

In the Skies and the Scriptures

Psalms Series

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Bible Text: Psalm 19

Preached on: Tuesday, May 26, 2015

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It might give you a sense of the abbreviating work that I've done for tonight's message if I remind you that I had preached on Psalm 19 at the beginning of our church and actually spent three messages going through Psalm 19. Tonight we're going to cover it in a single message and so there will be some abbreviation and if there are things that you want to explore more deeply, I'd encourage you to look for those messages back from the year 2012, about the end of February or early March, I believe, on our website.

But tonight we have a wonderful, wonderful Psalm. One of the most well-known Psalms, certainly, one of the most theologically critical Psalms in the entire Psalter, Psalm of David, Psalm 19, where he is meditating on the revelation of God and God has revealed himself in multiple places. We've seen that from our series where we studied, "Why do we believe in God?" God has revealed himself in several places that are unarguable, that are incontestable, that will provide grounds for judgment for those who reject him. But here in Psalm 19, David is focusing on two primary avenues of revelation. In the first six verses, he focuses on the way that God has revealed himself in nature and then in verses 7 through 11, he focuses on the way that God has revealed himself in his word, in the Holy Scriptures, and it comes to a climax in verse 12 through 14 where David applies this to his own soul personally. And just by way of a little bit of introduction and preparation for you, I think it's fair to say that most messages that you hear on Psalm 19 will focus on the authority of God's word and that's a good and important thing for them to do. Psalm 19 teaches clearly the inerrancy of the word of God but what I want you to see tonight and what I want to kind of focus your attention on and prepare you for is that David here in Psalm 19 is doing some very profound meditation. He is thinking very deeply about the revelation of God and he is not thinking about it in simply an abstract theological way. He comes to the end of this reflection on the revelation of God and it has a weighty effect upon his heart. David, at the end of his reflection, at the end of his meditation, responds to all of this revelation with a sense of profound, deep, humble reverence that causes him to forsake sin and to set his heart on the pursuit of righteousness.

When you take Psalm 19 in its totality as we're doing here tonight, that is what this whole Psalm is moving toward. It's moving toward a great climax of personal application and so for you and I here tonight, what I want to set before you is that that's what should be our anticipation as we listen to what God's word teaches us here this evening, that we would

receive its testimony about the way that God has spoken in the skies. We would receive the way that God has spoken in the Scriptures. But we wouldn't stop there like so many expositions of Psalm 19 tend to do, we would go through and we would follow David all the way to the end of where he goes and where David goes is to a place of personal application where this revelation has changed his life and that's what I want for us today, that we would appreciate the fullness of what he says about revelation but that we would equally desire and pursue and echo the response that David makes to it here in Psalm 19. So David here is reflecting deeply on God's self-disclosure and, beloved, here it is for you and me and those of us that struggle sometimes in our walk with God: David shows us how to respond. David not only teaches us about God, he teaches us how to respond to God and that's what I want you to see and to take away here tonight.

Well, let's take a look at this Psalm then. We're going to structure the message around three points. First of all, we're going to walk with David as he examines the skies. David examines the skies in the first six verses of Psalm 19. This is just a magnificent text of Scripture. Notice in verse 1 where he sets forth really the topic or the theme of Psalm 19 as he sets forth its emphasis on the glory of God. He says in verse 1,

1 The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.

In the original language, it reads in kind of an inverse order, "The heavens are telling of the glory of God and the work of his hands, the expanses declaring." And so at the middle there, is this emphasis on the glory of God on the work of God's hands. It's drawing your attention to what God has done and telling us that what we see in creation about us is pointing us to the glory of God and to the praise of his holy name. So David says, "The heavens are telling of the glory of God."

Question: how do we know that God is glorious? We can't see him. We can't touch him. We can't smell him, as it were. We can't hear him with an audible voice. We don't perceive him, as it were. We don't interact with him directly in that way. How do we know that God is glorious? Well, David tells us that God has testified to his own wisdom and power in nature that is around us and there are three aspects to this testimony that we see when we examine God's revelation in the skies so I'm going to give you three subpoints here as you're structuring your notes. David examines the skies and he comes away with three conclusions about what he sees when he looks up in the skies and, first of all, what does he see? He sees that the skies give an unbroken testimony. An unbroken testimony, by which we mean that the testimony of nature to the glory of God is continuous. It is ongoing. It never ceases and you can see that if you look at verse 2. I want you to look at your Scripture with me here tonight. Psalm 19:2 when he says,

2 Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge.

What are they revealing? What are they disclosing? Well, they're disclosing the glory of God. That's what he had just said in verse 1 and the sense of the time of this, day to day, night to night, as you look at this and consider it, it's like one day simply leads into

another. One night just gives over to another night. It never stops. Day 1 leads to day 2 leads to day 3 and each day in that pattern, each day is doing the same thing. It is declaring the glory of God by what is contained in the skies. One night yields to another in making this knowledge known. So it's an unbroken testimony that we see when David examines the skies.

What else can we say about it? It's not only an unbroken testimony, it is an unspoken testimony. Natural revelation is non-verbal in its character. Look at verse 3. David says,

3 There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard.

It's interesting, it's a kind of a play on words that he makes here when he says in verse 2, "Day to day pours forth speech," and then in verse 3 he says, "There is no words to be heard." There is no speech and it's almost like there's a poetic contradiction going on, not a genuine one. What he's saying is simply this: that the testimony is not expressed in human language. That what you see in the skies is testifying to you. It is speaking to you but it is speaking in a way that is different than the way you and I communicate with each other when we have a conversation with one another. There is no speech and what we're about to see here is quite significant in the argument that David is making. God is conveying this knowledge about himself in a non-verbal way. It is in a method that transcends human language and dialect and so God, as we look to the skies, as we see the order, we see the magnitude, we see the beauty, we see the variety that's in the skies, what David is saying is that all that we observe as we look up is driving us and is describing to us the Creator who put those in place and set them into motion.

So Scripture tells us that there is this unbroken, unspoken testimony that is going on and it leads to a question that is often asked. People will often trouble themselves and cogitate over the question about people who have never heard the Gospel. What about those that have never heard? What do we say about them and their eternal fate? As if they had never received any testimony about the nature and existence of God because they dwell in a place where the Gospel hasn't reached. The more we go into the age of the internet and social media and all of that, that number is shrinking rapidly, isn't it? But what I want you to see here in what we see in Psalm 19 is that whatever you say about the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to people like that, everyone everywhere receives this non-verbal testimony about the existence of God.

That's what David goes on to say in verse 4, that it's not only an unbroken and an unspoken testimony, it is a universal testimony. This display of the knowledge of God goes to all men equally everywhere and God has left no man at any point in the course of human history, there has been not a single individual who has not in some manner received this testimony from the living God. Look at verses 4 and those that follow where David says,

4 Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their utterances to the end of the world.

David says, "This testimony of which I speak is available to everyone, that all men throughout the earth have seen this testimony of which I speak." Here's where you see something of the genius, the unspeakable genius of God, the profound wisdom of God to imprint his testimony to himself, his disclosure of his being into the very fabric of nature. God has done it in a way that requires no human language to be understood. The tribal kinsman in Africa has the same testimony despite whatever human language he speaks that you and I have here in the middle of America and it all says the same thing: there is a Creator. He is powerful. He is wise. He is strong. He has established order.

So this testimony of which David is marveling at, this testimony that he is meditating upon, he is saying, "This is the same everywhere. It transcends culture. It transcends human language. Even human speech doesn't put a limit on where this testimony of God goes." So as he's meditating here, one of the ways that this is impressing itself on his heart and should be impressing itself on your heart as well is to realize that the power of this testimony, the wisdom, the magnitude of what we're speaking, that this Creator God has made himself known in a way that no one can miss. That's the universal aspect of the testimony to God that David sees when he examines the skies. It goes in like manner to all men everywhere.

If you were here when we examined the names of God back about four weeks or so ago, you can see in verse 1, I want you to see this because the contrast will be important later on, is that in this section where he's talking about God's testimony to himself in nature, David uses the name El for God, the Hebrew name, El, the general name of God that expresses his power. We studied this last time and you see how fitting it is that David would use that name of God to testify to the way that God has imprinted his powerful nature in the creation around us in a way that nobody can miss.

As David goes on, he focuses on the sun as the preeminent display of that glory. Look at the end of verse 4 with me. He says,

4 In them [that is, in the skies, in the heavens] God has placed a tent for the sun. 5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber; It rejoices as a strong man to run his course. 6 Its rising is from one end of the heavens, And its circuit to the other end of them; And there is nothing hidden from its heat.

So universal is the testimony that nothing is hidden from the heat and the light of the sun. So he says the sun is like a young man in the vigor of his manhood. He's coming out for his wedding. It's the most glorious day of his life and he steps out of his chamber to go to the wedding place where he will receive his bride and the capstone of his youth will be put into place. And the bridegroom is pictured as strong and energetic and vigorous. David says, "That's what the sun is like every single day. When it rises, it comes forth with power, with glory. It follows its circuit throughout the day and throughout that day in an unbroken way, gives testimony to the existence of the glory of God." Scripture says that that revelation of God is so clear and so definitive that people who reject him are culpable for their unbelief.

Look over at Romans 1, if you will. This is expanding beyond Psalm 19 just briefly. Romans 1. We've look at this recently so I won't dwell on it here but just to remind you how Scripture interprets Scripture and places accountability upon every man who has ever walked the face of the earth to respond to this testimony. The Apostle Paul says in Romans 1:20, "Since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse." Without excuse for what? Verse 18, the fact that they "suppress that truth in unrighteousness." They kick against the goads of this God who has made himself known. They turn to their false gods. They turn to their false religions and they won't respond to the thing that is in front of their face every single day. Scripture says that is true of every man who has ever walked on the face of the earth so that they are without excuse. They are culpable for not bowing down and honoring this God who has expressed himself in creation. Look at verse 21, he says, "Even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened."

So David has spoken about what theologians call general revelation, that nature reflects the greater glory of the one who made it. General revelation means that God continually makes his presence and power known in nature. We see it just by looking up at the sky and he testifies in a way that all men can understand. They don't need to know English. They don't need to know Hebrew. They don't need to know Greek. They don't need to know French or German or any other earthly language to be able to understand this. In the most remote, isolated language, this testimony comes in a way that all men can understand and so David examines the skies and says that God has given a clear unmistakable testimony to his glory there and so he is reflecting on the revelation of God.

Now, he doesn't stop there. He goes on and sees that God has made himself known in another place as well and this brings us to our second point here this evening when David examines the Scriptures. David examines the Scriptures in verses 7 through 9 and the transition here seems very abrupt as you read verses 7 through 9. Let me just read them here now. Having said there is nothing hidden from its heat, he immediately changes the subject without any indication or warning that he's going to do so. He says,

7 The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. 8 The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether.

We'll spend a little time here, maybe a little more time here. The first thing that I would want you to notice as you're looking at your text here is to see that the name of God that he uses in this section has changed. He's using that word that in your English text should appear in all caps, LORD, all capital letters, indicating that he's now using the Hebrew name Yahweh to refer to God. The name that is God's personal name that identifies him as a covenant keeping God who has made himself known. So by changing not only the

subject matter but the name of God to which he refers, he's showing that he's addressing a different aspect of the way that God has disclosed himself to men.

So this switch from the general name to the specific name, from the skies to the Scripture, David is stressing that he is abruptly switching to an even more important, I should say, an even more important way that God has disclosed himself and made himself known. The transition is deliberately abrupt. It's like someone comes and just kind of taps you in the face to get your attention. Rather than a smooth transition, it's abrupt and it calls you to attention. It says, "This is a real change from what I was just seeing." Well, that's the effect that it's supposed to have upon you, that it grabs your attention in that way. And here in these three verses, David uses six different words to describe God's written revelation. Look at them with me, verse 7: he refers to the law of the LORD; the testimony of the LORD. Verse 8: the precepts of the LORD; the commandment of the LORD. Verse 9: the fear of the LORD identifying it by the effect that it produces in those who read; the judgments of the LORD. He's piling up related words and synonyms to magnify the effect and to give a sense of the fullness and the completeness of the revelation of God. One writer says this, the commentator Derrick Kidner in his little two-volume Tyndale set of the Psalms, very useful for study. He says and I quote, "Together these terms show the practical purpose of revelation, to bring God's will to bear on the hearer and evoke intelligent reverence, well founded trust and detailed obedience."

Look at these words with me and think about what they say about the authority of God and the way that that requires us to respond in kind, that it calls upon a response of those who hear. The law of the LORD, the law expressing the authority of God and therefore that men are under that authority. The testimony of the LORD, that Yahweh has made himself known in the Scriptures. He has declared who he is and what he requires. The precepts of the LORD, indicating the standards that he would have us to live by. The commandment of the LORD, again, expressing authority and a call to obedience. The fear of the LORD, indicating that sense of holy reverence, that loving obedience that his word should evoke in our hearts. The judgments of the LORD, reminding us that there will be an ultimate day of accountability for us as well. In all of these things, God has spoken in the Scriptures and whereas in the first six verses we saw the idea of natural revelation, what we see here is the idea of special revelation by which we mean the knowledge of God that is testified to in his word. God has in a specific way in the vehicle of human language declared all manner of things about his nature and his attributes and spiritual truth. As you carry it throughout the New Testament, you see that only in Scripture you find that the true nature of sin is revealed. That the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ is revealed. The work of his redemption on the cross is made known. That the call to repentance and faith is made known. Salvation and judgment. The return of Christ and much more.

Here, beloved, I want you to see as we think through and kind of follow what David is thinking about here, you realize the superiority of special revelation. The superiority of Scripture over the way that God has spoken in nature because nature is limited in its function. Nature cannot reveal to you how to be saved. It simply puts you on notice that there is a great and glorious God of power whom you should seek but it can't tell you

how to find your way to him. Nature can convict you but it is not sufficient to convert you and so as we think about this and we see the special way in which there is much more to say about it that David has spoken about it but, beloved, you just take a Bible and lay it out on the table in front of you and you realize what it contains, this law, this testimony, these precepts, the commandment, the fear, the judgments of God and all of a sudden as we're following David's thought, you realize that there is this response of reverence that it calls for. That special revelation is really special. That it calls forth the affection of your heart, the reverence of your mind, the obedience of your volition. This word is special. This word is great. This word is where the one true God in one place has made himself known and that is what David is meditating on. "I see this glory of God expressed in everything about me and yet when I come to his word, I see something even more precious, specific, detailed, that makes this God known to me in a personal way."

As you continue in verses 7 through 11 in parallel statements, David describes the wonder of this book in greater detail. I'm going to give you three subpoints here as well, just like we did on nature, that God's testimony in nature was unbroken, unspoken and universal. Well, here, we want to consider three aspects of Scripture that David lays forth for us in this passage. In verse 7 we see and the first subpoint that we would make here this evening is that Scripture is perfect. Scripture is perfect. It is flawless. It is absolute. It is complete. It is without error. David uses many adjectives here in these three verses to describe God's word. Let's look at them together. Just as he used six nouns to identify God's word, he uses six adjectives to describe it. Look at them with me in verse 7 where he says, "the law of the LORD is perfect. It restores the soul. The testimony of the LORD is sure. The precepts of the LORD are right. The commandment of the LORD is pure. The fear of the LORD is clean. The judgments of the LORD are true." Look at them again without intervening descriptive words. What does he say about Scripture? It's perfect. It's sure. It is right. It is pure. It is clean. It is true.

Friend, the Scripture is everything that you and I are not. We are imperfect. We vacillate. We're wrong in our hearts. We are impure. Scripture says that we are unclean like a filthy rag. Verse 9, the judgments of the LORD are true but our hearts speak lies and your mouth has spoken lies. If not today, somewhere in the course of your life, you speak that which is not true. The very nature of Scripture convicts you of sin at multiple points up and down the line and we're going to see David responding to that in the last three verses but, beloved, what I want you to see is that Scripture is everything that you and I are not by the nature that we received at birth. What these adjectives tell us is they express the flawless and inerrant nature of the Bible. It is without error in everything that it affirms. Everything that the Bible teaches is true and trustworthy and without error and it is complete in its revelation of God.

Now, let's say something important here. I want to say a word to clarify the confusion that comes up with the way that some teachers try to mingle natural and special revelation together. Stay with me. This is really important. There are many in the church, not our church but in the church broadly speaking, many in the church, I'm sure you've heard this phrase, they love to say that all truth is God's truth and that sounds, I mean, at one level, that's true. It's a truism. God is the Creator of all things. He is the God of truth

and so that anything that is true comes from God. But what they're saying there is not what we mean when we talk about the truth of God. That is a wedge. That is a Trojan horse that they use when they have an ideological and philosophical agenda to undermine the authority of Scripture. Every single time. Don't miss this, this is really, really crucial: they use that general statement that is just a truism that all truth is God's truth, they use it as a weapon to silence dissent against specific ideas that cannot be shown from Scripture. So they will claim truth, the so-called truth of evolution, of an old earth. The truth of the natural state of homosexuality and any other number of things the Scripture speaks against. They will use the current status of academic opinion and the opinions of men and liberal teachers who don't know the Scriptures. They will take that and apply the adjective "true," the noun "truth," to whatever is currently politically correct and say, "This is true which we know from nature," and therefore that becomes that which interprets Scripture and is used to blunt and silence the convicting power and convicting truth of God, to silence it on that which is not popular to the unregenerate mind. In theological terms, beloved, what they are doing is they are using natural revelation to contradict or to interpret special revelation. Whenever you're brought into that realm of thought, you come back to Psalm 19 and you think seriously about what we're discussing here tonight, what God's word is show us from here tonight, because God's word answers this. Answers that sinful philosophy that wicked rebellion against God's word is answered right here in the text that we're looking at. Absolutely answered.

Notice what it says as you look at the first six verses just to compare the two. David speaks well of the way God has made himself known in nature but he uses the most general name of God to describe it and he describes it in descriptive terms and it discloses power but where, listen to me. Oh, this is so important and I'm so glad you're here tonight to hear it. Where does David use the adjectives to describe perfect and true and clean and sure and right? He doesn't apply those adjectives to the realm of natural revelation as if natural revelation was on an equal plane of authority with Scripture. No, he takes those adjectives and he applies them exclusively to the word of God. You can tell by the very way that he structures his argument and his logic that David is showing forth the superiority of Scripture and the proper way for us to think about these whole issue is that Scripture has the authority to interpret nature. Scripture has the authority to interpret prevailing cultural and political opinion, not vice versa. David makes that absolutely clear. There is no contesting this.

While some, perhaps some of you have used that phrase not realizing the significance of what's being done, that's why we need to be taught from God's word is so that we can correct our thinking in these ways. Some people, no doubt, use this ignorantly and because it sounds true but don't realize the really big hook that is in the bait that that statement covers. Believe me and as we've seen from Scripture, that phrase "all truth is God's truth" is bait on a hook that is designed to jerk you away from the truth of God's word. Don't let that happen. Understand that the superiority of Scripture is what David teaches here and that Scripture is our final standard of truth, not whatever the current prevailing nature of what men say is.

If you think about it and there are groups that are horrific about this and just have their agenda to undermine the truth of God's word, if evolution were true and that's the way that we're supposed to understand the whole disclosure of God in Scripture, it means that no one understood Scripture properly before the days of Darwin. That's not true. That's manifestly false because the Scriptures are clear, the Scriptures are true. Look at verse 7 with me, "The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple." It doesn't require this sophisticated reinterpretation of the opening chapter of Genesis. You can just read it at face value and say, "This is what God says and this is what's true." But they realize that if they're going to advance their agenda, they have to make it sound like they are consistent with Scripture. That's the only way they can draw you in. If they said, "I disbelieve Scripture and I'm going to oppose it and contradict it with what I'm about to say," people in the church would, most of them would get up and walk out. No. So Satan must come as an angel of light. The wolf must come in sheep's clothing, wrapping itself up, the wolf wrapping himself up with the statement and putting on the cloak of "all truth is God's truth," and then unveiling his agenda to undermine the very truth of Scripture that we hold dear here at Truth Community Church.

Beloved, I don't want you to be deceived and pulled into that. Scripture interprets nature, not vice versa. We determine truth by comparing an idea with Scripture, we don't go along with the prevailing views of science or culture just for the sake of agreeing with the world around us. The world is passing away and the lusts thereof. James said that whoever wants to be a friend with the world makes himself an enemy of God. Well, one of the ways that we ensure our friendship with God is genuine is by an intellectual, emotional, volitional commitment to this inerrant word and that's what David is doing. That's where his commitments lie and it's where the commitment of the greater David who came a thousand years later were found as well. Scripture is perfect, not to be reinterpreted by human ideas.

Secondly, not only is Scripture perfect, why else would you love God's word? Why do we love God's word here at Truth Community? Because Scripture is powerful. Scripture is powerful and those of you that find yourself in the dark chains of sin in your life need to especially listen up here because God's word is offering you the lifeline. God's word is offering you the light that you should pursue to find your way out of the darkness that you're in right now. Scripture is powerful. You see, what David says here in Psalm 19, he's showing that the flawless nature of God's word was not an abstraction to him. This was not a cute theological idea that he would set aside later when he wanted to move on to something else. No, this was the defining passion, the defining affection of his heart that determined everything else. The perfection of Scripture meant that it has power in human lives. If Scripture was inept, if Scripture was impotent to address the sin and the wickedness in your soul, then it wouldn't be perfect. It wouldn't be complete. It wouldn't be blameless. But Scripture is perfect. It is blameless. It is powerful. And that means that in Scripture we find spiritual power to either find our way to Christ as the Spirit of God works through the word to open our hearts to truth or for Christians to find its sanctifying influence coming to bear upon our lives and shaping us more and more into the image of Christ. God's word has that much power to change your life.

That's one reason why I love to preach God's word. I don't understand how the process works. I don't know how the Spirit takes the preached word and uses it in the lives of those who hear. I just know that he does and I know that those of you that come week after week and place yourself under the teaching of God's word, I know that God's word is having a transforming impact on your life. It has nothing to do with the speaker and everything to do about the powerful nature of this word. And so to be able to just be that which gives voice to it is wonderful.

Scripture is powerful. Look at what David says about it and go back to verses 7, 8 and 9 here when he talks about the powerful way that it impacts the one who reads and heeds it. Verse 7, "This law is perfect, restoring the soul. It is sure, making wise the simple. It's right, rejoicing the heart. It's pure, enlightening the eyes. It's clean, it endures forever. It's true, they are righteous altogether." What does Scripture do? What is it powerful to do? It is powerful to convert your soul. It is powerful to restore you from a position of sinful weakness to a place of spiritual strength. It is powerful to take the one grieving over loss in his life and restore their heart to a place of completion and joy and rest and peace. Anyone in here needing that tonight? Am I describing a need that you have? Scripture is powerful to meet the need of your heart here tonight.

Scripture brings joy. It brings wisdom. It brings eternal perspective. I won't ask for a show of hands but how many of you could testify to specific times in your life where you sat down and you read the word of God, you were under a message of a preached word, and the influence of truth changed your perspective from one of discouragement to one of hope? That under the influence of God's word, you went from a rebellious sinner to one who had repented and put his faith in Christ? A discouraged Mom who came under the word of God who had time with the word of God and suddenly had a refreshed perspective? Why does that happen? It's because God's word is powerful to change the human heart. It helps Christians overcome sin and discouragement.

Look over at 2 Timothy 3:15. You won't believe how many tangents I'm avoiding as I go through this here tonight. 2 Timothy 3:15. What else is Scripture able to do? What does Scripture have the ability, the capacity, the power, the strength, the might to do? 2 Timothy 3:15, "that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." We don't need a bunch of silly gimmicks. We don't need like the church up the road did. Someone sent me a link today. They set up a stinking rodeo in their worship center to try to attract people to Christ. We utterly reject that kind of foolishness. We condemn it even if it draws crowds because it obscures and it hides the convicting and converting power of Scripture. We don't want to do anything that would distract attention from this book because this book has power.

David kinds of sums it all up in verses 10 and 11. Not only is Scripture perfect. Not only is it powerful. He says that Scripture is precious. It is precious. Look at verses 10 and 11 where David kind of sums up and kind of warps it up and puts a bow on it in his discussion of the way that God has made himself known in the Scriptures. Verses 10 and 11, speaking of God's word, he says,

10 They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. 11 Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward.

Gold in the ancient Near East was the most valuable commodity that they knew. Honey was the sweetest taste of food that they had to put to their lips. David takes that which was the most valuable thing in the context in which he wrote and says, "Think about the most valuable thing that we have and Scripture is over it. It is more valuable. It is sweeter. It is more precious than the sweetest things that you could aspire after. Scripture is better than both. It's precious." And David says and in a way that encourages me about the future of our church and about your individual lives, David says that the one who devotes himself to God's word, to study it, to practice it, to teach it, that in keeping the word of God like that, treasuring it within your heart, therein is great reward. That God honors the one who honors his word. God blesses the one who submits his mind and heart and conduct to the authority of Scripture. The one who defends Scripture. The one who loves it. Who passes it along in the private moments with his or her children and family. He says there is great reward for that.

So it's evident that even as David is exalting the perfections of God's word, that you can't help but see the affections of his heart bleeding through what he's saying. He is talking about something that he himself loves. He knows this by direct personal experience. This isn't out there for him, he's speaking of that which has captivated his own heart. You young people, does that express your attitude toward God's word? Is your heart captivated by it? Do you just come under a sense of affection and love for the word of God? That's the mark of a true believer. Scripture knows nothing of a man who is truly saved who doesn't truly love God's word because we implicitly understand and as we study, we come to explicitly understand that this word is that which brought truth and salvation to us which liberated our hearts from sin, which testifies and assures our future hope, which explains and makes known to us our great Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ.

How could you have anything other than a sense that this word is precious? That this word receives affectionate submission with the totality of your life? That's what David leads us to and teaches us but he doesn't leave it there, as we said at the start. David has examined the skies and he's examined the Scriptures. What we see in the last three verses is this: David in response to all of that revelation, David now examines his soul. David examines the skies, he examines the Scriptures and then he turns and makes it personal and he examines his own soul. The greatness of revelation moves David's heart to respond. He's not indifferent to what he has just said. He is moved within his heart to respond.

What does he do? Well, there's another three subpoints that we'll make here real quickly. First of all, those of you that are in sin here tonight, here's an avenue of hope. Here's where your next step lies. First of all, he seeks pardon. He seeks pardon. He asks for forgiveness. Verse 12, look at it there with me, he says,

12 Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults.

He says having reflected on the great power of God revealed in nature and the searching perfection of his word, David realizes and feels in a welcome way, he feels the weight of all of this revelation, that this God is great who made himself known in the skies. This God is great who produced such a perfect book. And so David realizes that he's under the searching eye of powerful omniscience as he lives his life and he feels the sense of accountability that comes before being in the presence of a God like that and he feels the weight of his limitations, his own prejudices and his own favor, his own lack of spiritual maturity and discernment. There is a sense in which in a sanctified way he throws up his hands and says, "Who can discern his errors?" Elsewhere in the Psalms he says, "My sins are more than the hairs on my head." So he simply prays, "Lord, acquit me of hidden faults. Lord, I don't see my sin like you do. I know that there are things in my life that are sinful and that are wrong, that are outside of your moral will and I don't even recognize it. I don't even see it. So Lord, in light of your great revelation, I simply ask you by grace to acquit me and forgive me of that which you see but I don't even understand about myself." He's asking for free forgiveness to remove any barrier to fellowship with God.

Beloved, he's responding to God's revelation here and he gives this to instruct us in the way that we should respond as well. Every one of you here tonight should have a fresh sense of desire for the pardon of God and to know that all of your sins are cleansed and to go before him with a humble sense of confession that says, "Yes Lord, I'm not all that I should be. Yes Lord, I don't even realize where I fall short. So forgive me of all of that which you see but I don't." It's an emptying of pride that claims no self-righteousness for itself, not even the sense that I can even accurately judge my own heart. He just commits himself fully to the grace of God that way and asks for pardon.

Secondly, he seeks protection. David's desire for holiness leads him to ask God for protection but it's not the kind of protection that you and I normally think about. He's not asking for physical protection as he drives his camel down the freeway or whatever they did back then. No, he's asking for spiritual protection. He's asking God to keep him from sin. Look at verse 13. He says,

13 Also keep back Your servant from presumptuous sins; Let them not rule over me; Then I will be blameless, And I shall be acquitted of great transgression.

The word "presumptuous" there describes that which is willful or arrogant. It's high-handed rebellion against God. And he's asking God, watch this, those of you and I know that I'm describing the majority of you in this room that have sincere affections for God, that the Lord Jesus Christ truly is the high affection of your heart and you love Christ and you love his word. Well, let me show you from this verse where you go with that and what your next step is as you're in that sanctified place seeking to grow still more. David here understood that the sin that still dwell within him could motivate him to sin in the future even though right now he is presently submissive to the will of God. He's conscious of being rightly oriented toward God in this moment of his reflection and

meditation. "God, forgive me of all my hidden faults," and now he looks to the future and he doesn't trust himself. He doesn't trust his power of commitment or his power of self-effort. He realizes that he is still spiritually vulnerable and that's true of you and me tonight as well. He's vulnerable and so while his mind is conditioned toward submission to God, he prays proactively and says, "God, keep me back. I ask that you would work in my life in the future in such a way that you would keep me away from that which would be defiant against you. Don't let me drift into sin that would harden my heart and make me rebellious against you. I'm not like that now, Lord, but I just pray that you would never let that happen."

This is an important part of godly praying. Look over at Matthew 6. You need to see the parallel passage here. Matthew 6. Jesus taught us to pray this way as his disciples as well. Matthew 6:13, Jesus taught us to pray. He commanded us to pray in this way, "Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil." "Lord, as I'm praying here in my sense of communion with you, I ask you that you would keep me right here and keep me from that which would tempt me away from obedience to you." He's seeking protection of a spiritual nature. Charles Spurgeon said this. He said, "Saints may fall into the worst of sins unless restrained by grace and therefore they must watch and pray lest they enter into temptation." That's what David is doing here. He's saying, "Lord, keep me from temptation. Don't let me become a rebellious man from this position of blessing that I sense."

So he seeks pardon for sins that he doesn't recognize. He seeks protection from sins that are still future to him. Finally, he seeks purity. He seeks purity. David here in verse 14 comes to a climax of his response to God's revelation. Look at verse 14 with me. This is so simple and so pure. Writing under the inspiration of God, this is what the Holy Spirit would have us take away tonight and shape the attitude of our heart in response to what we've heard. This is what should be in your heart. This should be your prayer repeated and echoed in response to God's word. David says,

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.

Notice this in a general way about verses 12 to 14: suddenly David has started using the first person singular pronoun a lot, I, my, me. His whole inner man is engaged in what he's saying here. This is the way that we are to respond to God's revelation, that it's not something that makes us angry politicians or angry cultural warriors, it comes and it works its way into our heart that brings us into a state of contented submission to this God who has made himself known. He addresses God as "my rock, my Redeemer." This is personal to him. If it were true of no one else, it would still be true of David. Tonight it can be your sense that, "God, whatever anybody else does, you are my rock. You are my Redeemer. I trust in you to be my protector. I trust in you to be the one who delivers me from sin." David is praying in this spiritual sense, watch this, this is so cool: David's prayer is this, "God, what would most please me is if you would work in my life so that what comes out of me would most please you. Make what I think and what I say pleasing in your sight." That's how precious this God who has made himself known is to him.

There is a complete sense of self-abandonment that just says, "I belong to you and I want you to make me what you would have me to be."

Brothers, sisters, friends who don't know Christ, is that where your heart is at with the Lord tonight? Are you so submitted to him that whatever your personal circumstances may be that you say, "God, I just want to be found pleasing in your sight. I want to be free from sin, not because sin has bad consequences for me. I want to be free from sin because it displeases you. Because it's rebellion against my Maker, about this God who has made himself known." Have you learned to hate sin for the sake that it is sin? That it is rebellion? Do you hate sin as sin rather than what it's done to your life? Have you entrusted yourself to this Redeemer who forgives sin, iniquity and transgression?

You know, as you continue reading in your Bible, we could stop here and David had to stop here. We could stop here and just revel in the wonder of what God has done: the skies and the Scripture. Then we realize as we read on in our Bibles and we come to the New Testament, we realize that God has revealed himself in an even greater way. Maybe we should say he perfected, he culminated his revelation in what? In his Son. He revealed himself in the skies. He has revealed himself in Scripture. And now on this side of the cross, on this side of the New Testament that we enjoy, we look at the Lord Jesus Christ and we see that God has revealed himself there. Not just in a book. Not just in a written word but in an Incarnate Word. And we are overwhelmed all over again. Another wave of awe and wonder splashes across our soul. How great, how majestic, how wonderful is this God to make himself known like this? In such an incontestable way? How great? How marvelous? How wonderful that he made himself known in the Lord Jesus Christ, not simply to display himself but to offer himself as a sin sacrifice for you and me and everyone who would believe in him. It's humbling, isn't it? It takes your breath away to realize the majestic and the grace of God so greatly displayed in so many places, even to the point Christ leaving heaven to come and make this God known to us, to take on flesh, to serve you on the cross. What can we say in response to that except, "Lord, let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in your sight."

Let's bow together in prayer.

Father, we thank you for making yourself known. We acknowledge the wonder and the sufficiency of your revelation. We make ourselves accountable to you in response. Father, there is nothing lacking on your end. The sin and the shortcomings and the failures are all on our ends. So with David, we rejoice in the greatness of your revelation. With David, we submit ourselves to it. With the whole testimony of the counsel of God, Father, tonight we would offer and present Christ to those sinners who do not know him. Father, may the reality of your revelation strike them. Smite their hearts that they might humbly respond. By the power of your Holy Spirit at work through the testimony of your word bringing them to a true and deep repentance, a true and deep faith in turning to the Lord Jesus Christ. Father, we love you because you're a God who will forgive all of our sins if we simply turn to Christ like that, that we could be declared righteous in your sight, that our sins would be as white as snow, taken as far as the east is from the west from us, buried in the depths of the sea. That is the salvation, O God,

that you offer to sinners tonight. Let them come to Christ. Let them flee to Christ. Let them hurry to Christ tonight for this salvation that would produce in them the same spiritual attitudes that we've seen tonight from Psalm 19. We pray these things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.