my son’s GPS system to help us navigate through the hills and towns of southeastern Ohio. “Brita,” as we now call her, did a good job, but I have to confess that there were several times when I said, “I am not so sure about this. I do not think she is taking us the best way.”

We never have to do this with God! We can always say, “This is his direction. It is perfect. It is trustworthy. It is right. It is radiant. It is pure. It is sure. I can trust it, for I trust him.”

Now let’s discover *WHAT THIS DOES*. Once more, notice the words: reviving the soul, making wise the simple, giving joy to the heart, giving light to the eyes, enduring forever, altogether righteous. While we skip over some details again, we can say this: God’s Word is for our good. My soul needs life. My mind needs wisdom. My heart needs joy. My eyes need

light. God's Word provides all of that and more.

This too is good news! When we hear and heed God's Word, we know God will bless us. He will not always bless us in the way we expect. Sometimes the road to blessing is paved with hard stretches. In this world, we will struggle and suffer. But whether life is easy or life is hard, God's Word is good and great enough to guide us in every situation, and we find blessing when we follow his ways.

Now - after David tells us what God's Word is, what God's Word is like, and what God's Word does, he provides two images for us:

“They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.”

\* Gold is valuable. It always has been, and it always will be. But God's Word is far, far more valuable. Really! Truly!

\* Honey is sweet. It always has been, and it always will be. But God's Word is far, far more sweet than the sweetest of honey. Really! Truly!

Do we believe this? Do we live like we believe this? If I gave you a big old piece of gold right now, you would hold it, then hide it and hoard it. If I gave you a warm biscuit with honey right now, you would delight to eat it - and you would want another one. David says God's glorious Word is better than any of that. His glory shines through his Word, and our call is to value and enjoy this glorious gift, so that we may know his blessing in our lives.

(SINGING OF “HOW FIRM A FOUNDATION”)

Now let's turn on the third row of lights. With that, we discover the rest of the picture: if God's glory is in the world, and if God's glory is in his Word, then I desire this: **GOD'S**

**GLORY IN ME.** What is our response to this glory? Do we somehow have a part to play in this cosmic drama of God's glory? The answer is yes. Because God created us in his image, the picture of glory is complete when we see how God's glory can shine through us. God does not need us to be glorious. But God chooses to display his glory through us.

It starts when I say this: *MAKE ME PURE.*

“Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults. Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then will I be blameless, innocent of great transgression.”

Notice all the words one more time: errors, faults, willful sins. These words describe all kinds of ways that we may violate God's truth. Sometimes we sin without intending to sin. Sometimes we sin without even knowing we sin. Sometimes we sin when we intend to sin, and when we know we are sinning.

No matter the type of sin, our need is the same: before this great and glorious God, we need to be blameless and innocent. How could such a magnificent Maker tolerate and celebrate the presence of such rebellious people? How could his glory shine through us? Only if our sins are forgiven and his righteousness is ours. Only if we receive a new record before God: a record that is fully blameless, fully innocent, and fully righteous.

This is ours through the Son of David, Jesus Christ. He secured this for all who trust in him. He was the Son of God who came and lived a blameless and innocent life. So God was pleased to allow him to suffer and die for our errors, our faults, and our willful sins. Through faith in him, all our wrong is gone before God, and all is right with us before God. Because Jesus removes what dim God's glory in us, and because Jesus replaces that darkness with his glorious light, we have the opportunity to glorify the glorious God with our very lives.

It is amazing! So we say, “Make me pure.” I see how great you are, and I sense how broken I am. Jesus, Son of David, I turn to you to make me pure.

But that is not all, because God's glory shines through the lives we live, every day. That is why I also say: *MAKE ME PLEASE*.

"May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer." I think this and that. I say this and that. I do this and that. I want all that I think, say and do, to be pleasing in the sight of God. I know he is pleased with me because of Jesus, but now I want to honor him every day, and everywhere, and I want his glory to shine through me, every day, and everywhere."

A pastor named Michael Williams explains it this way. Picture a little boy or a little girl. He or she comes to Dad, maybe on Father's Day, crawls up on Dad's lap, and says, "Daddy, when I grow up I want to be just like you! I want to write out your character, your ways in my life. I want to live such that you will be proud of me. I want to honor you."

That little boy or little girl will never be exactly like Dad, and we will never be exactly like God. He is God, and we are not. In this life, will still stumble and struggle and sin. But just as that child is seeking to be like his or her father, we are striving toward God's glory. As we live in God's world, as we walk through God's Word, we want to reflect that glory as we live and walk in ways that please and honor him. We know it is not easy, so we constantly run to him, asking him for grace, mercy and help to give him the glory he deserves in our lives.

We do this every day, and we do this everywhere. We do this as we love our parents and brothers and sisters. We do this as we speak compassionately about that person who drives us crazy. We do this as we work really hard for the money we are earning. We do this as we care for the poor and needy. We do this as we run away from whatever tempts us to sin. We do this as we tell people about Jesus, who makes us gloriously pure. We do this in everything. God's world amazes us. God's Word guides us. God's glory shines from us.

Do you see? The lights are now on again. They are as bright as they can be. That is what we

want for our lives. We want God's glory to shine in us and through us, as bright as can be. That is what Vacation Bible School is all about. That is what every week of the year is all about. We join the world and the Word in declaring and proclaiming God's glory.

May that be your heart today. May that be my heart today. May that be our heart today.

(SEASON OF CONFESSION)

(SONG OF ASSURANCE - "HE KNOWS MY NAME")