

I Stand in Awe of You

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[0 : 0 0] All right, as we come together now to look into the Word of God, I invite you to open your Bibles up to Psalm chapter 19. We're in the Psalms this summer, a different Psalm each day, each Sunday.

And last week we heard a little bit of a lament, and this week we are looking at a Psalm that really speaks of awe of God.

I'm going to read the passage from Psalm 19, and then we'll go into some thoughts on it. For the director of music, a Psalm of David, the heavens declare the glory of God.

The skies proclaim the work of His hands. Day after day they pour forth speech. Night after night they reveal knowledge.

They have no speech. They use no words. No sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth. Their words to the ends of the world.

[1 : 0 9] In the heavens, God has pitched a tent for the sun. It's like a bridegroom coming out of His chamber. Like a champion rejoicing to run His course.

It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other. Nothing is deprived of its warmth. The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul.

The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart.

The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever.

The decrees of the Lord are firm, and all of them are righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold.

[2 : 1 3] They are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb. By them, Your servant is warned. In keeping them, there is great reward.

But who can discern their own errors? Forgive my hidden faults. Keep Your servant also from willful sins. May they not rule over me.

Then I will be blameless. Innocent of great transgression. May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in Your sight, Lord.

My rock and my redeemer. So this song of David has three distinct parts to it.

Now we don't know a lot about Hebrew music in ancient times, whether they had verses and choruses like we do in our songs today. But it seems as though there are distinct parts, much like some of the verses of How Great Thou Art.

[3 : 1 8] Each one focuses on a different theme. We see that in here. The first part that we see is in verses 1 to 6, where David sings about how the heavens proclaim God's glory.

The second part, David seems to focus on a different thing. Verses 7 to 11. He sings about how the scriptures proclaim God's glory.

And then finally, the final part, verses 12 to 14, is kind of a personal prayer to God. David speaking about his own relationship with the Lord and asking for some things.

Now we might wonder if we're just reading through this on our own. Why does it all of a sudden just change when we get to verse 7? We don't know the reason, but probably if we try to read this like this is, you know, a systematic theology textbook, it's just not going to feel right.

Why is he jumping around? But we have to remember, these are song lyrics. We have to read them as song lyrics. The one, I'm not going to call it main point, because it's not really a point, but the one unifying sentiment of this whole psalm, is I think David is just simply speaking from the heart, saying, my glorious God, I stand in awe of you.

[4 : 49] And these things that he lays out in each of these parts, they're the reasons, they're the things that have sparked this awe in David's heart. So let's see that, starting in the first part, in verse 1.

The heavens declare the glory of God. The skies proclaim the work of his hands. We know that David was a shepherd, which means that he probably spent a lot of time sitting out there in the field, in the day and through the night, looking after those sheep, staring up at the skies.

By night, seeing the stars. Throughout the day, watching as the sun rose at one end of the heavens and made its circuit all the way to the other.

And what did David see out there? Or rather, what did he hear? Let me paraphrase David's words here. It's as if he's saying, when I look up at the heavens, I hear them speaking.

I hear them declaring how glorious God is. I hear them shouting out loudly, just how excellent is the work of your hands, Lord.

[6 : 17] According to David, creation speaks. The things that God has made speak. And they speak about something in particular.

David says, the things that God has made speak about his glory. His excellence, his greatness, his grandeur, his radiance.

They speak of the kind of work that his hands are capable of. Now, David is looking up here. Heavens and skies are kind of the two words that he uses to describe his field of view.

So we'll stick with that for a moment. When I look up there, says David, I hear the things that I see shouting loudly, how glorious you are, God.

How awesome. How capable you are in what you can fashion and do with your hands.

[7 : 27] David goes on in verse two to say this. Day after day, those things up there that I see, they pour forth speech. Night after night, they reveal knowledge.

So the message that David hears when he looks up, it's not just a once in a while thing. It's an ongoing message.

It's not just a couple simple phrases that just kind of spark him about who God is. No, the longer David looks, the more he hears, the more he sees about how glorious God is.

As each day passes, there's yet more to see, more to reflect on, more to know. The things up there have a lot to say about God and his greatness, his goodness.

Enough to reveal new things about him day after day and night after night. From there, David says, they have no speech.

[8 : 33] They use no words. No sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.

Now there's some variance on the translation here, but probably it has very little effect on the overall meaning. We see two things here that David wants to convey. First, and again, depending a little bit on your translation, David seems to acknowledge that those things up there in the sky that I'm looking at, the sun, the moon, the stars, those are things that don't speak.

They don't use words. They don't have a voice that you can hear because they're inanimate objects. They're impersonal things. And yet, he says, they do speak.

There is a voice that we can hear from them saying things about who God is. Speechless things that speak and a silent voice that is heard.

The second thing that he conveys here in this, regardless of your translation, David describes who they speak to, the audience.

[9 : 47] He says, the things up there speak to all humanity, everyone on earth. Their silent voice is heard by everyone. You get the sense that it doesn't matter what language a person speaks, anywhere on the planet, all over the globe, anyone can look up and hear what these things up there are saying about how glorious God is, about how capable he is.

And then at this point in the song, David goes on to give an example of this, a specific example. And using that poetic phrasing in the song, he points us to the sun.

And he describes from his vantage point what it's like, very poetically. It's like God has pitched a tent somewhere up there for the sun, given a home or a dwelling place to the sun.

And from our field of view, you know it just kind of rises out of nowhere. It emerges. And then it makes its circuit, its course, from one end of the heavens all the way to the other.

And David has two metaphors that he brings in here. He describes it like a champion running its course and like a bridegroom emerging out of his chamber.

[11 : 07] Now, I'll be the first to admit, I'm not exactly sure what David intended by these two metaphors. What did he have in mind? Was it that the sun brings happiness to all who see it when it emerges, like the bridegroom does when he comes out and everybody sees him on the day of his wedding?

Or is it that a champion is unstoppable? As he runs his race, he rejoices knowing nothing can stop him or slow him down. In the same way the sun, it just keeps that pace all the way through.

Nothing can stop it or slow it down. I don't know about these metaphors, that's my best guess at them. You know, some things in the Psalms, the poetic beauty is lost on us because of that gap of time and culture and language.

But that's okay. David's point seems to be that God is so awesome, he is so glorious because he's the one who established this thing. He's the one who put that sun up there, the ball of fire, and gave it its home and established its course and made it to give warmth and light.

And if he can do that, then what kind of a God is he? How big? How powerful? How great? How kind?

[12 : 32] To see that every day, without fail, some measure of warmth touches the earth and everything on it. David's inviting us to listen with him and to look with him at one thing that God has made and established.

And this is just one example, according to David, of how the heavens declare the glory of God. Do you hear the awe and wonder in the heart of David?

And do you see where he gets it from? From looking up in the sky? Well, there's a broader principle here, an even larger truth.

It's not just space, the heavens, the stuff up there that declares the glory of God. In fact, it's all creation, all of it. The things up there and the things down here that God has made as well.

All of it is shouting loudly how excellent, how wise, how glorious, how good, how powerful God is. And it all does so with that same sort of silent voice that the heavens use.

[13 : 49] Now, the stuff that's up there might have some unique things to say about the glory of God. I grew up watching Star Trek with my dad and I used to love sitting down and doing that with him.

Now, I know that Star Trek is fantasy. It's fiction. But there's one thing that Star Trek gets absolutely right. You could spend lifetimes and generations traveling across the heavens, the vast expanse of space, and even at nine times the speed of light, you'll never get to the end of it.

There'll always be a new frontier. There'll always be more. Today, scientists still have not found the edge of the universe. They keep building bigger and bigger telescopes and they keep seeing more stars, more galaxies beyond the ones that they've already found.

It blows their minds. It puts awe in their hearts. How big is this thing? So space is something unique to say about God and his glorious nature.

Space is big. It's great. So what does that say about the one who made it? Even bigger.

[15 : 11] Even greater. But now all things that God has made declare the glory of God. not just the things up there but also the things down here.

All of it. They declare his wondrous ability, his creative power, his ability to engineer and design, his wisdom and his understanding.

All of it. These things are being declared constantly by everything that God has made all around us here on earth. Every day, every moment of every day by plants and flowers, trees, weather, wind, clouds, rain, all of the intricate cycles without which sustainability of life on this planet would fall to pieces.

By birds and reptiles, insects, fish, fish, all of these things so complex.

Each one of them having their own unique way that they grow and develop and reproduce and live together. And each of these living things has its own way.

[16 : 39] It's amazing. Scientists that don't believe in God will tell you that we still haven't even found every species on earth.

There's still more to discover. All of them declare the glory of God. All of them are speaking loudly about his excellence, his power, who he is, what he's like, what he can do.

We're going to just have one quick example here. I'm going to put a video clip up about the hummingbird from a movie made by Illustra Media on the subject of flight.

Isn't that amazing? That's just one kind of bird, which happens to be quite different from the rest of them. that clip comes from a video that explores all of the intricacies inside the bodies of birds that make them perfectly suited to flight.

And, yeah, it's a fantastic film. You know, I think of what we can do as humans, what we can build when it comes to flying machines. It took us until just over a hundred years ago to build a flying machine that could fly for any real length of time and with any sort of control.

[18 : 09] probably some of you have seen some of those hilarious movie clips. Meanwhile, for thousands of years, these little critters have been leaping off branches and cliffs and performing all kinds of aerial acrobatics, diving out of the sky, catching fish, surviving even the harshest developments here on earth.

They've been here all along declaring God's amazing abilities, his glory, his power. But now think for a second, if we can come to that place of awe about God just by looking at the tongue of a hummingbird, what about every other created thing on earth?

All of creation is shouting loudly how glorious God is. It's speaking so many things about him. the question is, have we been listening?

Have we been hearing these many things? Or are we mainly tuned into the voices of man? So this is the first point of application.

The weather is beautiful, summer is here, get outside, get out of the house, get out of the car, get into nature, put away the screen which is mostly filled with the stuff of man, and look at the created things.

[19 : 44] Check out that tree. Feel it. If you're spry enough, maybe even give it a little climb. Go to the lake.

Go bird watching. look at that bug a little closer. Look up at the sunrise and the stars.

If you're stuck inside the house watching over your precious ones like Jen and I are in the evenings, use your screen time to tune into something that will help you appreciate and see these things more clearly.

Read up on a critter that God has made. Watch a YouTube video about the latest discoveries in the human cell. Do like my wife did this past week and get yourself some composting worms.

Something that God has made that you can just look at and listen to and hear what God is saying about himself.

[20 : 51] The second section of this song changes the focus completely. It's still God speaking to us but through something different. Not through creation but through the law of the Lord.

Verses seven. The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes.

God speaks also through the scriptures, the sacred writings, the words that have come to us through the prophets. And David makes a series of parallel statements here.

They're all very similar in the way that they're formed. And he uses five different words to describe the scriptures. The first one kind of lets us know what he's talking about.

[21 : 59] It's the law of the Lord. That is the collection of divine revelation that God gave to Moses and through Moses.

Essentially what David's talking about, he's talking about his Bible. But in his day, that was just mostly the first five books of the Bible. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

They called it the Torah, which means the law. So this is what David is talking about now. When I look at that writing that you have given us, that revelation that we have written down for us, this is what I see.

And David's going to describe it. He also uses a few other words to describe the things that God has said in the law. Statutes, precepts, commands, decrees.

We won't go into detail about what each one of these things means, but it shows that David recognizes there's variety about the kind of things that we find written down for us in God's word.

[23 : 07] He acknowledges that. And then here's what he has to say about God's word, about the things that God has said. those things are perfect, trustworthy, right, radiant, firm.

These things are all positive. They're all admirable qualities. essentially, this is David's way of saying in the song, when I look at your scriptures, when I spend time in your scriptures, this is what I see.

There are no errors, flawless words. I can depend on what you have said here. These things are absolutely correct and true.

They are firm. they illuminate my mind, my eyes. They show me the best way, the right way to live.

And then David piles on top of all that these participial phrases to describe how his time in the Bible has been. His soul has been refreshed.

[24 : 39] These words, they have made me wise. they have brought joy to my heart. They give light to my eyes. They let me see clearly in the world, in my life, how things should be, what I should be doing.

And again, with the poetic phrasing of this, we hear that same sentiment. It's as though David is saying, I stand in awe of you, God, when I look at your words, when I listen to the things that you have said.

It's amazing. Those things are so flawless, so pure, so right, so true, so enlightening. I've been so deeply refreshed and found such joy and wisdom in them.

They reveal God's glory in a way that's so powerful. David goes on, he says, still talking about God's words, words, they are more precious than gold, than much pure gold.

How much do you think one of those bars is worth? Anybody want to have a guess? If my dad were here, he'd tell you, he knows.

[26 : 06] One of those 400 ounce good delivery, standard size, international trading bars of gold is worth a million Canadian dollars, just over. Can you imagine that you had one?

And at the same time, can you imagine that there was no access to the word of God, the scriptures, the Bible, on the internet? We just couldn't have it. It didn't happen. Can you imagine that the only way to get one of these, they were exceedingly rare, was in print.

And you came across the opportunity to get one. And the guy says to you, I'll trade my copy for that bar of gold. Would you do it?

It's a high price to pay. You know what David's saying here? He's saying, I'd make that trade for the first five books of the Bible.

That's the best deal. I'm getting the better end of the deal. Those words, they're your words, God. More precious than gold, than much pure gold.

[27 : 31] Would you make that trade? As I was thinking about this, you know, it's so easy to say, oh yeah, absolutely I would. But then how often do we just see the book sitting there on the shelf, the table, the nightstand, and, meh, I've got better things to do than read that.

This is David's feeling about the word of God. He's in awe of God because of the things that he reads in his Bible. It's so precious to him. Supremely valuable.

It's sweet. The sweetest thing he knows. And I have said this before, but I just can't not say it again. If you don't see the Bible the way David sees it here, who's seeing it right for what it is?

You or David? The answer is David's the one that's seeing it right. He speaks by the Spirit of God.

David's the one that's seeing it for what it really is. And sometimes we wrestle with that. We don't feel that. We don't appreciate fully what it is that we have here. sometimes it's something we have to embrace by faith regardless of how we feel to say if I don't feel like it, that feeling's wrong.

[29 : 08] Pick it up. Another way to come at this, if you decide not to read your Bible, what are you depriving yourself of?

The refreshment of soul. getting wisdom, joy, the deep down in the heart kind, light for your eyes.

A little further down, the warnings that you need from God to stay on course in life. Possibly even great reward from commands that you haven't even read about or thought about.

finally we come to the third part of the psalm.

And this will be quick here. This is the part where David sings about his own relationship with God and it gets quite personal and intimate here. In verse 11, David reflects on how God's words in the scriptures have given him those warnings that he has needed.

[30 : 28] And God's word does do that. It helps us see the dangers along the paths of life. And then David asks this rhetorical question in verse 12. He says, but who can discern their own errors?

sin? And the answer to this question is no one can. We all sin. We all blow it. And we do it even unintentionally sometimes, not realizing it.

Without God's word to help us see clearly, we can be completely blind and ignorant to things in our lives, to sins that we've committed.

And are we guilty? Are we responsible for the wrong things that we do, even if we didn't do it intentionally?

Absolutely. And so David prays to God, forgive my hidden faults. Don't count those things against me. Amen. Then in verse 13, David flips to the other side.

[31 : 40] What about the intentional things? The things I know that I have been doing deliberately. He says, keep your servant also from willful sins, that is deliberate sins.

May they not rule over me. I really love this verse. I've got it highlighted in my Bible. Even David, the one that God called a man after his own heart, even David felt the pull and the draw and the allurements of sin.

He felt tempted to do things he knew were wrong. And so he prays, God, keep me from doing those things.

Guard me from them. Protect me from them. Don't let those things come to rule over my heart. God, if you ever wrestle with the temptation to do things that you know are wrong, you're not the only one.

And this is our prayer. God, keep me from doing those kinds of things, from falling into those habits, those patterns. Don't let me do it.

[32 : 50] And David goes on from here. So what have we seen and heard in this song of David inspired by the Holy Spirit? The overall sentiment and feeling from David is I stand in awe of you, God.

I see your glory in creation. I see your glory in your word. And so what does he do? He humbles himself before the Lord.

what about you? Have you lost your awe of God? And if so, how do you get it back?

How do you grow that awe? Maybe you have it, but how do you grow it? Go outside and look and listen to creation.

God is speaking through it. Open up your Bible. Read. Meditate. Linger over it. Till you get to that same feeling that David has.

[34 : 02] Ah, I'm being refreshed. Mmm, now I see. Now I see. Maybe you're here and if you're honest, you'd say that you've never had an awe of God.

Never had a reverence of him like this. God is calling to you. 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 people are without excuse.

God's God's love. God's love. God's love. God's love. God is calling to you through these words of David. He is the glorious creator.

He is the one. He's made all that wonderful stuff around us. And he's given you enough to know something of the kind of God that he is.

His power, his goodness, and it's enough to leave us all with no excuse for ignoring him. The good news is he sent his son Jesus into our world to meet us face to face and call us back to himself because he loves us.

[35 : 28] And whether we believe in Jesus or not, this humble posture that we see here of David should be ours. Lord, I know I have sinned against you in countless ways, ways I don't even know.

Forgive me. I don't want to live doing what's wrong anymore. I want to live to please you. And amazingly, Jesus went on to die for us so that this blamelessness that David longs for, this forgiveness could be secured for us, could be a reality for anyone who will turn to God and accept his gracious gift.

This is the good news of God that Psalm 19 prepares us for. So we're going to go to prayer now. Let's pray. Father in heaven, we thank you that you have been speaking in all kinds of ways all throughout history and I pray that each one of us would hear you.

open our eyes. This week as we go into your world, open our eyes to see it. Help us to pause and linger. Help us to notice what you are saying about yourself in all the stuff around us.

Help us to value your word like David, to open it up, to read it. We pray for that refreshment. Forgive us of our sins, Lord, the things that we've done that are wrong, that we know we've done wrong, and the things that we don't even know.

[37 : 14] Thank you for sending your son Jesus to die for us. We stand in awe of you. Amen. I'll invite the worship team to come up and we'll sing one final song together.