

Please turn in your copies of God's Word to Psalm 19. This afternoon we're going to be continuing from the sermon this morning, concluding this psalm. Last time we looked at verses 1-6 and saw how God is revealed in the book of nature, what's known as general revelation. This afternoon we're going to look at the second way in which God reveals Himself, in the book of Scripture, what's known as special revelation. So please give your full attention to the reading of God's holy, inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word from Psalm 19 beginning in verse 7.

Read Psalm 19:7-14

Pray

This morning we did speak of general revelation, and so now we are switching gears to speak of special revelation. You may have noticed that this morning I made mention several times, even in the preaching and discussion on how God has revealed Himself in nature, of the absolute necessity of the Word. I don't want to belabor that point, but that is of a prime importance. We have to understand the absolute necessity of the Word of God. We are in the Reformed tradition, and we believe in a high view of Scripture. That's why the preaching is front and center in our services, because we believe in the high importance of the Word of God. We believe in the doctrine of 'Sola Scriptura;' Scripture alone is our infallible rule for faith and life. We believe these things. We have a high view of Scripture, and that is good. We need that. But how many times have you just sat down and thought to yourself why? Why do we have such a high view of Scripture? Why is the Word of God so necessary for us? Why is it so important? Why does it take the place of preeminence in our understanding of the Reformed faith, in our understanding of the Christian faith? So it's my desire this afternoon that we come to a greater understanding and appreciation for this book; that it's not just that we hold it in high regard because that's what our tradition teaches us. It's not that we hold it in high regard because our family told us that we ought to. It's not that we

hold it in high regard because our confession of faith tells us that we must. No, it's my hope that when we leave here today that we hold this book in a high regard because of what it is, because it is the Word of God. We are going to look at this book of Scripture, at special revelation, by looking two separate things. First, we are going to be looking at the Scripture's properties, then we are going to be looking at the Scripture's purposes.

So let's turn our attention first to the properties of special revelation. David begins this long string of seven properties with what can be argued is the most important of all of them, "The law of the Lord is perfect." If this is not our starting point when coming to the Scriptures, understanding that they are perfect, then we are beginning with a faulty foundation. What does it mean when we say that the law of the Lord is perfect? If something is perfect that means there is no flaws, no blemishes, no mistakes. We live in a world which is constantly challenging this primary property of the Scripture. The world says that the Bible is an antiquated book written by men that is full of errors and contradictions. It's funny that this lie keeps being propagated even though no one has been able to produce a single error or contradiction in any part of Scripture. That's because it is perfect. And it can only be perfect because of its source. God is the author of Scripture; yes, men were used as instruments to write down the Word, but they were holy men carried along by the Holy Ghost as 2 Peter chapter 1 tells us. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," as Paul tells us in 2 Timothy 3:16. This is why from Genesis to Revelation there is consistency, accuracy, no contradictions or errors. The source of Scripture is God Himself, working through the pen of men by His Holy Ghost. And because He is the source, we know that Scripture is true, infallible, authoritative, clear, trustworthy, and kept pure through all ages.

I know it may seem like I'm focusing heavily upon this first property, especially since there are six others that must be discussed, but the perfection of the law of the Lord is the fountain from which

the other properties flow. It's also the most pressing one concerning where we are as a society today. Some of you may find yourself in a situation where the perfection of Scripture is challenged, where people are actively trying to deceive you. I can guarantee that you will be presented with these lies of this world concerning the perfection of the Word of God. But these deceptions, these challenges to the perfection of the Scriptures, aren't just out there in the world but are starting to creep into the church as well. It's not just the world that is challenging it but so-called theologians as well. This comes in the form of ancient near eastern studies, evolutionary theories, and some forms modern textual criticism. There are those who claim the name of Christ who are questioning the perfection of the law of the Lord. It is nothing more than a new way of Satan's lie, "hath God said." Do not fall prey to these things. Hold fast to this teaching of the perfection of Scripture. Trust in the source of Scripture, who is God Himself, to be faithful and true. Do not be convinced by evil men and seducers, those seeking to spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, but cling to the truth you know. The law of the Lord is perfect.

And flowing from that perfection, "the testimony of the Lord is sure." To rightly understand this we have to set aside our modern notion of how we use the word 'sure.' Oftentimes we use it in an uncertain way or in an apathetic way. We say 'sure' to mean yes but without conviction. That's not what's being said here. To say that the testimony of the Lord is sure is to say that is it unwavering and without hesitation. When God says something He means it. The Scriptures are not a composition of suggestions, but lay forth exactly what God meant for us to have. No amount of modern scientific discovery can nullify what is written in the Scriptures. No amount of societal change can affect how we understand what is written in this book. Scientists claiming the earth is billions of years old does not make the account of Genesis untrue, it means that scientists are in error. Society accepting and promoting homosexuality and perversions does not make it any less sinful, but shows the depravity of the world we live in. Christ is the king over this nation and calls

the magistrate to rule accordingly no matter what the Constitution says. The testimonies of the Lord do not waver or falter. They do not change with the times. No, the testimonies of the Lord are sure.

Next we read, “The statutes of the Lord are right” and “the commandment of the Lord is pure.” I put these two together, not because they are the same thing, but because they are intimately connected. The fact that the statutes of the Lord are right means that every ruling that has been made, every caselaw written down in this book, every precept pronounced, and every command that is given is one hundred percent correct and useful for us today. They are not tainted by cultural contextualization or by the cunning of man, but are pure in all ways. There’s no hidden agenda to what God lays out in His Word. There’s no nefarious nature to what is written in Scripture. It is undefiled, blameless, unblemished, upright, moral, holy, and just. And we must receive it as such and apply it to our lives accordingly. We don’t add to them or take away from them. We don’t seek to correct what cannot be corrected. The very Word that we have in our hands today is the unadulterated, holy, inspired, inerrant, infallible Word that was given in ages past, and it is just as much for us as it was for them. The statutes and commandments of the Lord contained in these 66 books are ours, and they are right and pure.

Finally, we see, “The fear of the Lord is clean... the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.” Clean and true are simply expansions upon pure and right, but I want to take a moment and focus particularly upon the property of Scripture that it is righteous altogether. Righteousness is a characteristic or property that can only rightly be attributed to God. The fact that David attributes it to the Word of the Lord is important. It means that the very characteristics of God are part and parcel of the characteristics of Scripture. The judgements of the Lord are altogether righteous. They are holy. They are sanctified and set apart for a holy purpose. They are all righteous from the greatest to the least, without a single exception. There is nothing in all of Scripture that cannot be

described as wholly righteous. This is essentially the summation of everything that David has been speaking of concerning the properties of Scripture. Calvin notes, “By this commendation he distinguishes the law of God from all the doctrines of men, for no blemish or fault can be found in it, but it is in all points absolutely perfect.”

Brothers and sisters, the Word of God is amazing. It is completely unlike any other book or writing out there. It can inform us and it can transform us because of the Holy Ghost working through the words on the page making them effectual in our lives, and it can do that because it is perfect and sure and right and pure and clean and true and righteous altogether. And what’s even more amazing than that is that all of these properties of Scripture listed in this psalm points us to the Word incarnate, Jesus Christ, who is the living embodiment of this book and in whom we have our salvation and hope. And so Calvin puts it this way, “Since God in vain calls all peoples to Himself by the contemplation of heaven and earth, God’s Word is the very school of His children in which He teaches them the way of salvation.” This leads us now to consider the purposes of special revelation.

David does something similar with the purposes of special revelation as he did with the properties. He begins with a string of purposes and then goes into a more expanded explanation towards the end of the chapter. And just as he began the properties with the most important one, so too does he begin his list of purposes. He begins by proclaiming, “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.” This is the primary function of the written Word. This morning we saw that general revelation did not reveal what was necessary for man concerning salvation, but here we see that the gap in general revelation is filled in by this primary purpose of special revelation. It is from the Word of God that we come to an understanding of how we have fallen into sin and are in need of a Savior. It is from the Word of God that we learn of the sacrificial death of Christ Jesus who took on the sins of His people and on the

third day rose again from the dead conquering death, hell, and the grave. It is from the Word of God that we find the way of salvation in Romans 10:9, “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” Later on in that same chapter Paul states explicitly the need for the Word, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

I’ve heard far too many times that you will reach people for the Gospel simply by how you live your life. There’s some sense in which that can be true; however, this is oftentimes simply a cop-out for not sharing the Gospel with those around you. If all you’re doing is living a good and upright life, it’s much more likely you will convert someone to vain moralism than it is you will convert them to Christ. The Gospel must be proclaimed, and it must be proclaimed through the proclamation of the Word. In some small sense we are to live out the great commission every day. Matthew 28, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” You can’t teach people to obey all that Christ has commanded without the Word. Outside of the proclamation of the Word, there is no means of salvation. The law of the Lord converts the soul.

And just as with the perfection of special revelation being the fountain from which all the other properties flow, so too is it with the purpose of conversion of souls. The psalmist goes on to say that this special revelation given to us in the Scriptures makes wise the simple and enlightens the eyes. This is an after effect of the soul being converted. It is only after the heart is regenerated by the power of the Holy Ghost that the simple is made wise and the eyes are enlightened. The Word of God not only changes our outward actions, but it renews our minds, it alters the whole bent and purpose of our lives. So many so-called Christians view the Bible as simply the instrument that brought about salvation, but after that it

is just a book to sit on the shelf and collect dust. But that's not the case. The Word of the Lord has continuing purpose in the life of the believer, correcting errors, instructing in the way we should go, and conforming us more and more into the image of Christ Jesus. If you are neglecting the in-depth reading of the Word in your day-to-day life, you are missing out on one of the primary means by which the Lord promises to grow and mature you in the faith. Some of you here may have grown stagnant in your spiritual walk. If so, examine yourself and see if it is because you have neglected the Word, and if it is so, seek to remedy the problem promptly. It is God's Word that makes the simple wise and enlightens the eyes.

And in that you will find another purpose of special revelation, "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart." There is joy to be found in the law of the Lord. Psalm 1 speaks of the righteous man, who is Christ Jesus, being the one who delights in the law of the Lord. If you are in Christ then that righteous man is you as well. You must find your delight in His most perfect law. So often we can approach the Word with a sense of annoyance or even disdain for having to read it. I have found myself before even being angry that I had to spend time in the Word instead of doing something that I wanted to do more. How sickening! How blasphemous! If you find it difficult to come to the Word and truly find joy in it, then cry out to the Lord to remove that sin from your heart and cause the Word to bring rejoicing in your heart. We ought to be able to sing, not just say the words, but truly sing and mean it, Psalm 119M, "O how I love Your law! It is My study all the day." We must find our joy in the Word of the Lord.

And the last in the string of purposes is that this special revelation endures forever. There will never be a moment in human history in which the revelation of God is stripped away and man is left with only general revelation. No, the Word endures forever. No scheme of hell set out to destroy or dismantle the Holy Scriptures will prosper, because the Lord has promised that His word will stand. "The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

But the word of the Lord endureth for ever.” Now why is this a purpose of special revelation and not to be considered a property? Because the Word going forth continually is its purpose. Special revelation has always been intended to endure forever and ever. It was always intended to speak to people in every age of human existence. And this ought to bring great comfort to our souls, that the Lord is faithful to preserve and promote His Word throughout every generation. On this Spurgeon writes, “The revealed will of God is never changed; even Jesus came not to destroy but to fulfill, and even the ceremonial law was only changed as to its shadow, the substance intended by it is eternal. When the governments of nations are shaken with revolution, and ancient constitutions are being repealed, it is comforting to know that the throne of God is unshaken, and his law unaltered.” The Word of the Lord endures forever.

Here David makes a shift in how he speaks of the purpose of special revelation. He begins this shift by speaking of the equipping and nourishing aspect of the Word, “More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.” There is nothing in this world that is to be desired more than the living and active Word of the Lord. It is the Word which is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. It is the Word which is our offensive weapon to fight the war “against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” And nothing feeds us spiritually like the Word of God. We are told to not be content with the milk of the Word but to feast on the meat of the Word. It is through diligent study of doctrine found in the Scriptures that we grow and mature and develop. It is our meat all the day long. Have you ever noticed that the times when you are in the lowest points spiritually it’s almost always those times when you are out of the Word for prolonged periods? We must be hungering and thirsting for the Word, because without it we will starve.

But special revelation is not just for equipping and nourishing, it's also for convicting and sanctifying. "Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward." The Word must be our mentor. It must be our teacher, penetrating our hearts and showing us our faults. In 2 Timothy Paul tells us that Scripture is profitable for correction. We must be willing to listen to the correction of the Word and to heed its call lest we stumble and fall from the way. And in doing so, in heeding the call of the Word and in keeping the law of the Lord, there is great reward. This isn't the reward of salvation, because it's not by works we are saved. But it is the reward of blessing which is only found in obedience to the Word of God. There are true blessings that the Lord has ordained for us in this life which come through faithful Spirit-wrought obedience. Part of that reward is closer communion with the Triune God. That is part of being sanctified.

And all of this truth about special revelation, about the Word of the Lord, warrants a response from us. David gives that response as we see the words of Christ as He relied upon the Lord and His Word through all things. "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer." This ought to be our response as well: absolute reliance upon the Word of the Lord in all matters. The Scriptures are our ultimate authority in all matters concerning faith and life. They are absolutely sufficient for everything. We don't have to look to science or philosophy or the culture or anything else to correct what God has given; we have the Word of God. Let this prayer at the end of Psalm 19 be your prayer, that the Lord would keep you from sin, that He would keep you innocent of transgression, and that everything you do would be pleasing in His sight.

Brothers and sisters, I pray that we all learn to marvel at and love and take delight in the law of the Lord in a way we never have before. None of us are perfect in this area. We all have room to improve. Let us never take for granted the special revelation which God has given to us. So the challenge to you this day going forward is love the law of the Lord, meditate on it day and night, rely on it to equip you and nourish you, and thank the Lord for this special revelation. May we be known as people of the Word.