

FBC POWELL, 2-19-17 AM  
"Listen ... God Is Speaking"  
Psalm 19:1-14  
# 3 in Series, "Psalms: Medicine for the Soul"

**Psalm 115:4-5a** "Their idols are silver and gold, the work of man's hands. They have mouths, but they cannot speak..."

**Habakkuk 2:18 (NIV)** "Of what value is an idol carved by a craftsman? Or an image that teaches lies? For the one who makes it trusts in his own creation; he makes idols that cannot speak."

**2 Timothy 3:16-17 (ESV)** "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

"The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelation of the Spirit, or the traditions of men." - The 1689 *2<sup>nd</sup> London Baptist Confession of Faith*, Chapter 1, paragraph 6

"Take care never to impute the vain imaginings of your fancy to Him [the Holy Spirit]. I have seen the Spirit of God shamefully dishonored by persons – I hope they were insane – who have said that they have had this and that revealed to them. There has not for some years passed over my head a single week in which I have not been pestered with the revelations of hypocrites or maniacs. Semi-lunatics are very fond of coming with messages from the Lord to me, and it may spare them some trouble if I tell them once for all that I will have none of their stupid messages... Never dream that events are revealed to you by heaven, or you may come to be like those ... who dare impute their blatant follies to the Holy Ghost. If you feel your tongue itch to talk nonsense, trace it to the devil, not to the Spirit of God. Whatever is to be revealed by the Spirit to any of us is in the Word of God already – He adds nothing to the Bible, and never will. Let persons who have revelations of this, that, and the other, go to bed and wake up in their senses. I only wish they would follow the advice and no longer insult the Holy Ghost by laying their nonsense at His door."  
– Charles Spurgeon

I. God Speaks through the World He Created (vv. 1-6)

A. It Is an Unmistakable Speaking (v. 1)

"This is a declaration of God's greatness as displayed in nature. Every night since the beginning of time, the stars have appeared in the night sky, declaring the glory of God. The sun, moon, and stars are like headlines spelling out God's revelation of Himself to the human race. But in recent years, we have learned not only to read the headlines, but the fine print as well. Today we not only know about the sun, moon, and stars but we see our amazing Creator revealed nebulas, galaxies, and black holes. The complex and delicately balanced design of the cosmos speaks resoundingly of God and His wisdom, intelligence, and power."  
- Ray Steadman

"The current state of knowledge can be summarized thus: In the beginning there was nothing...which exploded."  
- T. Pratchett

**Romans 1:19-20** “because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For 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.”

**Romans 1:18** “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.”

B. It Is an Untiring Speaking (v. 2)

C. It Is an Understandable Speaking (vv. 3-6)

**Romans 1:20 (ESV)** “For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.”

II. God Speaks through the Word He Inspired (vv. 7-14)

“I have covenanted with my Lord that He should not send me visions or dreams or even angels. I am content with this gift of the Scriptures, which teaches and supplies all that is necessary, both for this life and that which is to come.”

– Martin Luther

A. The Attributes of His Word (vv. 7-8)

**Romans 8:28-29** “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.”

B. The Appreciation of His Word (vv. 9-11)

C. The Application of His Word (vv. 12-14)

**First Baptist Church Powell 02 19 2017 AM**

**Sermon 3: Listen ... God Is Speaking**

**Series: Psalms – Medicine for the Soul**

**Psalms 19:1-14**

Do you believe that God still speaks? I do! One thing that distinguishes the one true God from man-made idols is that God speaks. Psalm 115:4-5a: “Their idols are silver and gold, the work of man’s hands. They have mouths, but they cannot speak...” Habakkuk 2:18 (NIV): “Of what value is an idol carved by a craftsman? Or an image that teaches lies? For the one who makes it trusts in his own creation; he makes idols that cannot speak.”

Idols cannot speak. The Christian philosopher and theologian Frances Schaeffer wrote a book that said a lot in the title. The title, referring to the God of Scripture, was, *He Is There and He Is*

*Not Silent.* If one believes the Bible, there should be no questioning the fact that God speaks. The real question is, “How does God speak?” I have been a pastor of a Baptist church for over forty years. In those forty plus years, I have often had people start their conversation with me by saying, “God told me...” There have been times when the thing “God told” them contradicted the written word of God. I remember years ago a man said that God told him it was okay to divorce his wife even though he admitted that he had no biblical grounds to do so. I remember counseling with a godly woman whose husband (in another church) had told her that God told him to divorce her and marry another woman he went to church with. In both of those cases, the men were at best deceived and at worst liars and blasphemers.

I would encourage you to be very, very careful using the phrase, “God told me...” when you are not speaking of something in Scripture in context. Certainly the Holy Spirit takes commands and principles from God’s word and gives us insight as to how they apply to specific situations we are facing. If, however we are looking for something beyond Scripture to guide us, we are walking in very dangerous territory. The “God told me” language can easily undermine the precious and important doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture. We are fortunate to live in this time when we have the completed canon of God’s written word.

One of the most comforting truths is that God’s word is sufficient. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (ESV): “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” One of the confessions of faith that God has greatly used is the 1689 *Second London Baptist Confession of Faith*. Chapter 1, paragraph 6 says, “The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man’s salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelation of the Spirit, or the traditions of men.”

Charles Spurgeon had some harsh words for the “God told me” people in a sermon he preached titled, *The Paraclete*, October 6, 1872:

Take care never to impute the vain imaginings of your fancy to Him [the Holy Spirit]. I have seen the Spirit of God shamefully dishonored by persons – I hope they were insane – who have said that they have had this and that revealed to them. There has not for some years passed over my head a single week in which I have not been pestered with the revelations of hypocrites or maniacs. Semi-lunatics are very fond of coming with messages from the Lord to me, and it may spare them some trouble if I tell them once for all that I will have none of their stupid messages... Never dream that events are revealed to you by heaven, or you may come to be like those ... who dare impute their blatant follies to the Holy Ghost. If you feel your tongue itch to talk nonsense, trace it to the devil, not to the Spirit of God. Whatever is to be revealed by the Spirit to any of us is in the Word of God already – He adds nothing to the Bible, and never will. Let persons who have revelations of this, that, and the other, go to bed and wake up in their senses. I only wish they would follow the advice and no longer insult the Holy Ghost by laying their nonsense at His door.

When we seek ongoing revelation from God beyond the Scripture, we are confessing that the Bible is not enough for us. That is a recipe for theological disaster.

In Psalm 19 we see that God does speak and He speaks primarily in two ways. *He speaks through the world He created and through the Word He inspired.*

## I. God Speaks through the World He Created (vv. 1-6)

What is described in these verses is called “general revelation.” General revelation cannot convert sinners, but it does make them accountable. Let’s look first at the clear revelation of God in creation.

### A. It Is an Unmistakable Speaking (v. 1)

One of the strangest friendships of all time was the friendship of the famous agnostic, Robert Ingersoll, and the equally famous preacher, Henry Ward Beecher. They became very close in spite of the wide gap between them. During one particular visit by Ingersoll to Beecher’s home, he noticed a beautiful globe on Beecher’s desk. It was not a globe of the earth but of the stars and constellations. As Ingersoll admired the globe, he said, “That globe is exquisite! Who made it?” Beecher answered, “Why nobody made it; it just happened.” That was a hard piece of evidence that a God denier like Ingersoll had no answer for.

Let’s examine verse 1. The Hebrew word translated “heavens” speaks of all that is above the earth. It basically refers to all we can see with the naked eye. The word translated “expanse” refers to the heavens where the planets and stars and sun and moon exist. It’s more like our words “space” and “outer space.” The word “declaring” means to tell something in a celebratory way. To paraphrase verse one, “All that is above the earth celebrates and forcefully proclaims the glory of God; the planets, the sun, the moon, and the stars put on display God’s creative powers.”

Ray Steadman said it eloquently:

This is a declaration of God’s greatness as displayed in nature. Every night since the beginning of time, the stars have appeared in the night sky, declaring the glory of God. The sun, moon, and stars are like headlines spelling out God’s revelation of Himself to the human race. But in recent years, we have learned not only to read the headlines, but the fine print as well. Today we not only know about the sun, moon, and stars but we see our amazing Creator revealed nebulas, galaxies, and black holes. The complex and delicately balanced design of the cosmos speaks resoundingly of God and His wisdom, intelligence, and power.  
[Ray Steadman, *Psalms: Folk Songs of Faith*, page 48]

The speaking of creation is unmistakable. Yet, spiritually blind people refuse to believe. One evolutionist said, “The current state of knowledge can be summarized thus: In the beginning there was nothing...which exploded.” [T. Pratchett, *Lords and Ladies*, page 7]

Notice also that the heavens don’t just declare *glory*; they declare “the glory of God.” People sometimes speak of the glory of nature, but there is no glory of nature. Nature simply reflects the glory of God. The testimony of the heavens is not a hint; it is a plain, an unmistakable declaration of the fact that we have a glorious creator. In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul picks up on this same truth in Romans 1:19-20: “because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For 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.”

Often the question is asked, “How can God be just in condemning those who have never heard the Gospel?” The answer to that question is here in Romans 1:20. God has given all mankind the witness of creation. From the book of Acts, we learn that when people respond to the witness of creation, God gives them more revelation as with the Ethiopian official and the Roman Centurion, Cornelius. That means that every person is “without excuse” (Romans 1:20). The problem is not that God has not spoken; the problem is that lost mankind is spiritually blind,

deaf, and doesn't want to hear from God. Romans 1:18: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness." God is unmistakably speaking through the universe He has created.

### **B. It Is an Untiring Speaking (v. 2)**

The witness of creation cannot be silenced. The heavens constantly day after day, night after night, declare the existence of a powerful, all wise God. God's glory is handed off by the day to the night, and then it is handed off by the night to the day, and the cycle repeats itself year after year, decade after decade, century after century, and millennium after millennium. There is never a time anywhere in any place that the glory of God is not on display.

It is an unmistakable and an untiring speaking.

### **C. It Is an Understandable Speaking (vv. 3-6)**

Creation speaks a language that is understood by those in every people, tongue, tribe, and nation. In verse 4, the phrase, "Their line has gone out through all the earth" is likely referring to a surveyor's line. The picture is a surveyor surveying all the earth and when he is finished he concludes that there is not one place where God's glory has not been proclaimed by His creation.

We have said over and over that the creation declares. What is it that the universe is declaring? It is declaring the glory of God, but what aspects of His glory? From Romans 1:20, we know that it declares God's power and deity. Romans 1:20 (ESV): "For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse." From the intricate design and balance of the universe we see that God is not only powerful but has amazing knowledge. We can know that He is a God of beauty because of the beauty of all He has created. Remember that the beauty we see today is seen in a fallen creation. What must it have looked at before sin came into the world?

Having said all of these things about God's creation, we need to also understand that while we can know several things about God from his creation, we cannot know God. From creation we know that He is a powerful, all knowing, lover of beauty, but we don't know Him. That's where special revelation comes in. In verse 7 we move from the world to the Word; we move from what God has wrought to what God has written; we move from general revelation to specific revelation.

## **II. God Speaks through the Word He Inspired (vv. 7-14)**

In verse 7, there is an abrupt change from God's creation to God's Word. The reformer Martin Luther said of the Scriptures, "I have covenanted with my Lord that He should not send me visions or dreams or even angels. I am content with this gift of the Scriptures, which teaches and supplies all that is necessary, both for this life and that which is to come." [Spurgeon Quotations, page 21] The way Christians hear God speak is through His word. Why would we want anything more?

### **A. The Attributes of His Word (vv. 7-8)**

The word "law" here is broader than the Law of Moses. It speaks of all the teachings and instructions. He says that this law is perfect. That is the same word used for the temple sacrifices that were without spot or blemish. God's instructions and teaching in the Scriptures are without flaw and without error. We use the word *inerrant* referring to the Scriptures which means perfect and without error. Why would we desire anything beyond that? How could we improve on *perfect*?

This perfect Word restores our soul. That word translated “restores” means to turn back to God. When you are sensing that God seems far away and you sense the need to be restored to joy and vibrancy in your walk with Him, Go to the Word. Immerse yourself in the Word. That is so simple and yet we try everything else. Read it daily; be where it is being taught. There is no magic formula. The law of the Lord, the Scriptures are perfect and they will restore your soul. That word translated “restoring” is the same word used in Psalms 23:3a: “He restores my soul...” It means to turn back when we wander. It is not man’s eloquence or logic or persuasiveness that restores the soul. It is the power of the Scriptures. The Scriptures make wise (v. 7b). To be wise is to see from God’s perspective. The word “simple” refers to someone easily swayed or seduced. The Scriptures allow us to see people, circumstances, decisions, hard times, and *opportunities* from God’s perspective and thus to lead stable lives. The Scriptures cause the heart to rejoice. (v. 8)

The Scriptures allow us to see what we’re going through from God’s perspective and also what God is doing in our lives through what He allows. I remember when I discovered what Romans 8:28-29 meant and how it caused me to rejoice. I realized that I was not at the mercy of chance and that God has a sovereign plan He is working that has, as its end, my conformity to Christ. Romans 8:28-29: “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.”

The “testimony of the Lord” means “the witness of the Lord.” The Scriptures are the perfect witness to the person of God. The word “sure” means to be firm, enduring, and unchanging. The Scriptures never change. They are perfect and sure. The Word takes the “simple” (easily swayed) and gives them wisdom – the ability to see from God’s perspective. Things begin to fall into place – the fog breaks and the light of the Word makes clear what needs to be done. Don’t short circuit that process! It is so sad that most believers have never known what it is to agonize over the word and what it means. It is so counter cultural that to obey the “testimony of the Lord” will often be painful.

In verse 8, we see that the precepts of the Lord bring rejoicing to the heart. The word “precepts” refers to direction for daily living. The word “right” means the Scriptures will never lead you down a wrong path. You can trust the directions given by the precepts of Scripture, even when you don’t understand all the reasons why, and when they seem to go against logic. The Scriptures give guidance and direction in every area of life – home, church, workplace, government, problems – there is no area of our lives to which the Scriptures do not speak, and when they speak, they are right.

A commandment is an authoritative divine decree. His commandments are pure. That means clear. Because they are clear, our eyes are enlightened. The Scriptures were meant to be first understood.

### **B. The Appreciation of His Word (vv. 9-11)**

The fear of the Lord is to stand before Him with a sense of awe and reverence. That sense of awe brings cleansing from false motives and phoniness. “Judgments” refer to formal decrees or a verdict announced. We cannot judge another’s motives or heart, but God can and He does!

Even in David’s time gold was highly valued. David says that the Scriptures are even more valuable than gold. Fine gold speaks of pure gold without impurities. The judgments or decrees of the Lord are sweeter than honey (v. 10b). Honey was usually the most desired food because of its natural sweetness. The Scriptures are even sweeter than honey. Oh how sweet it is to hear God speak to you through His word. As we come to know God and His glory from His revelation

in the Scriptures, we have a sense of awe, a sense of His holiness and purity. We stand in reverence of Him, and fear to have sin in these lives that belong to one so holy, and our lives are cleansed because of the fear we have for Him. The Scriptures obeyed bring reward (v. 11). The Scriptures not only inform us of the possibility of reward, they show us how reward is obtained and lost.

How could any true Christian not hear God speak? Do you see how that through the Scriptures we come to know God and His ways and what pleases and displeases Him?

### **C. The Application of His Word (vv. 12-14)**

There are two categories of sins that the Holy Spirit convicts us of as we apply His Word.

#### **1. Errors (v. 12)**

These are unpremeditated sins that you slip in to. It would include sins like a critical spirit, worry, allowing the flesh to control us. We are usually unaware of these sins until we get into the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit begins to apply the principle of Scripture to our lives, and we see it, and grieve over it. Apart from the Holy Spirit's conviction, these remain blind spots. These errors are also called secret or hidden faults.

#### **2. Presumptuous Sins (v. 13)**

These are deliberate sins. The NIV translates it "willful sins." The Holy Spirit convicts us of the hideousness of these willful sins that rob us of our intimacy with God and our opportunity for spiritual maturity.

The Spirit takes the principles of the Scriptures and "keeps us back" from presumptuous sins. He then takes the truths of Scripture and shows us how to walk in freedom over sin's bondage so that these secret, and presumptuous, sins will not have dominion over us. That allows us to walk blameless. That word doesn't mean sinless. It means that there is nothing in our lives that others could latch on to and use to accuse us.

### **Conclusion (v. 14)**

Verse 14 is a prayer that ties it all together. When through His special revelation – the Scriptures – He converts us, then our highest desire is to please Him. We pray that our inner thoughts, and our outer words, would be pleasing to Him. It ends with a confession that He is our strength and redeemer. Listen.....God *IS* speaking. Look at the sky and then look at the Scriptures and then listen to the Spirit.