

A Silent Sun and a Talking Book

(Psalm 19)

(preached 1/8/18; Pine Grove BC Sun AM)

Introduction

Christianity is constantly under attack.

There are scores of people everyday trying to ease their guilty consciences by erasing God in the world and in their own minds.

In their way of thinking, all will be well if God can simply go away.

So, the attacks come in all shapes and sizes..

But one of the ways to attack God is to attack his character...

Oprah Winfrey has said that she rejects God ever since she read that God is a jealous God...

Jodie Foster rejects God because he doesn't reveal Himself to her..

But one of the attributes of God that is most attacked is the idea of God's fairness.

You may have heard this question before..

It goes something like this..

“What happens to the person in the world who never hears the name of Christ and the gospel of salvation?”

“If someone in a South American jungle never hears the gospel, how can God hold them accountable?”

And the motivation of that question is often a desire to call God unfair...

You see, if God has said that you must call on the name of Christ into order to be saved...

Which by the way, He has said that in Acts 4:12 and other places in Bible...

12 And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.

So if God requires salvation through the name of Christ and if there are people who have never heard that name, isn't it unfair of God to send them to hell?

So how do we answer that charge of God's apparent unfairness?

How does someone in an area of the world without knowledge of the name of Christ get saved?

Well, it is a combination of two things that God gives to us in Psalm 19 that lead a person like that to saving faith...

The first is the World...

And the second is the Word..

So, let's look this Psalm this morning, and this is a great way to prepare our hearts for the Lord's Table...

The Lord's is a celebration of Christ's death of the cross, where he took on the believer's sin as our substitute.

And every time we come to table, we celebrate that fact but in doing that we are reminded that we know the whole truth about Christ...

And we have embraced that truth about Him...

And we are trusting our lives, deaths, and eternity to that truth...

But how did we get it?

And how do other people get access to that truth as well?

So, let us look at Psalm 16 in the form of 3 questions that help us understand how a person anywhere in the world comes to salvation.

The first question is this..

I. What Does a Person Need to See? (1-6)

*¹The heavens are telling of the glory of God;
And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.*

*²Day to day pours forth speech,
And night to night reveals knowledge.*

*³There is no speech, nor are there words;
Their voice is not heard.*

*⁴Their ^[a]line has gone out through all the earth,
And their utterances to the end of the world.*

Men, if you don't already know it, we need to be experts in non verbal communication.

When your wife gently grabs your side and gives it a nice pinch...

That means you need to stop running your mouth....

When she kicks you under the table...

That means it is time to go and stop running your mouth...

When she smiles and raises your eyebrows at you....

That means "I can't believe you said that" and stop running your mouth.

In short, most if not of all of her non verbal communication or body language always includes the fact that we need to shut up.

But seriously, there are criminal investigators who are experts at body language and all sorts of non verbal communication.

They can tell if a person is lying by all sorts of clues...

Or whether a person is uncomfortable or confused or truthful more by what is not said than what is said.

And God is an expert at the non verbal communication in His creation...

The truth of these first 6 verses is that creations screams about the existence of God .

You have all seen these dog whistles.

You blow real hard but hear nothing, yet the dog will come to you.

That is the truth of God's creation; it says so much by really saying nothing.

The psalms says that the heavens declare the glory of God.

The heavens are simply a reference to the sun, moon, stars, the sky, the clouds...

Simple gazing at the stars is enough to tell a person that God is real.

I love the sunsets this time of year.

The warmer weather of spring makes the sunset orange and purple, but there are reds and pinks and blues....

All added in to create such a masterpiece of God every evening.

And the amazing thing about God's creation is that you cannot escape its beauty.

Verse 4 says that their witness has gone out through all the earth even to the ends of the earth.

Even on the frozen continent of Antarctica, the sunrises are spectacular and the stars are so near and clear.

For that reason, the Bible declares that no man is without excuse when it comes to knowing that God exists.

In the early 1500s Da Vinci painted the masterpiece known as the Mona Lisa.

People call him a master artist even today for one painting over 500 years ago.

God paints a masterpiece every day, yet many refuse to believe that He even exists.

David then turns to an example of God's handiwork in verses 4 -6...

By pointing to the sun....

*In them He has placed a tent for the sun,
5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber;
It rejoices as a strong man to run his course.
6 Its rising is from **[b]**one end of the heavens,
And its circuit to the **[c]**other end of them;
And there is nothing hidden from its heat.*

He writes that the sun runs across the sky every day as a groom coming out of his hotel room ready to be married.

The sun's heat reaches every part of the earth.

And it rises and sets every day.

And all that activity of just the suns screams of a Creator...

So the point of these opening verses is to call people to see the glory of God in the beauty and wonder of Creation..

But let me ask this...

What if this is all we had?

What if the psalm ended here or this is all we knew about God?

How would the world look?

I think we actually see an answer to this question in our world today as people worship creation.

In David's day and even in our day, there are sun worshippers.

There are even people who worship trees throughout the years and even today.

There are certainly star worshipping astrologers.

And they are the result of people who see creation but don't know how to react to it.

The book of Romans says this..

Romans 1:20-24

20 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. 21 For even though they knew God, they did not [n]honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and [o]crawling creatures. 24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. 25 For they exchanged the truth of God for [p]a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed [q]forever. Amen.

Ever used the term Mother Nature?

People say that all the time.

There is no Mother Nature; only Father God.

She doesn't control the weather; God does.

Unfortunately, Mother Nature is created because people either don't have the Scriptures or refuse to believe them.

And so are countless other false religions of the world that worship the creation and not the creator.

This even extends to the animal world and people who worship animals over the One who created the animals.

And that is what happens when you look at creation and either refuse to believe in a Creator or have never read of Him in the Bible.

That is why the Scriptures are so important.

Without them, each of us becomes like these people who worship the creation and not the Creator.

Without the Bible, we would have invented our own religion and worshipped a false god as well.

That is why the Bible is the final word on who God is.

Because God Himself wrote it.

And the truth of this psalm is that creation reveals there is a God...

But only the Word of God reveals him perfectly.

And that leads into part 2 of Psalm 19...

II. What Does a Person Need to Hear? (7-9)

Verse 7...

***⁷ The law of the Lord is ¹⁴perfect, 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.***

People who view the Bible as a rule book are simply missing the boat.

The Bible is surely a book of instruction but it is not instruction that leads to death but to life.

Since they started keeping records, 55 people have fallen from the rim of the Grand Canyon to their death.

They either got too close to the edge and lost their balance or were playing too close to the edge.

So, park rangers put up simple signs to remind people that falling is a possibility.

This is instruction that is meant to be life saving.

Don't get too near the edge or your may die.

It is meant to help people, not restrict them.

And that is the blessing of the Bible.

Sure, it is instruction, but it is instruction designed by God for your protection and care....

But more importantly for your salvation.

And in these few verses, look at all the benefit from God's word.

In verse 7, God's Word restores the soul.

You want to know how to be made right with God?

The Bible is the only source of that truth.

You want to be wise and know how to live in this world?

Verse 7 says that the simple minded are made smart in the Scriptures.

You want happiness?

Verse 8 says that the heart is filled with joy in God's Word.

You want your eyes opened to what is going on in the world?

You don't need the evening news, you need a dose of God's Word in your life.

On Saturday mornings in our men's group, we are talking about having a biblical worldview.

And that means that Christian men, and ladies as well, need to look at our world through the lens of what the Bible teaches.

WE react to everything in our world through a set of lenses that act just like glasses on our nose.

And that is what verse 8 is saying, the Bible allows your eyes to see everything in the right lens.

When a child dies in an earthquake in Haiti..

When a teenager shoots up a school...

When a law is passed in this country...

Believers need to know how to react.

They need a good set of eyes.

The Scriptures provide that.

The truth of these verses is that the Bible is the ultimate source of truth about who God is.

You don't have to scratch your head and try to figure out who God is...

He has revealed it in his word perfectly.

Little kids love picture books.

These cardboard books are hard to destroy and they are mainly made of colorful pictures.

Some are made with any words at all.

And when that is the case, each time you read it, you simply make up your own story.

One night, the dog is a happy dog headed to the park.

The next night he is a mean dog ready to attack.

The point is that wordless books leave the story up to you.

However, most children's books have words.

In that case, you read the story.

And you know what is funny?

Once your kid is old enough to talk to you....

Try to change the story of a familiar book and see what he or she says...

Daddy, that isn't the way it goes.

They get so familiar with the words that they know when you start making stuff up.

The truth of this psalm is that God wrote a picture book all around us every day...

But he did not leave it up to us to make up our own story...

No, he wrote the story down and it not only tells us what we see all around us...

It tells how us what everything in the book means and it tells us how to be right with the One who wrote the story.

That is why this life is not all about what we see, but about what we read and hear in God's Word.

The Bible is enough...

The Bible is sufficient..

In fact, without the word of God, a person is deficient in the knowledge of how to be saved by the God that He sees in creation...

Yes, you can see God in the stars, but you can only know through the Scriptures..

So for any person in the world, he needs to see God in creation but he also needs the word of God in order to know how to be saved,...

This leads us to the final section of Psalm 19....

III. What Does a Person Need to Do? (10-14)

Verse 10....

***¹⁰ They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.***

The first response to God's Word is that you treasure it.

Read it, obey it, memorize it, teach it, hear it preached, protect it.

God's word is an incredible mercy of God.

For men like me who have no mechanical sense, the instructions in the box are a blessing.

For a sinner faced with death, the instruction on how to avoid hell are a tremendous gift from God.

How desirable are they?

More desirable than gold, according to this psalm.

And the contents of the Bible are sweeter than honey on the lips...

How sweet is it to read the Bible and see the truth that God has saved you.

That he is keeping you saved.

That he is providing for your needs.

That he making you more like His Son.

That he has prepared a place for you.

So, the first response is to treasure God's Word...

We see another response in verse 11....

***"Moreover, by them Your servant is warned;
In keeping them there is great reward.***

We must treasure God's Word, but we must also obey it.

This goes without saying....

But you would be surprised at the number of men who are experts in the Scriptures but fail to obey them in their own life.

And that is sad.

The Bible is to be treasured, read and studied, but above all, it is to be obeyed.

A third response is found in verses 12-13...

***Who can discern his errors? Acquit me
of hidden faults.***

***¹³ Also keep back Your servant from presumptuous sins;
Let them not rule over me;
Then I will be blameless,
And I shall be acquitted of great transgression.***

We must not only show thanks and obey God's Word we must also search God's Word.

David is declaring that the Word of God helps us identify sins that we may not know about.

Those are the hidden faults.

But staying in the Scriptures also keeps us from presumptuous sins...

Which are sins that we knowingly violate.

And the cure for those is not to avoid reading God's Word....

But to read it all the more and meditate on it all the more.

We hide God's word in our heart so that what?

We may not sin against God.

The Bible alerts us to every little sin, but it also keeps us from every big sin.

That is why we must stay in it.

And then the psalm closes with a very familiar verse to all of us....

14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart

***Be acceptable in Your sight,
O Lord, my rock and my Redeemer.***

The final cry of David is for God to make him a man of the Word, to make him an acceptable man in God's sight.

The final point of this psalm is that the ability to be acceptable to God comes in a general way through what we see in creation...

But the specific way to be acceptable to God only comes through knowledge of the word of God..

Conclusion

So how does this answer our question about the process of God being able to save anyone in the world?

Here are few thoughts to consider...

#1 - God uses His people to carry the gospel to the world.

Let me answer a few of the original questions in a hypothetical way..

Let's say a woman in a remote area of the world is fascinated with creation...

She sees the stars, the sun, the moon, the world around her and know that there a God who created this all..

So she wants to know how to know that God...

God who hears and sees all knows that no one is saved apart from the name of Christ...

So, what does God do?

He works out a plan to get someone to her with the name of Christ and the gospel found in the Bible..

This is why we as the people are missionaries every day.

You may not think about this but in South Carolina today, there are people who have not heard of Christ..

That is why you take the name of Christ with you wherever you go...

That is why we give out Bible and tracts that contain the word of God..

That is why we support people who go on mission trips and serve as permanent missionaries...

Salvation requires someone to hear and trust in the name of Christ, so we must make sure that name gets out..

And I assure you that God can get the gospel to anyone that needs it...

You may remember in the book of Acts the story of the Ethiopian eunuch.

He had a desire to know how to be saved, so God supernaturally sent Philip to him to explain the Bible to him so that he could be saved, and then God supernaturally snatched Philip away..

I encourage to read that in Acts 8:25-40 this afternoon to see how God can take the Bible and the gospel to anyone anywhere at anytime..

But that also means that we need to be ready to go ourselves..

#2 - The Word of God in the Bible is sufficient.

You may already see this in me, but I am committed to the Scriptures...

Not because that is what preachers do, but simply because the Bible is a treasure..

I have little tolerance for people devaluing the Word of God...

With the Scriptures, I have no idea how to be saved, how to live, how to do anything as a Christian...

Without the Scriptures, I am only guessing the exact nature of God....

Yes, I have the Holy Spirit but what does the Spirit do?

He points to the book that He wrote...

I am saddened by so many Christians who think that the Bible is not enough...

Now, they don't outright say that, but they live out that conviction by looking for other sources of help, seeking experiences, neglecting the study of the Scriptures...

I assure you that the Bible is not only free of error, it is also free of any competition in this world.

The church doesn't need any more words from God that what He has given us here.

If the person in the remote jungle needs the word to be saved, the church certainly needs it to live by..

#3 - The World and the Word lead us to Christ.

Listen to Colossians 1:15-16...

15 [w]He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For [x]by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.

Christ created the world, Christ is the Word, and the reason for that that is both of them point to Him...

Why is the sunrise gorgeous?

To provoke people to seek Christ.

Why is the Bible understandable?

To lead people to salvation in Christ...

And this morning, my prayer is that you seen the glory of God in creation...

And as you came to understand that there is a God...

God also sent someone to point to the Bible to tell you that you can be acceptable to the God of creation by repenting of your sins and trusting in Christ alone to save you...

That is the story of most of our lives, and if it is not the story of your life, maybe today God has brought the good news of salvation in Christ to your ears..

We are going to gather around the Lord's Table now...

This is also known as communion or the Lord's Supper in some circles..

It is simply a time to take our eyes off ourselves and put on our eyes and our minds on Christ...

This ordinance of the church is reserved for believers in Christ who are not living in unrepentant sin...

Unrepentant sin is not the occasional sin that plagues all believers, it is the continual sin of the heart living in known disobedience to the word of God....

If you are here this morning as an unbeliever or a believer living in sin, I must ask you to not take part in the Lord's Supper or you will be guilty of taking part in an unworthy manner...

And that is prohibited by the Word of God..

Though I give that warning, I must also let you know that you can repent in your heart now either of your unbelief or of your unrepentant sin...

And God will honor that repentance and you can part in this celebration of Christ's death for the guilty sinner...

I also remind all parents that your child's participation is a matter of your discretion, but please realize the seriousness of what we do every time we come to the Lord's Table...

With that said, I want the church to know that this is a great reminder of the truth that we hold dear...

As we prepare to pass the bread and the cup, I would encourage to express your thanks to God that the truth got to your ears..

Both the truth we see in creation but more importantly the truth we see in the Scriptures that led us to salvation in Christ...

To God be the Glory.

Let us pray..