Congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ,

One rock band wrote a song about their view of god and said this: Why do the gods sit back and watch so many lost? What kind of mother leaves a child in the traffic turning tricks in the dark? What kind of god? When I meet god, I’m going to ask her, What makes her cry? What makes her laugh? Is she just stars and indigo gas? Does she know why love has no end, but its dark-angel friend tearing women and men slowly apart?

And as hard as it is for believers to hear someone talk about God like that, I dare say that this is basically how many people, if they allow for the possibility that god exists, think about that god today – a God or gods, he or she, gas, distant, cruel, and uncaring.

And this puts those people in very much the same position as the Men of Athens that we read about a few moments ago. Paul could see that they were religious and that they worshipped many gods , but they needed to know about the one, true God.

So the question is, though, how do we know that this God *exists* and how can we know Him? Why is God not Zeus or Allah or just stars and indigo gas? How can the one, true God be known?

Well, Psalm 19 answers these questions by explaining that God can be known because He reveals Himself to us. If you have someone new at school, boys and girls, or a new neighbour or someone new at the office, brothers and sisters, you can get to know them by approaching them and asking them questions about themselves. But of course, we can’t do this with God. We can’t go to God and ask Him questions about Himself. The only way we can know God is if He makes Himself known to us. And Psalm 19 explains that God makes Himself known to us in two ways, through creation and by His word.

Now, let me just say here that this sermon owes a lot to Dale Ralph Davis’s commentary on Psalm 19. I have borrowed his title and his points and even some of his thoughts about its content. So there you have the sermon credits, if you like.

Psalm 19 is a psalm of worship. It ends with the magnificent profession of faith in v14, “*O Lord, you are my rock and my redeemer*.” And that is the right response to God’s revelation of Himself. But the Psalmist gets there having meditated on how God reveals Himself in creation and in His word.

So Dale Ralph Davis calls this Psalm **Worship from the Top Down**. The Psalmist’s worship begins at the top with God’s magnificent creation, then he comes down to praise God’s glorious word, and he ends with personal confession and profession. So our three points this afternoon are what we should **see**, in vv1-6, what we should **hear**, in vv7-10, and what we should **say**, vv11-14.

1. So we begin with what we should **see**, from vv1-6.
   1. Vv1-6 are very plainly about creation. V1 mentions the heavens and the sky, and vv4-6 focus on the Sun. So the emphasis here is on what we can ***see*** up in the sky.
      1. In fact, v3 goes to great lengths to emphasize this by telling us that “*there is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard*.” So what is being described in vv1-6 is not about audible words that we can listen to or words written on a page that we can read; they are about what we can see.
      2. But there is a very loud message in what we can see! So even though the Psalmist says there is *no* speech or words or voice, he also says in v2 that creation “*pours out speech*” and that the heavens ‘declare’ something and that the sky above ‘proclaims’ something. So there is a powerful message in creation.
      3. And that message is God revealing Himself. As we look up at the sky, we see the one, true God revealing Himself.
   2. Now, creation is not just the sky. *All* of creation reveals God. The points the Psalmist makes in vv1-6 could be made just as well if we were to talk about atoms and molecules and DNA and microscopes. For the smallest parts of creation also declare the glory of God and proclaim His handiwork. But let’s work with the Psalmist’s focus, which is the sky and particularly the Sun.
      1. A little bit of Google Sun research revealed that our Sun is the ideal size to support life on earth. Betelgeuse is a red supergiant. But it would engulf the inner planets. Rigel is a blue/white supergiant – 25,000 times brighter than our Sun! But it gives off too much radiation. And a smaller Sun would be too faint to support life.
      2. Our Sun is also in the ideal position to support life on earth. It runs on an almost exactly circular orbit that is not too near the inner galaxy, where energetic star explosions are quite common, it orbits almost parallel to the galactic plane and just far enough away from galactic centre. Now, I have no clue what that all means but apparently it is very important and very good! ☺
      3. Our Sun is an also exceptionally stable star – a recent study of three other stars of the same size, brightness and composition as our Sun revealed that they erupt around once a century in superflares that are 100 to 100 million times more powerful than the biggest ones recorded by our sun. And that is *not* good!
      4. Now, the Psalmist didn’t have Google. He is far more poetic than I have been. He describes the regular path of the Sun as being like a bridegroom leaving his chamber. Whether this is referring to the place where the marriage was formalized or the nuptial tent, the bridegroom would always come out in those days.
      5. And the Psalmist doesn’t ascribe this to naturalistic evolution. He says at the end of v4 that God has ‘set a tent’ for the Sun in the heavens. In other words, God has placed the Sun in its place, and He directs its path around the galaxy, so that we have heat and light for each day.
   3. And all of this, says the Psalmist, declares “the **glory** of God.” The Hebrew word translated in the Bible as glory literally means ‘weight.’ The idea is substantial and impressive.
      1. **Romans 1** says that “*what may be known about God is plain to [all mankind], because God has made it plain to them. 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 men are without excuse*.” So looking at creation reveals the glory of God; His eternal power and divine nature.
         1. Theologians speak about several proofs for God.
            1. One is the *causal* proof – Everything has a cause, so there must be a very powerful uncaused cause at the beginning – God!
            2. Another proof is the *teleological* proof – no one who found a watch on a beach would assume it had randomly assembled itself together; we assume because of its design and complexity that there must be a designer and watchmaker. Well, how much more with the complexity and beauty and design of creation?!
      2. So creation reveals the existence of an eternal and glorious and powerful God.
   4. And the Hebrew words translated as “declare” and “proclaims” are in a form that means **ongoing and continued action**. We would be quite right to insert the words “daily” or “continually” in v1, “the heavens are *continually* declaring the glory of God and they *daily* proclaim His handiwork. Dale Ralph Davis said, “The heavens and skies are simply bursting to tell us of their Maker and keep pumping out their testimony about Him.”
   5. And all of this is why our Belgic Confession of Faith article describes creation as a “**most beautiful book**.” We gave our grand-daughter the book ‘*Spot visits his grandparents*.’ Who knows the Spot books? Many of you. Spot books have Flaps. Some books have 3D Pop-ups! Well, creation is a most beautiful 3D-4K-Technicolour book that reveals the glory of God!
2. And because this message can be seen by everyone, this form of God revealing Himself is called ***general*** **revelation**. That is its theological name – general revelation. But even though everyone can see this message, not everyone worships the one, true God. And that is because while general revelation is enough to leave all mankind without excuse when it comes to the existence of God, it is not enough for them to know all that we need to know about God and salvation in Christ. So that is why the Psalmist continues to speak next about what we should **hear** in vv7-10.
   1. vv1-6 were about a message we can *see*, but as we come to vv7-10, we come to the words of God that we can hear and read. And while we might immediately think of the Bible, there is more than just the Bible in view here.
      1. There were many centuries of human existence before Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible. And God spoke to His people during that time. And during OT times, God also spoke to His people via the burning bush and from out the cloud above Mt. Sinai, and in dreams and visions. **Hebrews 1:1** says, “*Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets*.”
      2. And Hebrews 1 continues, “*But in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son*.” Jesus is described in John 1:1 as “the Word of God.” Jesus, the person, is the perfect and fullest revelation of God. That is why Jesus repeatedly states, as we have seen in our John studies, that he who has seen Him has seen the Father. If you want to know God, listen to Jesus.
      3. But of course, God speaks to us today in the Bible. It is to the Bible that we must turn for God’s special and saving revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ.
      4. And that is what is chiefly in view as the Psalmist refers to the law and the testimony and the precepts and the commandments and the rules in vv7-10. It is the Bible that reveals our sinfulness and the Saviour. It is the Bible that reveals the full truth about God and salvation.
   2. And the theological name for this form of how God reveals Himself is **special** **revelation**. And it is called this for two reasons:
      1. First, it is not automatically available to everyone, as is general revelation.
      2. And second, because while general revelation leaves unbelievers without excuse on Judgment Day, special revelation gives us what we need to know in order to be saved, because it reveals sin and salvation in Jesus Christ.
   3. Notice how the Psalmist impresses this upon us. How many times is a name of God mentioned in vv1-6? One. God. The Hebrew word is El. It is the impersonal name by which anyone might describe God. But how many times is a name of God mentioned in vv7-10? 6! And the name used there is always the LORD – Yahweh! God’s special, covenant name. It means the God who graciously draws near to dwell with His people. And He did this most especially through Jesus – Immanuel – God with us. So in terms of what we need to hear, special revelation reveals God as Father through Jesus Christ.
   4. And the Psalmist gets us there by first of all speaking about the ***character*** of God’s word in vv7-9: He says the Law of the Lord is…
      1. V7 – *perfect*, reviving the soul – What do spiritually dead people need above everything else? To have their souls revived! The testimony of the Lord is *Sure*, making wise the simple. The first time we have to cross a road as children, our parents teach us to look both ways before you cross. If they did not do that, we would just run out and probably be hit. So their instruction makes wise the simple. And that’s how God’s law works – it gives us wisdom. Verse 8 – The precepts of the Lord are *right*, rejoicing the heart. Many people have the idea that God’s commandments take the fun out of life. Nothing could be further from the truth! The pathway of obedience is the joyful, wonderful life. Psalm 119 explores this in great detail. The commandment of the Lord is *Pure*, enlightening the eyes. Read the testimony of a drug or sex-addict who has come to know Christ and they will tell you how much enlightenment they receive from God’s law. Verse 9 – the fear of the Lord is *clean*, enduring forever. The rules of the Lord are *True*, righteous altogether. Congregation, 20 years ago, you and your unbelieving neighbour probably agreed about many moral issues. Today though, it seems that anything and everything is up for grabs – euthanasia, drug use, prostitution, homosexuality, transgenderism, the roles of men and women, polygamy, etc. We are much in need of the certainty and objectivity and reliability of God’s enduring standards.
      2. So the Psalmist is building up a total picture of Yahweh’s true, reliable, soul reviving, heart rejoicing, life preserving, enduring words.
      3. And ultimately, the law of the Lord is all these things because it points us to Jesus! Summarizing all of these terms as the Bible, it reveals our sin and guilt and points us to Jesus as our only hope for salvation. But the Bible is also the guide for grateful living – the pathway for the wonderful life that is Christian obedience.
   5. So that’s the character of God’s word. But what v10 is about is the ***desirability*** of God’s Word. “*More to be desired than gold, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb*.” And I must ask you if that how you think about the Bible?
      1. William Tyndale translated the Bible into English. At one time he was in prison. He wrote a letter to his jailer. He said, May I please have a cap, a coat, a patch, and lamp, but above all, I entreat and beseech you to *kindly give me my Hebrew Bible*!
      2. I know that I have often excused my own lack of Bible reading with a lack of time. And I hear many other people offer the same excuse. I just can’t find time to read the Bible. I heard an interview recently with the CEO of Netflix. He was asked about the competition. His surprising reply was not Youtube or Amazon Prime but sleep. They provide so much content, in every style you can imagine, and whole series are made available straight away, that the only think that stops people watching Netflix is the need to sleep. One more episode. We do find time for the things we desire. God’s Word should be desirable to every believer!
3. And why it should be so desirable to us is because of what the Psalmist says about What we should **say** in vv11-14, our third and last point.
   1. I told you before that there are six mentions of the Lord’s name in vv7-10. And in the Bible, six usually leaves us waiting for number seven - the number of perfection. And we have that seventh use of the Lord’s name in v14. It is the Psalmist’s profession of faith! “O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.” But how does the Psalmist get to his profession of faith? How does God’s revelation of Himself get anyone to a profession of faith? Well, in **2 Timothy 3:14-15**, the Apostle Paul described the Bible as “*able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus*.” And it does this because it is through the preaching of the gospel that the Holy Spirit brings sinners to an understanding of their sin and guilt and their need for salvation in Christ. And it is those two things together that are God’s special revelation – the preaching of the gospel and the inward work of the Holy Spirit that reveal God in Jesus Christ. Look how this worked with the Psalmist:
      1. Having spoken about the character and desirability of God’s laws and precepts and rules, the Psalmist says inv11 – “*by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward*.” Obeying God’s law is the pathway of blessing.
      2. But we do not always keep God’s commandments, do we. So God’s law also reveals the many ways we sin. And the reality is that we are so prone to sin and so self-deceived that we sin in ways we are not even aware of! And that is what the Psalmist speaks about this in v12 as he prays, “*Who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from hidden faults*.”
      3. But hidden sins or sins of ignorance are not our only problem. So having prayed about his hidden faults, he continues in v13”*Keep back your servant from presumptuous (wilful) sins*. *Let them not have dominion over me*. *Then I shall be blameless and innocent of great transgression*.”
         1. Perhaps you have heard this anonymous quote: “Watch your thoughts, for they become words. Watch your words, for they become actions. Watch your actions, for they become habits. Watch your habits, for they become character. Watch your character, for it becomes your destiny.”
         2. The Bible teaches us that God preserves His children in faith. But we may not use that truth as an excuse for spiritual laziness. We should never take sin lightly because it kills!
      4. And all this is why it is so important that we see where the Psalmist lands; he says, “*Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer*.”
         1. The Psalmist’s confidence and comfort was not in himself and his ability to not sin; it was in the Lord. He looked forward in faith to the one that the sacrifices and ceremonies of the OT pointed towards.
         2. And we know from the Bible that is One is the Lord Jesus Christ. We know that God sent His Son to die on the cross that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. We know that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Is that what you believe? Is your response to the revelation of God’s glory and the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ one of faith? Do you know the Lord as your rock and redeemer? May it be so! Amen!