

Psalms Playlist

Week 2 | Psalm 19

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I may have audibly gasped before saying, “I’ve never seen so many stars!”

When my husband and I were dating, he took me to his grandparents’ farm to celebrate Thanksgiving with his family. One night, we sat on a blanket in their yard and stared up at the night sky. Far away from the city lights, the wide open spaces of central Texas made the breathtaking view possible. A band of almost cloud-like haze made up of millions of stars stretched across the dark sky. I’d seen the milky way in pictures, but never in person. The first verse of Psalm 19 sprang to mind, “The heavens declare the glory of God.”

Psalm 1, the first track in our Psalms playlist taught us that a wise person lives by meditating on and following God’s Word. Track 2 has a similar theme, but with wonderful variation. Psalm 19 takes us on a fieldtrip out into creation to marvel at the wonders of God’s hand.

Day 1

Read

Psalm 19 (NIV)

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

*¹ The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.*

*² Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they reveal knowledge.*

*³ They have no speech, they use no words;
no sound is heard from them.*

*⁴ Yet their voice goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.*

In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun.

*⁵ It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,
like a champion rejoicing to run his course.*

*⁶ It rises at one end of the heavens
and makes its circuit to the other;
nothing is deprived of its warmth.*

⁷ *The law of the Lord is perfect,
refreshing the soul.
The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy,
making wise the simple.*

⁸ *The precepts of the Lord are right,
giving joy to the heart.
The commands of the Lord are radiant,
giving light to the eyes.*

⁹ *The fear of the Lord is pure,
enduring forever.
The decrees of the Lord are firm,
and all of them are righteous.*

¹⁰ *They are more precious than gold,
than much pure gold;
They are sweeter than honey,
than honey from the honeycomb.*

¹¹ *By them your servant is warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.*

¹² *But who can discern their own errors?
Forgive my hidden faults.*

¹³ *Keep your servant also from willful sins;
may they not rule over me.
Then I will be blameless,
innocent of great transgression.*

¹⁴ *May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart
be pleasing in your sight,
Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.*

- What images does this Psalm bring to mind? What does it make you feel?
- What similarities do you see between this Psalm and Psalm 1?

Reflect

The book of Acts tells a fascinating story about an encounter the apostle Paul had with some Greek philosophers in Athens. Paul remarked on an altar he'd seen while walking around the city. On it was the inscription, "To an Unknown God." The ancient Greeks had a whole pantheon of gods, but just in case there were some unknown gods that might be offended by their lack of worship, they wanted to cover their bases. Paul assures them that he knows this God, who is the one true god. "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else" (Acts 17:24-15).

Paul can speak confidently about God because God has revealed himself to humanity. We aren't left guessing about the One who created us. He has communicated with us through his creation. He has also communicated to us directly through his Word so that we can know his design for our lives. Psalm 19 rejoices in this revelation and shows us how we should respond.

- Look back over Psalm 19. How has God revealed himself? What does this revelation tell us about our Creator?

Respond

As you sit before the Lord, praise him for revealing himself to you through creation, prayer and his Word. You are not left to wonder about some unknown god. You have a loving relationship with the Creator of the universe! Rejoice in that privilege today.

Day 2

Read

Psalm 19:1–6 (NIV)

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

*¹ The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.*

*² Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they reveal knowledge.*

*³ They have no speech, they use no words;
no sound is heard from them.*

*⁴ Yet their voice goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.*

In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun.

*⁵ It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,
like a champion rejoicing to run his course.*

*⁶ It rises at one end of the heavens
and makes its circuit to the other;
nothing is deprived of its warmth.*

- Who “speaks” in this section of the Psalm? What does the voice “say”?
- What does this section reveal about God?

Reflect

I grew up in the age of “awesome.” No, everything in the world wasn’t awesome, but my generation used that word so frequently, you’d think that it was. Everything from pizza to sneakers to pop songs to hair styles was labeled with the word. Sometimes things were even “totally awesome.” It’s an adjective that’s lost some of its meaning. If practically everything is awesome, what word do we use when we come upon something that truly inspires awe?

In Psalm 19, David reminds us that the heavens above should fill us with awe because they declare the glory of the one who made them. David conveys his own wonder through the poetic use of language. The heavens are given a voice with which they proclaim God, even though they have no actual voice. The sun is compared to a bridegroom, who on the day of his wedding leaves his room determined to marry his bride. Like a champion, the sun rides across the sky, completing his course day after day.

David is painting a picture with his words. In a day long before someone could whip out their phone and take a picture of the sunset, David uses his words to communicate the awesome beauty that he sees. He reminds us to look up at the sky as well, but not just to admire the view, but to worship the one who created it. David knows that the splendor of the sun, moon, stars, and planets implies the splendor of the one whose hands made them.

With all our science and technology, the sky is a threshold we’ve now crossed, and beyond it are things David could have never imagined. We’ve sent rovers skidding across the surface of Mars and landers to one of Saturn’s moons. Our spacecrafts have plunged into the sun, circled Jupiter, and flown over Uranus and Neptune. We have telescopes that can see supernovas, galaxies, and nebulae millions of light years away. All that we’ve discovered beyond our own planet declares the glory of God, at least for all with ears to hear the declaration.

The creation invites every human being to honor and revere the Creator. As Paul will later describe in Romans 1:20, “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.” Unfortunately, the pervasive influence of sin in this world has meant that humanity hasn’t accepted the invitation. “For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened” (Romans 1:21). The awesomeness of the creation speaks of God to all, but not all hear and respond.

- When’s the last time you found yourself awestruck by something in nature? How can you use those moments to honor God? How can you respond in worship to the glory of God revealed in creation?

Respond

Find a time this week to spend with God in nature. Go out and witness a sunrise or sunset, sit under the light of the moon and the stars, or lay back and watch the clouds dance across the sky. While you’re there, read Psalm 19:1–6. Declare it as true and then let it lead you into a prayer of praise and thanksgiving.

Day 3

Read

Psalm 19:7–11

*⁷ The law of the LORD is perfect,
refreshing the soul.
The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy,
making wise the simple.
⁸ The precepts of the LORD are right,
giving joy to the heart.
The commands of the LORD are radiant,
giving light to the eyes.
⁹ The fear of the LORD is pure,
enduring forever.
The decrees of the LORD are firm,
and all of them are righteous.*

*¹⁰ They are more precious than gold,
than much pure gold;
They are sweeter than honey,
than honey from the honeycomb.
¹¹ By them your servant is warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.*

- What speaks to us in Psalm 19:7–11? What does it “say”?
- How is God’s Word described?

Reflect

As we saw yesterday, the creation points us to the Creator. Yet, the creation alone doesn’t reveal everything about God. It reveals a deity who is creative, powerful, and worthy of honor, but it doesn’t teach us what is expected of us, if anything. Many people over the centuries have imagined a god who set the universe into motion and then stepped away, or theorized that the divine is just an impersonal life force that pulses in and through everything. According to these views, there is nothing out there that cares about us or helps us in our journey through life. But Psalm 19 offers us a very different view.

Starting in this section of the Psalm, David begins using God’s personal name, Yahweh (translated here as LORD). God has revealed himself in his Word and has provided instructions on how we can relate to him, and how we should live. The Psalmist makes six statements describing the Word of God. “Law,” “statutes,” “precepts,” “commands,” and “decrees” are roughly synonymous, yet each has a certain character of its own. Through repetition the Psalm

emphasizes the goodness of God’s revelation. It is perfect, trustworthy, radiant, pure, right, and firm. “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, detailed obedience.”¹

Too often the Bible is viewed as a dry book of rules that if followed would take all the fun out of life. Christians can treat reading the Bible as something that’s good for them, like taking their vitamins, but not something they really enjoy. David challenges that kind of thinking. The benefits of God’s Word are tremendous! Who doesn’t need their soul refreshed? Who doesn’t want more wisdom and a clearer perspective? Who couldn’t use an infusion of joy straight into their heart? All of this comes from God’s Word.

If someone offered a million dollars to never open a Bible again, how many people would leap at that deal? How many Christians would consider it? According to David, they would be giving up something more far more precious than pure gold. Why? Because there is nothing that you could buy that would benefit you more than the Word of God.

The Creator who scattered a billion galaxies across the universe, who placed the sun and the Earth at the precise distance so that our planet thrives, who designed every cell in your body and knows every thought in your head has revealed himself to you in his Word. The God who is love and who created you to love and be loved shows you in his Word how much he loves you.

God knows how you will flourish and thrive on life’s journey, and has given you instructions to guide you. He’s marked the obstacles and dangers on the road and handed you the map so you can avoid them. Your life will be infinitely better if you know, believe, and trust in God’s Word and live according to it. How is that not worth more than any amount of money?

We don’t always recognize the sweetness of God’s Word. Our taste buds can become desensitized by gorging on the things of the world. Scripture takes time, effort, and prayer before the sweetness can be savored, and we’ve become accustomed to processed and packaged treats. Yet through his Word, God is offering to revive our souls, guide us through life and bring joy to our hearts. May he persuade us by the power of the Spirit that following his Word will bring a very great reward!

- How does the Word of God tend to “taste” to you? Dry and bland, sweet and savory, or somewhere in between? Why do you think that is? How would you like to change that?

Respond

Praise God for gift of his Word. Ask the Spirit to give you a greater taste for it and invite him to reveal himself through it.

¹ Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1–72: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 15, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 117.

Day 4

Read

Psalm 19:12–14

*¹² But who can discern their own errors?
Forgive my hidden faults.*

*¹³ Keep your servant also from willful sins;
may they not rule over me.*

*Then I will be blameless,
innocent of great transgression.*

*¹⁴ May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart
be pleasing in your sight,
LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.*

- Who is speaking in these verses? What requests are being made?

Reflect

This week, Psalm 19 has reminded us that God has revealed himself in Creation. He’s also revealed himself directly in his Word where we can discover his will for our lives. At the end of the Psalm, we discover David asking God to reveal something else— hidden sin. It’s the proper response of someone who has been awestruck by the splendor of God’s creation and the righteousness of his Word.

In appreciating the immense value of God’s word, and enjoying the sweetness of what’s been revealed, we can imagine that David desired to know and follow God even more. Yet, he was ever more aware of his own sinfulness. God’s Word isn’t only a window through which we can see God and understand his ways, it’s a mirror that exposes our own pride and rebellion. It challenges us to do the seemingly impossible, love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength and love other people as we love ourselves. As we spend time in God’s Word it will reveal the control that sin tries to assert over us, but it will also invite us to be free.

David asks God for help in discerning his own errors and forgiveness for his hidden faults. He admits that he might not even recognize his own sin. Then he seeks protection from willful rebellion and disobedience. He doesn’t want to be ruled over by sin, but instead be innocent of great transgression. Ultimately, David wants to please God with not just his actions, but with what he says and how he thinks and feels.

Hebrews 4:12 tells us that “the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” What the Spirit reveals through the Word is meant to push us out

of our complacency and make us uncomfortable in our sin. It will expose us for not loving God and others as we should. We'll see that we are as prone to idolatry as the ancient Israelites. We put all kinds of things before God in our lives. Often we'd rather hide in the shadows nurturing our sinful habits than run into the light and meet God.

The Word will show us our selfishness and how often we insist on putting our needs before the needs of those around us, even those we love dearly. We'll be forced to recognize that we care more about our comfort than the poor and value our reputation more than speaking for the oppressed. God's Word won't let us make peace with unrighteousness and injustice.

The Word will slice through all our justifications and rationalizations and leave us exposed. But it doesn't leave us that way. Because on the other side of recognition and confession is forgiveness and restoration.

David is able to make his request with confidence, because he sees God as his Rock and Redeemer. We could allow our sin to send us into hiding away from God, the way Adam and Eve did when they sinned in the Garden of Eden. But David encourages us to turn to Yahweh because he is a place of safety and refuge, even for the sinners who know God's commands and break them. Even for the rebels who defy God and go their own way. God redeems slaves sets them free. He fixes what's wrong and makes it right. God is ready to forgive and restore.

- Do you ever pray that God will reveal your errors and keep you from sinning? Why is that a good thing to pray for?
- How do you usually respond when your sin has been revealed? Are you quick to seek forgiveness?

Respond

Turn David's prayer in Psalm 19:11–14 into your own. Personalize the words. Meditate on the truth that Yahweh is your Rock and Redeemer.

Day 5

Happy Friday! How has Psalm 19 impacted you this week? Maybe it was already on of your list of favorite Psalms, or maybe you're ready to add it to your list. Regardless, take some time today to reflect on the Psalm one more time and hear what God has to say to you through it.

Reflect

Read all of Psalm 19 again. Ask the Spirit to speak to you through this Psalm.

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In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun.
⁵ *It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,
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- How do these verses resonate with you today? How has this Psalm encouraged you in your walk with God?

Connect

The revelation of who God is will shake us to our core. From the heavens above, to the Bible in our hand, he has made himself known. He is holy and righteous, powerful and mighty. Yet the Word shows us his kindness, mercy, and love. We see his desire to forgive and restore those who've wandered far from him. That desire led to the cross.

The supreme revelation of God that we see in Scripture is Jesus. He walked among ordinary people and instructed them in his ways. He demonstrated a life lived solely according to God's will. And at the cross, we see where God's justice and mercy meet. There, our final redemption is revealed. We've been brought into the family of God and saved from eternal judgment. We've been rescued from slavery to sin and brought under the reign of the Spirit. We do not have to live in fear, but can have confidence that nothing will separate us from God's love.

Our own exploration of God's Word should bring us to a greater desire to know God and walk in his ways. And as it reveals the goodness of God, we will be confronted with our own failures. We will recognize all the ways we wander and stray. But these revelations shouldn't lead us to shame or despair, but to seek God's forgiveness. God loves us and will remove our sins and restore us. He is our Rock and our Redeemer.

The heavens declare the glory of God. A redeemed life will too. May our lives testify to the goodness and grace of our God.

Respond

In both Psalm 1 and Psalm 19 we've been reminded of the value of God's Word. Ask God to increase your desire to spend time with him in his Word. Then make a plan. Decide on a time and place, and pick what you'll read. You may want to read through the whole book of Psalms this summer during our Psalms Playlist series. You may want to spend time with Jesus in the Gospels. Regardless, invite the Spirit to speak to you through God's Word. Pray as you read and respond as the Spirit prompts.

God's Word will reveal our sins even as it assures us of our ultimate restoration. Are there sinful habits, either in thought or action, that you have made peace with? Ask the Spirit to show you a different way.