

# God's Revelation

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[0:00] Good morning. My name is Matthew Capone, and I'm the pastor here at Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church, and it's my joy to bring God's Word to you today.

If you are new or visiting with us, welcome. We're glad that you're here. And we're glad that you're here not because we are trying to fill seats, but because we are following after Jesus together as one community.

And as we follow after Jesus together, we become convinced that there's no one so good, that they don't need God's grace, God's forgiveness, and there's no one so bad that they can't have it.

And so for that reason, we come to God's Word, the Bible, over and over again week after week, because we know that God has something to say to everyone in His Word. And that's where we are right now.

We have been going through the book of Psalms, and as I've told you many times, the book of Psalms is the hymn book and the prayer book of God's people in the Old Testament. It was their guide for how to worship God and how to speak to God.

[1:01] And it also continues over into the people of the New Testament as well, the church. And so we as New Testament people, as Christians, as the church, we still continue to look to the Psalms as God's guide, His divinely inspired guide for how we talk to Him and think about Him and worship Him.

I've given you lots of different angles to look at the Psalms from, because it's hard to sum it up very quickly or shortly because it's such a complex book. It's like any hymn book or song book.

It's filled with all kinds of songs about all sorts of different things. And we've seen all sorts of different genres. We've seen Psalms of lament, Psalms that help us have hope in the midst of suffering and tragedy. We've seen a Psalm crying out for justice.

We've seen Psalms of praise. That was our Psalm last week. And this week we come to a Psalm that's a little different than those in the sense that it doesn't fit into any one genre perfectly or precisely.

There's some elements of praise here of God. There's also a prayer at the end, so it can teach us to pray like many of the Psalms do. Someone might call it a wisdom Psalm because it talks about how it is that we become wise.

[2:06] Instead of telling you all those things, I'll just give you a teaser. C.S. Lewis, a great theologian, wrote a book. And the whole book was about the Psalms. And he had this to say about Psalm 19.

He said, I take this to be the greatest poem in the Psalter and one of the greatest lyrics in the world. I take this to be the greatest poem in the Psalter.

I can't think of higher praise to give this Psalm than that. I'll also tell you this as another teaser. If you've listened to me preach before, you know that many times before we read the Scripture reading, I'll say this is God's Word and God tells us that His Word is more precious than gold, even the finest gold.

And it's sweeter than honey, even that honey that comes straight from the honeycomb. And you might be thinking, well, I know that honey comes straight from the honeycomb, but I don't know where that quote comes from. And it comes from this Psalm. It's from Psalm 19.

And so it's going to give us an outline here. And I typically don't do this, but because there's so much in this Psalm and it's so rich, every once in a while I'll give you a caveat. If we come to a tough topic or a long passage, I'll say, I'm not going to say everything, but I'm going to say something.

[ 3 : 10 ] I'm not going to say everything about Psalm 19, but I will say something. Okay? And I'm going to give you an outline, which I typically don't do. We're going to see three things in this Psalm. First, God's world. Then God's Word.

And finally, it's going to end with a prayer. God's world, God's Word, and a prayer. And with that, let's jump right into Psalm 19.

It's printed in the back of your worship guide. You'll also find it in your Bible or on your phone. And as we come to this, remember that this is God's Word. And God tells us that His Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path.

In other words, God has not left us to stumble alone in the dark, but instead He's given us His Word to show us the way to go. And so that's why we read now, starting in verse 1. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims His handiwork.

Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. Verse 3. Verse 7.

[ 4 : 35 ] Verse 10.

Verse 10. Verse 12.

Verse 12. I invite you to pray with me as we come to this portion of God's word.

Father in heaven, we thank you that your word is more precious than gold and sweeter than honey. We ask as we come to it now that you would show us its sweetness and its preciousness.

That you would help us to understand and see and delight in your word and your law. And more than that, that we would long for the goodness that you offer to us in it.

[ 6 : 16 ] And finally, we ask that we would be able to and want to pray with the psalmist. That the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts would be acceptable in your sight.

We ask these things in the name of your son. Amen. Amen. Amen. As you were reading along this psalm with me, as you were following along, you might be thinking back to last week's psalm.

And if you are a devil's advocate, you might have been wondering or thinking this sounds very similar to what we heard last week. And you might even be thinking of what I've told you about the psalms before.

That sometimes they function like Monet's paintings of watered lilies. That they're the same theme over and over, but with different colors and different variations. And if you're thinking that, in a sense, you would be correct. Last week when we looked at Psalm 8, we talked about the glory of God's creation.

I shared with you my experience of going to the Grand Canyon and how looking out, I realized that I was a very, very small person. And God and his creation were very, very great. And that was the emphasis of Psalm 8.

[ 7 : 20 ] Psalm 8 gave us a way to think about God's creation. One of the things that the psalms does very effectively is it gives us a way of looking and thinking about the world. It gives us all sorts of categories.

Not just that God saves us from our sins, but that he's also our king. He's also our creator. He's the one that gives us hope in the midst of trouble. He's the one we look forward to. He's the one who brings justice to the earth.

And the psalms also highlight everything that we can see and know about God in creation. And so, in a sense, there's something similar to Psalm 8 here. However, it is not just the same.

Just like the Monet water lily paintings, there are different colors and different shades here. So, Psalm 8 was extremely specific. Psalm 8 told us that God's creation helps us understand God's greatness and our smallness.

Highlighted something very specific about the creation that we learn from it. And it led us, very specifically, to praise. Praising God for his care and his concern for mankind. Remember, the psalmist said, What is man that you're mindful of him?

[ 8 : 22 ] And the son of man that you care for him. This week, it is not specific things that we learn from creation. It's general things. So, we learn, verse 2, knowledge. I'm going to suggest to you that knowledge is a very broad category.

And so, there's not one thing that I could tell you that we learn from God's creation that this psalm points us to. Instead, it points us to everything that we learn about God from his world. And it leads not to praise, like Psalm 8.

Instead, this one leads to self-reflection. It doesn't lead to praise of God. Instead, it leads to asking God for his mercy and his grace in the midst of our sin and imperfection.

And so, this is going to give us a different angle, a different way to think about how the creation, the world around us, everything that God has created, teaches us about God.

And in fact, that is the point at the beginning of this psalm. And so, that's why our first section here is God's world. Because it's God's world that tells us about God. Verse 1, Remember, we've talked about the fact that repetition in the Bible matters.

[ 9 : 40 ] And we see here this point being made over and over again is that God's creation, silently, without making a sound, says a lot of words about God. God's creation teaches us about God.

And so, we learn about God from looking at the world around us. That's the point of verses 1 and 4. And then in verses 5 and 6, we learn something in addition to that. Not only does God's word teach us about God, but we actually can't get away from it.

So, just like the sun comes from one end of the earth and goes to the other, and, at the end of verse 6, there's nothing hidden from its heat, in the same way, there's no place that we can go that we can get away from the fact that the earth tells us about God.

In other words, there is nothing and no one that can hide from the truth about God. God does not just reveal His greatness and our smallness in creation.

He reveals all of His glory in creation. He reveals not everything we need to know about Him. We're going to see that in a few minutes. He has to reveal those things to us specifically in His word, but He reveals many things, many dynamics and aspects and angles about Himself.

[ 10 : 54 ] Now, some of you think to yourselves, you know, I really find God in nature. That's where I really connect with God. And some of you think, you know, I'm really an outdoorsy person, or I'm really not an outdoorsy person.

I don't connect with nature as much. That's for very specific types of people. Those outdoorsy people who enjoy getting outside, I'm more of an inside person. So, this relates to me in some ways, but not as much as it relates to other people.

And I'm going to suggest this to you. I would be very surprised if any Israelite ever said to himself or herself, man, I really just, I experience and connect with God in nature more than anything else.

And I would be even more surprised if any ancient Israelite who is reading and singing this psalm said to themselves or said to another Israelite, you know, on their way to the temple, man, I just, I really consider myself to be a really outdoorsy person.

And I want you to think about it for a minute, what it was like to live, maybe in Jerusalem, maybe what it's like to live in the ancient Near East. You're outdoors. When would you be outdoors? You'd be outdoors seeing God's creation all the time.

[ 11 : 59 ] And that's not to say that you didn't have a place to live or a house to be in, but it is to say that we, more than maybe anyone else in the history of the world, are disconnected from the world around us. And for the psalmist, this would have been a natural way to learn about God and understand God and know about God.

Now, I pointed out earlier that this is, it's different from Psalm 8. We're not told explicitly everything that the creation teaches us.

We do know that it reveals knowledge. So I could spend the next several months going through this psalm and saying everything and telling you everything that we learn about God in creation. But as I warned you earlier, I'm not going to say everything.

I'm just going to say something. And so there's a few things that we can learn from God in creation that I am going to point out. And I'm going to point them out in light of both what we learn in the New Testament and also what we see in the psalm. So in the New Testament, if you're tracking with us in our New Testament reading, we read from Romans 1.

And Romans 1 makes the point that God's creation lets everyone know that God exists. One of the things that the creation tells us is that God is real and He exists.

[ 13 : 04 ] When we look at the world around us and we understand how intricate and sophisticated it is, when we see its glory, when we understand the ways in which we emotionally are moved by it, that is proof, that is one proof to us of God's existence in this world.

And so that's why we read earlier in Romans 1 that no one has an excuse to not have knowledge of God because, as we've seen in verses 1-4, all of creation is speaking silently all the time about God.

Another type of knowledge that we get, and I'm going to give us knowledge that's going to help us in verses 12-14, not just knowledge of the fact that God exists, but we also have tremendous

knowledge about God's love and His grace for us.

We saw some of this last week. I talked about the fact that in Matthew 5, Jesus tells us that the rain falls on the evil and the good, the just and the unjust. God provides food for everyone.

He provides the sun for everyone. He's set up the world in such a way that we could actually live rather than die. He's given us water, which is especially precious in Colorado.

[14:10] So creation, it shows us that God exists. It shows us His grace, His love for us, for the world. Creation also shows us God's judgment. So we can say that God sends His rain on the just and the unjust.

We could also say, God sends hail and it wrecks the cars of the just and the unjust, the good and the evil. And so as we live in this world and we look at the creation, on the one hand, we can't escape the knowledge of God, His existence and His goodness.

On the other hand, we can't escape the knowledge that this world is deeply flawed and broken and infected by sin. And so we see both glory and ruin in the creation.

And so God uses His creation for everyone and everything to reveal and teach. God is a master teacher. When we were going through the Gospel of Matthew, I pointed out that Jesus is a master teacher.

He goes from the unfamiliar to the familiar whenever He's talking about something with people. That's why He uses so many parables. God also has His own illustrations for us, His ways of teaching us.

[15:22] And His creation is one of His first and foremost ways of teaching us about Himself. And so when it declares the glory of God, the heavens and the sky proclaims His handiwork, we're seeing God's glory and His majesty and His greatness.

We see God's goodness. That this Creator is the one that we want to align with, the one that we want to be associated with. He's the source of the goodness that we long for. However, understanding God's goodness in general and His judgment in general are not enough.

And so the psalmist here transitions from God's world to God's Word. Now it may feel a little abrupt at this point. We're jumping from the sun very quickly to law.

My guess is that most of you, when you look at the sun, you don't immediately start thinking about laws. And you might be wondering, why in the world does the psalmist do that? I understand some people look at creation and they think of God.

Most people don't look at creation and think of laws. It's somewhat abrupt. Well, one explanation is this, and this is, I'm going to go back to C.S. Lewis. He offers this explanation.

[16:31] He says, In other words, Here we have all kinds of different words that have overlapping meanings.

And so this is a poem. There's a reason that C.S. Lewis said this is the greatest poem of all the psalms. And that's because we have this beautiful language using all kinds of different angles to talk about one thing. We see that the law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul.

Verse 7, In other words, God's Word, as we've talked about in Nehemiah, brings life. Takes things that are dead and brings them to life. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

In other words, we can trust what God has told us in His Word. He will take people who don't have skill in living and know how to walk in this world, and He will teach them how to do that through His Word. Verse 8, The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.

God brings joy to our lives. We talked about that in Nehemiah as well. We talked about that in Philippians. The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

[18:10] There's no evil in what God reveals to us. And He helps us to see and understand the things that are right. The rules of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. We can trust what God has told us.

In other words, verses 7 through 9, God has given us what we need to know to live life in this world. And not just to live life, but how to thrive and flourish.

The psalmist rejoices in verse 10 because he understands that just like the sun gives the world life and energy, God's law does the very same thing.

It gives people what they need to live, to have sanity rather than insanity. If you struggle to find God's law attractive and beautiful, one thing you can do is hold it up in contrast to everything else in the world.

C.S. Lewis also points out that Psalm 19 and many other psalms about God's law become more and more beautiful the crazier and crazier the world around us becomes. And so if you think that this world is becoming crazier and crazier, you should at the same time.

[ 19 : 28 ] I'm not suggesting, by the way, you should think that. I'm not saying I believe you should think that the world is becoming crazier. But if you do, God's word should be becoming more and more beautiful because it shines out in sharper and sharper contrast.

It is sanity rather than insanity. And so that's how we get to verses 10 and 11. The psalmist sees how life-giving God's word is, that it leads to love and flourishing and life and thriving.

And so in verse 10, more to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold, sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. In other words, the psalmist doesn't just obey God's law, he delights in God's law.

He delights in God's law and realizes that it is more valuable than anything else and that the most valuable things come from it. Now, if this sounds a little pie in the sky, that God's word gives us the most valuable things, I want you to think for a minute about what are the things that are most valuable.

And what are the things that we've seen in the psalms so far? One of the things that we've seen in the psalms over and over is hope. And I'm going to suggest that gold and honey cannot give you hope.

[ 20 : 46 ] And yet the psalms of lament that we've studied do. They show us how to have hope in the midst of suffering. What do we do when we long for justice? Our money cannot always buy us justice.

And no matter how much justice it might be able to buy us, it will never be justice that is full and final. God's word, however, gives us a promise of justice that's going to come.

And so that is more precious than gold and sweeter than honey. You can think also of our confession of faith this month. Instead of asking what are the benefits that flow from justification and adoption and sanctification, we could instead ask, we could ask the question, how is God's law more precious than gold and sweeter than honey?

And I could give you the same answer. It gives us peace with God. Joy in the Holy Spirit. Assurance of our salvation.

The psalmist sees God's word and he understands how precious and how valuable it is. And when he looks back at the creation, it confirms what God has taught in his word.

[ 22 : 04 ] And so God's word and God's world go together. Understanding the life that comes from God's word is part of how we begin to love it and long for it like the psalmist does.

We have to understand what... Today's C.S. Lewis Day. I'm just going to admit it. So in his book, *Till We Have Faces*, which is one of C.S. Lewis' stories, not his general writings, we meet several characters.

One of them is in Urwell. And Urwell tells her sister at one point, the protagonist of the story, she says, In other words, when the psalmist looks at God's creation and when he looks at God's word, he sees and knows where all the beauty came from.

He sees the beauty in creation and instead of worshipping that beauty, he sees what the beauty points to. It is the place that he longs for.

He longs for the place where all the beauty came from. When he looks at God's word, he knows that God's word is good and brings him life and flourishing because he knows it comes from the person where all the beauty comes from.

[ 23 : 35 ] And so his longing for that beauty cannot be separated from his longing for God's word. Because he understands God's word is not just something to be obeyed, it's something to be desired and wanted and searched for and sought after.

Because if God is the source, then it can only lead to more and more of this goodness. This here is not precise academic language, this is poetic imagery that we're given here.

There's a reason why Lewis calls it the greatest poem. That it speaks not just to our minds, but our hearts. This is a heart word, verse 10, to be desired than gold.

And so this psalm poses a question to us. Do we consider God's world and his word, and especially his word, to be more precious than gold and sweeter than honey? And if we don't, what do we do about it?

Because I would suggest that for many of us, if not most of us, we don't wake up every day thinking God's word is more precious than gold and sweeter than honey.

[ 24 : 56 ] Because we live in a world where we struggle to see and understand the beauty and to know and long for it in the way that the psalmist does here. And so if we don't delight yet, or if we don't delight as much as we want to, the psalmist gives us here part of what we do for it, that this is something that grows.

It's something that grows and can be cultivated, and that's what the psalmist does next. He understands the beauty of God's world and God's word, and he points out something else for us about God's word in verse 11.

God's word doesn't just point us to the beauty. Moreover, by them is your servant warned. In keeping them, there's great reward. Part of the reason we need more than God's world, the reason that we also need his word, is because if God's world reveals to us God's judgment and his grace, we have to understand how it is that we avoid that judgment and access that grace.

And that's what the psalmist prays for in verse 11. Or states, he doesn't pray until verse 12. He realizes that he needs God's word, God's specific revelation, to help him understand that God's judgment and wrath are falling on the world.

And so there's warning in God's word. Not only does it show us the way to the beauty, the place where all the beauty came from, but it also shows us that there's a different path away from the beauty and towards destruction. The psalmist sees that and knows that there are, as we saw in Psalm 1, only two ways to live.

[ 26 : 33 ] There's a way of warning and a way of reward. That's the way that's offered in the law of the Lord, verse 7. That's what the psalmist needs more than just the creation. He needs God in his word, in the scriptures, to reveal to us and show us what we see in Romans 1, that God on the one hand, and the rest of Romans for that matter, is pouring out his wrath on the earth, and on the other hand, has poured out his wrath on his Son for those who have trust and faith and hope in him.

And so the psalmist builds on everything we've seen in the psalms so far. He builds on what we saw in Psalms 1 and 2. And then finally he prays.

If this is the place where the beauty comes from, if he wants to avoid the warning, to avoid God's judgment and have the reward, then he asks God, essentially in verse 12, for his grace.

And so he moves from God's world to God's word, to finally to a prayer. He says in verse 12, who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from hidden faults.

In other words, the psalmist asks for God's forgiveness, that God would forgive him of his sins, even the ones that he's not aware of. And then he asks that God would keep him from sins that he is aware of.

[ 27 : 53 ] Verse 13, keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins. Let them not have dominion over me. Keep me from growing in sin. Keep me on the path that's talked about in Psalm 1.

Keep me away from sin, and then I shall be blameless and innocent of great transgression. The psalmist here is not saying that he's going to be morally blameless and perfect in the sense that he doesn't deserve God's judgment.

Instead, he's talking about the growth that happens in the Christian life, the sanctification that we talked about last month in our confession of faith, that he's going to grow. Now, the psalmist didn't necessarily know about Jesus, but we do.

But as we grow in God's law, we're growing more and more to become like Jesus. And so his prayer, after he's seen what God has revealed about himself, is that God would give him his grace. He'd give him his grace by declaring him innocent. In verse 12, he'd give him justification. He'd make it just as if he'd never sinned by declaring him innocent. And then, and the psalmist didn't know these words, but we do.

[ 28 : 57 ] Verse 13, he prays for sanctification, that God would grow him in his holiness. And then he asked for the continuation of that in verse 14, that the words of his mouth and the meditation of his heart would be acceptable in God's sight, because God is his rock and his redeemer.

Now, I left a little bit of a hanging question earlier. I asked, how do we grow to love God's word and his law if we don't already? And then I didn't answer that question for you. Instead, I jumped to the prayer. Part of it is understanding this great reward.

Verse 11, the psalmist understands the reward. The reward is multiple things. One, it's the fact that this is the source for all the beauty came from. And so as he obeys and understands and knows God's word more and more, he's going to grow in that reward.

In other words, holiness is its own reward. But secondly, this reward that the psalmist looks forward to is what we think about in Psalms 1 and 2, that there's going to be everlasting life.

And so the psalmist wants and longs for the life that God offers eternally, the forgiveness that happens when God declares us innocent from hidden faults.

[ 30 : 10 ] And so his understanding of his sin, his need for God's forgiveness, his need for God's grace, and his understanding that God offers that grace, understanding that that's the place of life, the place where all the beauty came from, that is what stirs up the psalmist to desire God's word more than gold and honey.

And it's a desire that grows more and more as he continues to follow after God, praying this prayer, longing for his forgiveness and his blessing. And so for those of us in the New Testament, as we look back to the witness of the Old Testament, the hope of the psalmist is our hope as well, and even more.

Because we know what the psalmist didn't know. As we think about God's word and his creation, we're told in John 1 and Hebrews chapter 1 that God created the world through his son, that Jesus was part of the creation of the world, and that Jesus is the one who holds the world together.

That's what Hebrews chapter 1 tells us. We also know in John chapter 1 that Jesus was the word. He was the ultimate and full and final revelation of what God had given to his people and his law. He was the final fulfillment of everything. And so we as Christians look in hope, knowing that the only way we can be declared innocent from hidden faults is through Jesus and his sacrifice.

[ 31 : 33 ] And the only way we can be kept from presumptuous sins is the work of God's grace in our lives, which is one of the things that Jesus has earned for us through and by his death.

And so it says we have faith in Jesus, faith that is stirred up by looking out at the world and into God's word. It says we have that faith knowing the truth, the facts about Jesus, that he came and he died for our sins, that he paid the penalty that we deserve.

As we believe it, that it's actually true, it's something that actually happened in real time and real space. And as we trust it, living our lives in light of it, we will grow more and more like the psalmist. Looking around to the creation and hearing what God is saying silently through it. Looking into God's word and seeing that it is the place where all the beauty comes from, the place that gives us life and longing for it more than for gold and honey.

And then praying to God, knowing that he's the one who hears us, who will declare us innocent if we confess our sins to him and grow us in his grace as we long and ask for him to continue to make us more and more like Jesus.

[ 32 : 50 ] And so it's with that, knowing and seeing and learning from God's world and his word, that we're able to pray the prayer of verse 14. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

And so I invite you to pray with me now. Dear Father in heaven, we thank you again that you do give us light and life, that you truly have not left us to wander alone in the dark, but you've taught us about yourself through your creation.

You've also taught us about yourself through your word. And most importantly, you show us that there is both a warning and a reward. We ask that we would heed the warning and we'd pursue the reward, that you would grow and stir up our hearts, that we would understand and long more and more, as the psalmist does, to see you as more precious than gold and sweeter than honey, and that it would lead to us to pray and have faith and trust in you, knowing that you do promise to forgive and declare us innocent from our hidden faults when we have faith and trust in you.

We ask all these things, not because we have earned them, but because Jesus has earned them for us, and so we ask them in his name. Amen.