
God reveals His Glory

Psalm 19

Introduction

GOD CREATED THE WORLD not to seem secondary but to show splendor. He did not “go public” to be assumed. He is not to be unspecified. He is to be glorified. And therefore, we have a problem.

Our problem is found not mainly in international trade or homeland terrorism. Even when confronting the impoverished values of education systems or the horrors of RU 486, we are not yet to the face of the matter. The core trouble is found not in the credit card nor spousal communication skills. We have not yet discovered the central part of the concern until we understand the nature of the battle.

Beloved, we are in a battle; and the battle comes down to two glories. The question is, “Which glory will exert the pull on our souls; the creation or the Creator”?

Will we be dazzled by October trees and the feel of its breeze? Or the One who created them? Will we be amazed at the speed of the newest laptop or a 9th inning winning homerun in the World Series? Or are we in awe over the supremacy of the One who spoke the Universe into existence? Are we marveling over landscapes and seascapes? Do we find delight more in a baby’s smile than in the Bible’s silhouette of Christ Jesus? What beauty, in other words, holds our attention and guides our destiny? What splendor are we savoring?

Beloved, we are in a battle; and the battle comes down to two beauties.

- Which beauty will enchant our minds?
 - creation & creatures ?
 - the Creator?

Isn’t this the very thing the apostle Paul was getting at in Romans one? In vv.18-21 Paul to the Romans said that God displays himself in creation in order to remove all excuses for “worship disorders”. Failed worship deserves frightening wrath! And nobody has an excuse. The reason for this, Paul said, was that they did not honor God even though they “knew” God. They recognized but did not relish the supreme worth of the Creator of the world. Rather, they exchanged the glory of God for an image and served and worshiped the creation

and not the Creator. The Bible calls this idolatry. It boils down to what we think about the glory of God.

The great problem of all time and in every culture concerns what humans are making of the glory of God. The fundamental problem we face this morning is we do not make much of the greatest value in the Universe. And exchanging the glory of God for God-replacing treasures is mutiny.

This morning's message titled *God reveals His Glory* is aimed at making clear His glory. But it is more than this. Its purpose is to so expose God's beauty that our hearts will want nothing but Him. And that sin will be undesirable. And that we will turn from substitutions to the Substance. And that we will repent of falling for the grand lie that life is found in creation. And that we will turn to the beauty and glory of the Creator for all we need. Psalm 19 was written and preserved for people like you and me to recognize and relish the splendor of His worth. We notice this as we take note that *God reveals His glory from the stars above to the Scriptures in hand to the soul unseen.*

From the stars

(Vv.1-6)

In these opening six verses we have a striking presentation of the truth that *God reveals His Glory from the stars*. He has built into his creation a demonstration of his deity and might that call forth praise to his name. We witness this glory as we observe how he reveals it in his world as the Creator.

As the Creator

(Vv.1-2)

In the midst of the staggering sheer size of space and the vast number of stars we are meant to be overwhelmed not by His works but by Him.

V.1 begins the poem in a symmetry and beauty known as synonymous parallelism. "The heavens" correspond to "the sky above". "declare" parallels "proclaims". And "the glory of God" matches up with "his handiwork". The verbs in this verse are a progressive tense. That is, the describe ongoing action. Each sunrise, each twinkle of a star, each cloud formation speak afresh of the glory of God.

In v.2 we notice a continuing development of the nature of God's communication of Himself in His creation. :Day to day pours out speech. "Pours forth" or "bubbles over" describes fluid that cannot be contained by its container. As a boiling pot bubbles over so one day cannot contain its news to itself. By nature, it has to overflow into the next day. Like a relay race in which the runner runs so far and then gives the baton to the next runner is God's creation with

God's message. And the message is God is glorious! God is glorious! God is glorious! Creation echoes the never-ending succession of the awesome news that God is glorious!

Notice also how David refers to the Creator. He calls Him God. The word translated God in v.1 comes from a root meaning *might*. Some translations will render this term *The Mighty One*. His might and deity are revealed in His creation.

This is what Paul refers to in Romans 1:18-23 which seems to be Paul's commentary on Psalm 19. It is precisely His eternal power and divine nature that the heavens proclaim. We see this pattern all the way back to Genesis one where Moses uses the term "God" or "Elohim" to describe and display the Creator's might.

Nothing in the sun or moon or stars or comets or black holes or sheets of galaxies is learned about God's grace. God is revealing but one angle on His infinite character.

Not only do these two verses show God's might and how it is communicated through creation in an ongoing, each and every day kind of way. It also presents a marvelous perspective on the Creator. All His creation is his "handiwork". Creation comes from His hand. He made it not like a painter paints using things already existing. God's handiwork came out of nothing. Psalm 8 calls this "the work of His finger". Ponder what is being communicated about God's power!

Apart from speech

(V.3)

Verse 3 continues to shape our understanding of the nature of God's revelation of his glory in creation. Notice that there is a limitation to this revelation. And that limitation spoken of in v.3 is that it is apart from speech. This revealing is a non-verbal revelation.

Before we moved out to Ohio, we lived in a valley amid the beautiful mountains of Montana. I remember fondly going along side the meandering streams to simply look and listen. I thoroughly enjoyed watching bald eagles search for thermal pockets in which to soar effortlessly over the river. I recall with great joy sitting in the woods in December and hearing the almost inaudible puff of a gentle snowfall.

These were special times in which my soul recognized the beauty of the Lord. But not once did the mountains or streams or eagles or snow say to me, "Dan, look at me. Allow me to tell you about my Creator". V.3 is telling us that this revelation is non-verbal. It is, if you will, God's body language.

To the end of the world**(v.4a-b)**

And this mute message has traveled a distance as seen in v.4. To the end of the world God reveals His glory through this speechless speech. This is what Paul picked up in Rom.1:20f to say that all are without excuse; for the wordless word of God's revelation of His glory goes to the ends of the world.

With awesome beauty**(Vv.4c-6)**

And it goes with arresting power and beauty as noticed in vv.4-6. David, using eye-catching word pictures, wants his readers to recognize the power and beauty of the Lord's glory in creation.

As a bridegroom & an athlete

This section could only have been written away from malls and high rises and central air. In the arid climate of southern Judah where David lived, the sun was an ever-present reality. Walking the Jericho road in heat of over 110 degrees and organizing life around the sun one does not have to wonder why David talks this way. As a bridegroom the sun is strong, healthy, robust. There is no hesitation in the sun's circuit each and every day. It knows where its going. And with power and pleasure it pursues its path. Likewise with an athlete God's glory in creation is seen in energy and joy. The sun look victorious; always. What do these metaphors carry to their readers in relation to God's glory? Think upon this.

To the Scriptures in hand**(Vv.7-10)**

What a mighty and glorious God he must be! He puts his power and glory on display in order to be marveled at. But his nonverbal communication is not enough. We need his words. And that is where we find the psalmist going. In vv.7-11, we see that God reveals his glory from the stars now to the Scriptures in hand. From His works to His Word God reveals his glory. We see this beauty in what the word is and in what it does.

What it is

Though the beauty and power of Creation is a wonder to behold, it itself is not the point. The heart of the psalm is found in vv.7-10. Here we wonder at His glory displayed in his Word. As R.T. France said in his book "The Living God" "The forthright declaration that God reveals Himself to man through nature is balanced by a far higher eulogy of His revelation of Himself through His words. It is these that are the guide to right living and true relationship with God".

I believe that it is the teaching of the movement of this psalm that God reveals His glory more fully than in all creation. The words of God sketch out the character of God. And the more we gaze upon the character of God the more we see the Son of God; the living Word (cf. Jn.1). And so, as we scroll through God's glory revealed in His Word by looking at what it is, don't miss the last Word (cf. Heb.1:1ff). Look at these words as a contour of Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Name

These descriptions of the Bible / Last Word are not meant to be sliced and squeezed to extract every drop of juice. One could study them independent of each other with some profit. But they are meant to be read together so that we get the cumulative impression. They are a stereophonic six speaker wrap-around designed to hear the awesome music of the Word! So let me point out but a few notes from this sheet of music.

Notice the repetition of the name *Yahweh* (that is "LORD"). All that the Word is is of the LORD. This six-fold use of His Name is to be contrasted with the one time use of the term "God" in v.1. In creation He reveals His power and wisdom and glory. In the Word he reveals Himself. We should never have known of God and His Son and of His Spirit and of His salvation and of heaven and hope and of joy if He had not SPOKEN. And in these last days spoken to us by His Son; the living Word.

The synonyms

The second note to this music is the synonyms David uses. These words all speak about the Scriptures but each with its specific slant.

The law

Pointing to the road to life. It is the instructions of the Lord.

The testimony

Pointing to the self-authenticating revelation of God. It is the confirmation of His character.

The precepts

Pointing to the directions to the destination. It is the roadmap of His purity.

The commandment

Pointing to His authority. It is His sole right to speak over our lives.

The fear

Pointing to results. It is the proper effect the Scriptures are to have on us.

The rules

Pointing to discernment. It is the arbitration in the affairs of our lives.

The quality

The last note I desire to strike in this sheet of music as to do with quality. The words perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, true and righteous altogether all correspond to the quality of Scripture. They are piled upon each other to highlight the integrity and purity and trustworthiness of the character of the Scriptures which all point to Jesus. Free from blemish and utterly reliable and desirable is the Lord Jesus Christ.

What it does

If that is what the Word is, what does it do? What effects does it have on the believer of the Word? The Scriptures are never to be on the coffee table only. They ought not to be found on our bookshelves much. The Word when believed powerfully shapes the soul. These affects are:

Reviving the soul

Making wise the simple

Rejoicing the heart

Enlightening the eyes

Enduring forever

Satisfying altogether

When reading the Bible as though we are in love with the Author of Bible and Creator of the Universe our souls are revived more than a trip to Myrtle Beach. When we meditate on the Word rightly our minds are made clear more than they would be in a state park. When studied properly the Scriptures make our hearts happy far more than camping in the Smokey's. When we scour the Bible for Jesus we become satisfied more than a guided tour of the Grand Canyon.

Here's the point: When we understand; and I mean genuinely know the Creator through Jesus, we can validly enjoy creation. We will not exchange the glory of God for the Creation. We will not embrace and be embraced by idolatry. We will be worshippers of our glorious God!

To the soul unseen

(Vv.11-14)

More desirable than gold, sweeter than honey, the Scriptures reveal God's glory which surpasses even that of His glory in Creation. We are now ready for the third and final movement in this psalm. How are we going to respond this day to this glory?

Notice how David responds.

Revels in Scripture

He revels (cf. vv. 10-11). He revels not in the stars but in the Scriptures. From all the beauty that is around David, he chooses the Scriptures to be the object of his amazement. It is from the Bible that we find warnings and rewards. It is not found from the sun. Though the sun shines throughout the world and pierces into hidden places, the Word shines forth ever so more piercing into the hidden places of the soul. When God reveals His glory from the stars above to the Scriptures in hand the test to determine whether we are seeing this glory or not is found in what we revel over. Do we celebrate over and take great satisfaction in the glory of creation & creatures. Or do we celebrate over and take great satisfaction in the glory of God in Scripture? David sees God's glory in the Bible. He sees so much of the purity of the Word that he sees something else. And that something is his sin.

When glory is seen we revel over it but also recoil from sin. We see this in how David ends his psalm.

Recoils from sin

Prayer

David, in light of the perfections seen and felt in the Word, becomes concerned with his own sins. He sees two types of sin. And so, he cries out for two graces in relation to these two types of sin (as seen in the word "also" in v.13).

Hidden faults

He talks about declaring him innocent from *hidden faults*. David, like all of us, was totally depraved. He was sinful whether or not he was expressing his full sin. Undetected sin may not have the same consequences of the other type of sin. But it nevertheless is sin. Thoughts and motives unexposed and unnoticed which run contrary to the holiness of God are still sinful. When David saw afresh God's glory he knew he had a multitude of hidden sin. And so, he cries out for acquittal. "Declare me innocent" was his response to God's glory. Not unlike Peter's response to Jesus when he caught a glimpse that Jesus was not a mere man. His divinity seen unraveled Peter (Lk.5:8). Peter wanted Jesus to depart. Isaiah was unraveled too (Isa.6).

Perhaps you are here today and have seen a glimpse of God's glory which causes you stress. You do not have your sins forgiven. You see the splendor and might of the Creator. You witness His character as being pure and perfect. You need full and forever forgiveness; for you know you have hidden sins. Do what David did. Recoil from your sin by calling out to the Lord for his declaration of innocence. This declaration is found only in Jesus. Turn to Jesus. Bank you hope on Him and his righteousness. Look to the cross. See your penalty for your sins paid in full on the cross. The cross is the only place in which you will here the declaration of forgiveness and acquittal.

Presumptuous sins

In v.13 we see another kind of sin. He calls it presumptuous sins. We find this category of sin in Num.15:30. Bold and bigheaded are ways these sins are carried out. The high hand of rebellion is what David is talking about in v.13. Notice how he responds to the glory revealed in this verse. "Let them not have dominion over me". He cries once more to the glorious God of the Scriptures for freedom. He knows of no other place to which he can flee for hope. Though God is in another class altogether; holy & majestic, David unraveled over his sin goes to the glorious God for mercy. And mercy he found (cf. Ps.51). He found not merely the pardon for sin. He found the power of grace necessary to live free from the power and control of sin. He found what he was looking for; reconciliation with the glorious God of the Universe!

Outcome

When he saw God's revealed glory both in the stars and in the Scripture, he needed mercy and grace. He prays. And he prays for two things; a declaration of innocence and a restraint from his known and powerful sins. He received both. Notice the outcome of this answered prayer.

When declared innocent from hidden sins and restrained from presumptuous sins David shall be blameless. He will not be guilty of the great transgression. And it is this outcome that brings the psalm to a close and to its main application. The great transgression to which he refers is idolatry; desiring something not for God's glory or in such a way that we lose our contentment in God (cf. Col.3:5). This Hebrew phrase "the great transgression" is found in other passages where idolatry is the topic. Paul picks up on this and writes his commentary of ps.19 in his letter to the Romans. He says that the great lie or transgression is to see the glory of God and then prefer the creation or the creatures.

What David is doing here is something all of us need to do. To behold the glory of God is to become like the glory of God. Beholding empowers repentance of this sort. It keeps us away from desiring something not for God 's glory.

David ends with a sweet prayer. He longs to be pleasing to the Lord from inside out.

All aim to please; some to please themselves and some to please others. But those whose hearts are gripped by His glory seek to please Him.

Conclusion

If we are ever to learn to sing of the glories of God it will be because we have learned of Him through His word and then learned how to delight in Him through all that He has made.

The battle over our affections comes down to two glories. Which one is winning over your soul? What ought you to do if you see your soul being charmed by something less than God. What must you do this hour if you have seen a measure of glory and find your heart losing contentment in His glory and hunting elsewhere for your satisfaction.

1. Check to see whether you are in the faith.
2. Identify your object of love.
3. Notice how you think about it.
4. Get help.
5. Find biblical repentance as your solution.
6. Set your sights on seeing and savoring the splendor of His glory.

