

“The Spoken Word of God’s Written Scriptures” Psalm 19:7-11, Sermon Notes

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Introducing the Message

Well, as we come back together this week to worship in the Word, I have to confess that Psalm 19 has been a particularly rich time of study for me. It feels like every time I think I’ve captured all this Psalm has to say, it squirts out between my fingers and gives me more to consider. It’s kind of like trying to hold on to jello; the more effort you apply, the more it oozes out of your hands! One of the reasons this Psalm is so amazing is because it is almost a trilogy – it is three types of Psalms in one; yet perfectly blended together and unequivocally one Psalm! While I am certain it is not David’s intention to draw attention to himself, Ps 19 displays David’s range as a poet. I say this, because the first six verses follow the structure of a Psalm of Praise; and more specifically a hymn of descriptive praise. Generally, these hymns of descriptive praise focus on who God is and what He does – which is a very fitting description for what we learned last week; evidenced in creation! Today’s section ... vv. 7-11 ... is characteristic of an Instructional Psalm. Instructional Psalms are didactic in nature – meaning they are designed to teach us something. Verses 7-11 are similar in structure and nature to the teachings in Proverbs, as well as being an introduction to Ps 19’s bigger brother, Ps 119, which provides an extensive tribute to the nature and the supremacy of the Scriptures. Then, the final three verses of Ps 19 bear the hallmark of a Penitential Psalm. As the very name suggests, the primary emphasis of penitential Psalms is expressing repentance for sin! Probably drawing your minds to Ps 32 and 51. Well, we have another all you can eat buffet before us this morning. So let’s get to it, starting with a quick review of last week to set the context.

Context

In the first six verses of Ps 19, we saw how God reveals Himself in the Unspoken Word of the Created World. David showcased two universal aspects of creation, the skies and the sun. The canvas of the sky is God’s glorious handiwork. It is God’s unspoken witness of Himself. Through the testimony of the skies, we learned that God is continuously and abundantly communicating to us without saying a single word. The sky is a silent testimony to God’s grandeur and majesty in creation. We also learned that the skies provide a universal testimony to all people, of all nations, throughout all of time.

Then David pointed to the most prominent feature in the sky: the Sun. The radiance of the sun is also a universal testimony. But even more, the sun’s very character displays four attributes of God’s essential nature. God created the sun and gave it a “home” a “tent” in the skies, demonstrating God’s sovereignty over everything He has created. Then using two illustrations in v. 5, a bridegroom and a strong man we see God’s power, His omnipotence. God is able to do anything that is consistent with His nature. Then through the imagery of the first two lines of v. 6 David highlights the persistent and perpetual nature of the sun’s rising and setting each and every day demonstrating God’s immutability ... that is His unchangeable nature. God is unchangeable in who He is; His plans and decrees are set in stone and will not change; and His promises will be fulfilled – each and every one! And then in the last line of v. 6 we see God’s omnipresence. David said it this

way, “*And there is NOTHING hidden from its heat.*” God is everywhere with His creation and nothing can hide from Him. Both a reassuring thought when we are obeying His principles and a scary thought when we are sinning!

This week, we will see how God reveals Himself in the spoken word of the written Scriptures. Let me say that again, we will see God’s self-disclosure in the spoken word of the written Scriptures.

Now I feel compelled to warn you at the outset of today’s message that you are going to need to be locked in mentally and you are not going to get much mental relief as we go through vv. 7-9. These verses are going to keep coming at you. Kind of like the grand finale of the 4th of July fireworks. You know, when they fire off a bunch of fireworks simultaneously and there is an explosion of color and sound in the sky. Well, vv. 7-9 are going to come at you like that. So bear with me as I try to stay faithful to what the text has to say to us! Let me read vv. 7-11, and then we will jump in

“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. 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 Thy servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward.”
(Psa 19:7-11 NAS)

Introducing the Text (vv. 7-11)

So maybe right here at the outset we ought to think about an important question; namely, why are the scriptures so critical? In answer to this, the first thing that comes to mind for me is, without them, we are left only with general revelation. OK – what’s the problem with that? We learned the answer to this question last week. While general revelation is a powerful witness, it does not communicate God’s plan of redemption. God is completely righteous and just to condemn us on the basis of His general revelation alone, but praise be to Him that He is also loving. As such, it would seem to be inconsistent for a loving God to convict, without showing us a way out. Which is precisely why God has given us His special revelation in the Scriptures. At their highest and most magnificent thematic level, the Scriptures have a three-fold purpose: 1) They reveal God; 2) They reveal our sinful nature; AND 3) They reveal God’s plan to redeem fallen mankind! Let me say it this way , God created everything perfect in Gen 1-2; We blew it in Gen 3:1-12; Then in the midst of punishing us, He gives us hope by progressively revealing His redemptive plan Gen 3:13-Rev 22! Isn’t it amazing? In the midst of His fury over our sin and punishment of our sin, God shows mercy! Do you do that – I don’t! Think of the last time you were disciplining your children. Was mercy on your mind? Probably not! When I’m mad, I am sadly completely and selfishly controlled by my “right to be mad!” You fouled me and I am going to give it to – from both barrels! Now I’m not proud to say that, but praise be to God that He isn’t that way. Instead He is both just and forgiving.

So, drawing attention to our text, David is going to tell us that the Scriptures are important because they are the only source of restoration, transformation, and guidance. The Bible is the spoken word of God’s written Scriptures. Unlike creation, the Scriptures have a loud and audible voice and they speak to us of God and His plan to redeem us. In vv. 7-9 David is going to tell us that Scripture is completely sufficient, and then in vv. 10-11 he will say that Scripture is incomparably excellent. Let me say it again – David will extol (that is greatly praise) the Scriptures complete sufficiency, and then he will consider their incomparable excellency.

Let's start with their complete sufficiency

The Scriptures are Completely Sufficient (vv. 7-9)

In expressing the Scriptures complete sufficiency, David will first describe their comprehensive nature in vv. 7-8, and then in v. 9, their intended influence.

We need to start with some general observations about these three verses, because their "structure" is quite different from vv. 1-6. In vv. 7-9, David goes from longer lines filled with imagery to shorter lines that demonstrate unequaled poetic parallelism. The first, and most obvious, observation is that vv. 7-9a follow precisely the same 3-part pattern. In so doing, they first tell us what Scripture is and then what Scripture does. Note the pattern: Each clause of these verses begins with a noun that gives us a name for the Scriptures – e.g. "the Law" in v. 7a; This is followed by an adjective to describe the nature of the Scriptures "is perfect;" and concludes with a verb that expresses the purpose of the Scriptures in our lives – it "restores the soul." These verses are an example of a distinct type of poetry called wisdom literature – which is prominent in the books of Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. Wisdom literature is characterized by clear and straightforward teaching that provides practical exhortation for day-to-day living in accordance with God's counsel! When we encounter wisdom literature, we should keep in mind that it intends to communicate general truths. They are not absolutes in that they will always come true, but rather universal principles for Godly living. An accompanying observation is that David switches to God's personal, covenantal name YHWH. In v. 1, David used God's divine name, the Hebrew word *lae*. So, here in vv. 7-9 we have God's personal name and His very personal instructions for our good!

A second observation is what seems to me to be a logical progression in the terms used to "name" the Scriptures. David starts with the most comprehensive term in v. 7a – "the law," likely making reference to the Hebrew Bible of the time; what we call the Pentateuch – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Today, of course we have all of Scripture, comprised of the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments; 39 books in the Old and 27 in the NT. Then in v. 7b, David identifies the source and authority of the law – it is the LORD's own testimony. The apostle Paul tells us precisely the same thing in the NT, when he says that all Scripture is God-breathed, or inspired by God (2 Tim 3:16). And last, in the two lines of v. 8, David points out the content of the God's testimony; it contains His precepts, which represent His general principles and guidelines, and His commandments, which communicate His binding decrees. Do you see the progression? First the book itself – called "the law;" then the book's author – "the LORD;" and last the book's content – "the precepts and commandments."

A third observation comes from our Scripture reading this morning. I want you to notice the parallels between Ps 19:7-9 and the introductory section of Ps 119. It would seem that Ps 19 is a teaser for Ps 119 or maybe better, it is the "Readers Digest version" that prepares us for the tribute to the surpassing value of the Scriptures in Ps 119. The NT books of Galatians and Romans have a similar connection. Hold your place in Ps 19 and turn with me to Ps 119:1-8 and let me point out the perfect parallel. Both in the words used and the order of presentation. Note first in v. 1 of Ps 119 – "the law of the Lord," exact same starting point, exact same words as in v. 7a of Ps 19. Then in v. 2 – "testimonies" – same word, same order as in v. 19:7b; and again in v. 4 – the word "precepts" parallels v. 8a. Now stay with me. Down in v. 6 of Ps 119 "commandments" – yup, you guessed it, same word as in 19:8b; and lastly in v. 7 – "judgments," – exactly the same word as v. 9b! Very interesting, don't you think? If we ever question that the Bible is the product of one Divine author, speaking through its human authors, all we have to do is notice the continuity, or maybe better, the connectedness of the Bible – It is flawless. How do we account for this with over 40 different

human authors? By acknowledging its Divine source – GOD. Peter tells us this very thing in his second letter chapter 1 vv. 20-21 when he says, “*But know this first of all, no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, BUT men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*” And these words are even more weighty, when you consider that, in addition to expressing the source of Scripture, Peter is also highlighting the superiority of the written word over experience and other forms of revelation. He does this by saying the prophetic word is “*more sure*” (v. 19) than what Peter experienced in the transfiguration of Christ (vv. 16-18) – which would surely have been a stunning encounter! What is Peter saying? Simply this: We don’t put our faith in feelings or “mountain-top” experiences. Rather, we place our faith in the written word!

A fourth and final general observation is the focus of David’s interest ... it is so much more than just spewing out information about the nature of Scripture. Instead, he wants us to understand its impact on our lives. David makes my job simple by just going ahead and giving us the application in the final part of each clause – He says, *it restores the soul, it makes us wise, it brings joy to our hearts, it illuminates our eyes*, and with our submission to it, *it endures forever*. The richness of Scripture is amazing, but what astounds me even more is how much Scripture communicates in so few words!! These tightly packed “wisdom statements” in vv. 7-9 tell us everything we need to know about Scripture, along with every beneficial effect it will produce in our lives when we are obedient to it!

Verses 7-8 communicate four fundamental truths about the comprehensive nature of the Scriptures. Let me refresh our memories by reading these two verses again – *READ vv. 7-8. Verse 7a says:*

“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.” (Psa 19:7-8 NAS)

Verse 7a says: The Scriptures instruction inspires repentance: David starts with the most comprehensive name that he could use for the Scriptures, as they existed in his lifetime “*the law.*” It is not limited to the specific legal commands of the Bible, as we use the word today. Rather, the Hebrew word used for “law” is תּוֹרָה (*Torah*), and this is also the name the Jews use for the first five books of the Bible; what we call the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. David is using the word to communicate the idea of everything that God has revealed in His written Word. David goes on to say that the law is perfect – which emphasizes its completeness. The Bible is not lacking in any way, it needs no addition, or subtraction as we are told in Rev 22:18-19. And then he tells us what this produces the restoration of our souls. The Hebrew verb translated “restoring,” is שׁוּבָה (*shoov*), an important OT word! Its literal translation is “*to turn from*” and it is often used to express the action of repentance. It is used in this way here and makes the connection between the perfect nature of the law and the purpose of the law. It is to get us to “*turn from*” one pattern of life to another. Namely from a life lived in disobedience to God to one that lives in obedience to God. Moses says it this way in Deuteronomy 30:15-18, paraphrasing he says love God, walk in His ways and live; or disobey and die! David wants us to know that the law’s instruction inspires repentance! The law is fully able to convert a soul – justification; it is fully able to transform a soul – sanctification; and it is fully able to refresh a soul – restore fellowship with God. David says this beautifully in Ps 51, but we will save that for next week.

Verse 7b says, “The Scriptures witness instills wisdom.” One of the reasons why the law is perfect is because it is God’s own testimony! It is His self-attestation which the Apostle Paul calls “inspired or God-breathed.” It is what God says about Himself. It is not what man says about God! So, the Scriptures are God’s words. A concept we are all probably very comfortable with and take to be absolute truth. Now, because they are God’s words, they are sure. There is a cluster of nuances to understanding this word “sure”. It is confirming, lasting, faithful, or reliable – and all of these descriptions are true. But the description that best conveys David’s thought here is that of making something firm or being foundational. The testimony of God in Scripture is “sure” because it is foundational. You can build on it and its witness instills wisdom in the simple. Simple here is referring to naivete as opposed to a fool. A fool knows and is foolish when he goes against what he knows to be prudent. A naïve person is “unknowing” and needs to be taught and guided. Scripture is his tutor, and when he responds to its testimony he will grow in wisdom. As one builds on the foundation of God’s word, he will withstand the storms of life. He will withstand the storms because he will act on God’s word. That is, he will obey it! This is precisely the point that Jesus makes in the Sermon on the Mount in Matt 7:24-27, when He contrasts the man who builds on the rock with the one who builds on the sand.

Then, if you remember the summary of the Sermon on the Mount that follows in vv. 28-29 of Matthew chapter 7, we have the perfect segue to v. 8. Paraphrasing: People were amazed by Jesus teaching (v. 28). Why? Because He taught authoritatively (v. 29)! In what way was Jesus’ teaching authoritative? Well, I’m glad you asked. It is authoritative because He taught the precepts and commandments of God. Precisely what David now reveals in v. 8!

Verse 8a says: The Scriptures prescriptions produce joy: God exposes His will to us in the Bible. He does this in two particular ways – his precepts and his commands. In v. 8a David deals with God’s precepts. God’s preceptive will consists of His principles and guidelines, given to us in the Bible. They are intended to steer and direct our conduct. They are good and acceptable and perfect. Paul probably captures this idea in Rom 12:2 when he says, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed in the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove (that is demonstrate through our lives) what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

God’s precepts, David says are right and they produce joy in our hearts. The word “right” here expresses the idea of being straight, upright more than the idea of its antonym, being wrong or incorrect. David is emphasizing the morality or the virtue of God’s instructions for our life. God would never prescribe something that would harm us; that would be totally inconsistent with His nature. James says it this way in his letter, chapter 1 and vv. 16-18. He says, “Do not be deceived my beloved brethren. Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.” In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth (THERE IT IS ... The Scriptures – God’s written revelation to us!), so that we would be a kind of first fruits among his creatures. But like any prescription, it does us no good unless we take it ... as the Doctor prescribed it! Again, I appeal to James’ continuing commentary in vv. 19-22. He says, “This you know (referring back to vv. 13-18), my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. But prove yourselves to be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

So there it is, God gives us the choice. Heed His word that is, receive it and do it. When we do, His prescriptions produces joy in our heart. The prophet Jeremiah says it vividly, “Your words were found and I ate them, And Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart” (Jer 15:16). Jeremiah took God’s words into his heart he “consumed” them, as we should! This does not mean that life will always be easy. What it does mean is that even in difficulty, IF we cling to God’s precepts, His principles, His guidelines ... we can experience joy!!

Verse 8b says: The Scriptures decrees generate illumination: If God’s precepts are good for us, then God’s commandment is authoritative over us. This is the difference between a precept and a commandment. God’s commandments are his decrees. God’s commandments, along with His precepts, comprise the totality of God’s revealed will in the Bible. Unlike the precepts, God’s decrees are entirely binding and they “will be done.” They are not dependent upon our actions ... or obedience ... in any way. Doctrinally we say it this way: God’s decrees are his ‘eternal, unchangeable, efficacious decrees in which He has predetermined all things.’ All of what God says in the Bible is important, but some of the things He communicates are set in stone. God has predetermined that these things will happen. And praise God for that. For instance, the promises that God makes in the Bible are set in stone. The assurance of eternal life conditioned upon belief in Christ is set in stone. God’s Word itself is set in stone! Jesus says this very thing in Matthew’s gospel ... in chapter 24 and v. 35. He says, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.”

David describes God’s decrees as absolutely pure. There is no defect, imperfection, deficiency, error, fault, or inadequacy in them. What they produce is “light” for our eyes. In other words, God’s written word generates illumination. Illumination is the work of God, through the Holy Spirit, by which He enables the individual person to spiritually and intimately understand and welcome the Scriptures. Understanding of the Scriptures can only be experienced by the regenerate, that is true believers. The unregenerate (unbelievers) can read Scripture, but in the absence of a saving relationship with Christ, they cannot discern the things revealed by the Bible, which Paul clearly explains in 1 Cor 2:13-14.

The writer of Ps 119 embraces David’s point in v. 105, saying: “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” In other words, God’s Word lights up the road we should follow and prevents us from stumbling. The parallelism of 119:105 says two things about the illuminating power of God’s word. First it shows us the path immediately before us, the lamp to my feet. We might compare this to the low beams of a car’s headlights that illuminate what is immediately ahead. But if we are traveling too fast, the low beams lose their effectiveness. In this case we switch to the high beams which give us visibility further down the road, the light to my path. It is the same with God’s word. It provides visibility both to our next step (e.g. immediate decisions) as well as to the longer road ahead (e.g. longer-term planning).

God doesn’t leave us to guess about His will for our lives. In its most simple form, God’s will for us is to love Him and obey His commandments. Through the words of Scripture God enlightens our eyes, providing us with every detail necessary to honor and glorify Him!

Now you might be wondering why I did not include v. 9 with vv. 7-8, given that the first line of the verse follows the same grammatical pattern. Well, it is not because I missed it! Rather, because David’s shifts his focus from Scripture’s attributes in vv. 7-8 to an emphasis on their intended influence in v. 9. In other words, v. 9 seems to concentrate on what the Scriptures should inspire in us, that is, their influence on our lives. The first influence is to inspire a reverence for God, and the second is to inspire a respect for God’s standards of justice.

“The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.” (Psa 19:8 NAS)

Verse 9a says: The Scriptures inspire reverence for God – expressed as the fear of the LORD. Moses said precisely this when he addressed the nation of Israel in Deuteronomy 4! Turn with me and let’s read vv. 7-10

"For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as is the LORD our God whenever we call on Him? ⁸ "Or what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole law which I am setting before you today? ⁹ "Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your sons and your grandsons. ¹⁰ "*Remember* the day you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, when the LORD said to me, 'Assemble the people to Me, that I may let them hear My words so they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children.'" (Deu 4:7-10 NAS)

The phrase fear of the LORD is often misunderstood. There is a definite sense in which we should actually fear God. Jesus expresses it in Matt 10:28 when He says, “Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him (GOD!) who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” But here David is using the phrase to convey the idea of having a reverential awe for God. The God who spoke the words of Scripture demands our reverence. In a very real sense, David is still talking about the Scriptures in v. 9, but what he does is focus on their intended effect (i.e. the fear of the LORD) versus the Scriptures themselves.

King Solomon features the fear of the LORD multiple times in the book of Proverbs, describing what it inspires in the believer – to sample a few, the fear of the LORD inspires the beginning of knowledge (1:7), discernment (2:5), a hatred for evil (8:13), the beginning of wisdom (9:10), life and long life (10:27; 19:23), and much more. Time does not permit us to more fully explore this phrase, but I commend the Proverbs to you to fully grasp what the fear of the Lord inspires in the believer.

David goes on to describe the nature of our reverence for God and His Scriptures as clean. Reverence for God will scrub you better and more thoroughly than any known detergent of man. More than man’s methods for doing things, more than psychology which is nothing more than man’s evaluation of man, and more than uncontrolled feelings or spiritual experiences! Another reason that the Scriptures are so much more is because they are enduring forever. Isaiah says so in 40:8, the grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of our God stands forever. And Jesus says the same thing in both Matt 5:17-18, and 24:35. Nothing with pass away from the Scriptures until all is accomplished. The point is this, the Scriptures which inspire the effect (i.e. fearing God) are enduring. They will not pass away, nor should our reverential awe for God pass away. It should only improve as we conform to the image of His son and one day experience Him in glory.

Verse 9b says: The Scriptures inspire respect for Gods standards of justice. The final line of v. 9 departs from the pattern of vv. 7-9a. The introductory formula remains the same – “The judgements of the LORD are truth.” But David alters the final part of the clause with a second assertion about the nature of the LORD’s judgments. He says that we should view them as altogether righteous. They are morally right and completely justifiable. In other words, God’s judgments are always fair!! How can this be? Well, because God’s judgments rely on what He reveals to us in Scripture. Scripture is God’s revealed standard for administering His righteous judgments. The

Scriptures are the only source of unfailing absolute truth, despite the World's insistence that all truth is relative! By means of the Word, God establishes His standards for justice. If we violate His precepts and His commands, we should fully expect His righteous judgment of our sin. This seems to be a straightforward, logical, and fair conclusion. Yet we often want to question God's justice and His "fairness" just as the Israelites did; the very thing the prophet Ezekiel addresses 18:25-32. You can read this on your own later.

To me, the more amazing thing is not God's fairness in judgment, but rather God's mercy in forgiveness! Peter makes just this point in his second letter, "The Lord is not slow about His promise (i.e. to come to judge), as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9)

Wow, I don't know about you, but my mind is cramping and I'm out of breath! I really am sorry to do this to you, but these verses just don't let up in their intensity. Verses 7-9 are marvelously packed with truth for life. By way of a quick summary of vv. 1-9, the German theologian, Immanuel Kant, speaks well when he says, "Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe: the starry heavens above (which summarizes vv. 1-6) and the moral law within' (which summarizes vv. 7-9). While I would have much to disagree about with Kant's theology, he nevertheless admirably summarizes David's awe for God's unspoken word in the created world, and God's spoken word in the written Scriptures.

Which leads us to vv. 10-11 where David gives us a little breather from the "heavy stuff." In these two verses, David offers his commentary on Scripture's incomparable excellence; first expressing its surpassing worth in v. 10, and then its practical utility for our lives in v. 11. In these two verses, David will express his appreciation for the Scriptures:

"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 Thy servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward." (Psa 19:10-11 NAS)

The Scriptures are Incomparably Excellent (vv. 10-11)

Now David actually does all the work for me in vv. 10-11, so I won't belabor them, except to say there is one tricky connection we need to make before we jump into vv. 10-11. The plural pronoun that begins v. 10 the word "they" refers to God's judgments. To make sense of David's meaning, we need to remember what I just explained about God's, they are judgments are inseparably tied to God's Word – that is, the Scriptures. In a very real sense then, David's evaluation is directed at the excellence of the Scriptures, which form the basis for God's judgments, as much as they are directed at God's judgments themselves. So, for the sake of clarity, I am going to use the word "Scriptures" as a synonym for God's judgments in my discussion that follows. I will appeal to John 12:48 to support connecting these two words as synonyms. Jesus says, He who rejects me and does not receive my sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day." Jesus says that the word, that is, the Scriptures, is the judge that will pass judgment! This same principle is at work here in Ps. 19. We don't have time for a more detailed explanation – so please trust me and feel free to see me after the message if you disagree or want more detail!

So back to v. 10. In v. 10, David pauses to express his evaluation of what he has told us in vv. 7-9. In David's mind the Scriptures have surpassing worth, there is nothing in the natural world that can compare to their significance! Then in v. 11, David applies the Scriptures to his life, noting their practical utility. In v. 11 David is saying there is nothing to compare to their usefulness!

The Scriptures Surpassing Worth (v. 10): David's evaluation employs two straightforward comparisons. The first line of v. 10 says the Scriptures are most precious. In fact more-so than the most valuable commodity – gold, even much fine gold. This idea should not be very foreign to us here in America, as our own currency is backed by gold. In other words, we have a “gold standard.” David is saying that the essential value of Scripture exceeds the most valuable commodity known to mankind.

In the second line of v. 10, David moves to the sweetest natural substance in nature – honey. Scripture, like honey, is to be savored. It is to be tasted and enjoyed completely. I think David uses this metaphor to express the superiority of the Scriptures experiential value.

Putting the two thoughts together David says this: The Scriptures are to be valued over and above anything we can possess or experience in the natural world. And this idea should not surprise us, because the Scriptures are God's gold standard!

Having commented on the Scriptures surpassing worth, David will now conclude with their practical utility for our lives.

The Scriptures Practical Utility (v. 11): I love the way David ends. He doesn't view Scripture in the abstract – that is as existing in thought absent any concrete value. The Scriptures are not theoretical. Rather they have practical utility for our lives. In v. 11, David highlights two benefits for applying the Scriptures to our lives.

The first is their “sirens call.” Like the horn of a car, or the siren of an approaching ambulance, or a fire alarm, the Scriptures provide us an urgent warning! Against what? Against the pervasive and corrosive effect of sin! It also protects us against the lies, deceptions, and errors of the world promulgated by Satan. We need the Bible because we have a world system all around us that is promoting its value system. The apostle John captures how we should respond when he says, “Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life is not from the Father, but it is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever – 1 John 2:15-17. John Bunyan captures David's idea well when he said, “This Book will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this Book.” The Bible is God's antidote to sin! The OT prophets warned Israel – they didn't listen. The Bible warns us – Are you listening?

And then David concludes by telling us that in keeping them there is great reward. James Montgomery Boice helpfully points out the most important thing to pay attention to in this verse. Notice the verb! David does not say that you will receive a reward, that is a future reward. Rather, he says that there are rewards in keeping the Scriptures right now! As we obey the Scriptures day-to-day there is reward. Not only reward, but great reward. Boice says it this way, “Virtue is its own reward.” In other words, keeping God's word is a reward in and of itself! Now, this does not deny future rewards. Paul clearly states the reality of future rewards in 1 Corinthians 3:14. But David's focus is on the present, the here and now, our present lives and the present reality on earth. Maybe we can conclude by saying it this way: There is great reward in living a submissive life that is obedient to God's word, because the righteous are already blessed in their righteousness!

Conclusion

We have come to the end of God's special revelation in the Scriptures. So how do we sum this all up? How should we respond to God's word? Well, our response to God's word is contingent upon our relationship with God and there are only two options. You have either responded to God's word and have been saved by it, or you are still dead in your sin!

If you are here today and you have not responded to God's word, let me tell you what the Scriptures say about your condition – and the remedy.

1. They say that you have been born with a spiritually fatal condition. Paul says it this way in Romans 3:10, "There is none righteous, not even one." He goes on in v. 23 saying, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." So that is the starting point!
2. Paul goes on to tell us the penalty for this condition in 6:23a. He says, "the wages of sin is death" This is God's verdict regarding your condition. While we will all experience physical death, here Paul is referring to spiritual death. So, up to this point we have what I call the bad news!
3. Paul follows this with the most important word used in the Bible – the word "but". How can that be the most important word? Because it introduces the remedy for our sinful condition in the balance of v. 23 the beginning of the GOOD news.
4. In the second half of v. 23 Paul says, "BUT the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." What can this mean other than that God has a solution to our birth defect and that solution is Christ. What did Christ do?
5. Jesus fully paid for sin. God the Son came to earth in the form of a man. He lived a perfect life. He accepted an unjust condemnation and died for our sins on the Cross. And most important He was resurrected and returned to His former glory; sitting at the right hand of God and interceding for all who belong to him! Followers of Christ worship a living God – not some dead idol. So, what do you do with this?
6. Well, you need to first accept and acknowledge our condition along with the fact that we can do nothing about it on our own! You must confess your sin and repent from it – that is turn from your sin to Christ. How do you do that?
7. Well, again, Paul tells us in Romans 10:9-11. Paul says, "... if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, YOU WILL BE SAVED. For with the heart a person believes resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. For the SCRIPTURE says, 'Whoever believes on Him will not be disappointed.'" Did you notice the certainty! Paul didn't say, you might be saved, or there is a good chance that you will be saved. He says with unequivocal certainty – you WILL be saved!
8. So, if you are here today and these words describe you – my prayer and that of all God's followers in this body is that you will respond by understanding who you are and then claim God's free gift to you.

Now Paul goes on in Romans 10 with a note to believers. Our first duty should be obedience to God's word in every aspect of our life. But there is a particularly preeminent duty that we should embrace ... and this is what Paul gives us in vv. 14-15 of chapter 10. He says, "How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel! We are all preachers in this sense. And as such, we are all called to proclaim the gospel to the unbelieving world. So, let me close with two questions:

1. First, if you have not yet believed in Jesus – will today be the day for you?
2. Second, to all of you who have chosen to believe in Jesus Christ, I ask you this – How beautiful are your feet? ... Are you fulfilling your duty to make disciples by sharing the gospel?

Let's pray.

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