God Speaks!

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 08 May 2022

Preacher: Evan Macdonald

[0:00] Yuri Gagarin, the Soviet pilot and cosmonaut who became the first human to journey into outer space in April 1961, is a hero of history.

Anyway, travelling in the Vostok 1 capsule, Gagarin is claimed to have said during his space flight, I didn't see God up there.
Of course, the sentence, if it was ever said, was a political statement to bolster the views of an atheistic regime.
But it does remind us of the question, is there a God? And how do we know if he exists?
Now, I appreciate that in our gathering today, there probably will be no atheists. There may well be, I don't know. There may be some agnostics who are not too sure of whether there is a God or not.
[1:15] But nevertheless, for believers and atheists and agnostics, it is always worthwhile to consider such questions to enable us as believers to give a reason for the Christian hope that we have.

If we look now at this chapter, this amazing chapter of Psalm 19, it's an excellent starting point as we seek to address the subject.
C.S. Lewis has said of it, I take this to be the greatest poem in the Psalter and one of the greatest lyrics in the world. Well, I trust that this study of Psalm 19, imperfect as it will be, will help us to see how God the Creator speaks to us today.
First of all, then, we notice in this Psalm that God speaks through creation. God speaks through creation.
David the psalmist had a very different perspective to Yuri Gagarin. In verse 1, he's written here, the heavens declare the glory of God.
[2:41] The sky above proclaims his heart. The heavens. The heavens. The heavens. Or if you like, the skies, the firmament. Declare, recount the glory of God.

In other words, his honor, his weight, his impression. The glory of God in the heavens. We remember, aren't we, of Genesis chapter 1.
Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate from water. So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it.
And he made the expanse sky. Yes, the skies proclaim his handiwork. A continuous act of creativity.
Not random chance. The sun and the stars impress us because they are great works of art.
[3:46] God is the original and consummate artist. Who has passed to all of us an ability to appreciate beauty in art in its various ways.

For we have been made in his image. According to Tim Keller, nature speaks to all without audible words.
It is non-verbal communication. That there is God. That the world is not an accidental collection of molecules.
But the meaningful work of an artist's hands. Verse 2, we go on to read. Day to day, the skies pour out speech.
Night to night, they reveal knowledge. This is a daily advertisement, if you like. A pouring forth of speech. An impressive building up of spring.
[4:51] And therefore perhaps the unfailing variety with which the days reflect the daily mind. Look to the daytime sky.

Creation speaks. God speaks through his creation. The creation is a daily reminder of the creator's mind. But also, look up to the starry sky.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

How impressive is the night sky? Remember, a holiday to Morocco many years ago. Lying in the open air, searching, looking at the night sky.
And the volume of stars was so, so impressive in the clarity of the atmosphere in that of the earth. With its millions of stars, the light of the nearest star taking four light years to reach us.
Walter informed us on Wednesday that there are as many stars in the sky as there are grains of sand in the sea. Sure. Sure.
[5:59] The night sky displays knowledge. What is this knowledge? Surely it's vastness. It's glory. It's beauty.

It's smallness and finiteness as humans. Verse 3. We go on to return. There is no speech, nor are there words whose voice is not heard.
Verse 4. Their measuring line or voice goes out through all the earth. Their words to the end of the world. In other words, the nation speaks silently, universally.
This is summed up nicely in the message. Their words aren't heard. Their voices aren't recorded. Silence fills the earth.
Unspoken truth is spoken everywhere. Be it or six as a description of the sun apparently moving across the sky and likened to a bridegroom in, quote, splendid apparel, radiant and festive mood, journeying to meet his bride.
[7:17] Again, this is how the message translates that or paraphrases it. God makes a huge dome for the sun, a super dome, the morning sun, a new husband leaping from his honeymoon bed and day-breaking sun, an athlete racing to the tape.

That's how God's word vaults across the skies from sunrise to sunset, melting ice, scorching deserts, warming to faith.
Yes, creation speaks. David could see it in the blue sky with the glory of the sun and the clouds and the beauty of sunrises and sunsets.
He could see it in the night sky with the brightness of the moon, the awe of the starry sky and the cloudy spread of the distant galaxies. These, together with their size, their awe, their grandeur, shouted to David and all who would see the God who created all this glorious creation.
This is evidence of glory. One commentator has put it this way. God is glorious in his size, having created something so big.
[8:42] He is glorious in his art history, having created something so beautiful.

He is glorious in his goodness and kindness, having created something so beautiful. But isn't it true that in the 20th century, we have even greater reason to marvel at God's creation.
Radio telescopes have beamed waves millions of miles into space. Incredibly beautiful images of the universe. And increased our knowledge of the planets, the stars, the galaxies.
And we have something else that David never had access to. Electron microscopes. Which are able to project into the created world to reveal amazing microscopic images.
The James Webb Space Telescope, launched by NASA in November last year, is the world's largest and most powerful space telescope, attempting to make breakthrough discoveries on the origins of the universe and Earth-like planets beyond our solar system.
[10:04] It is totally mind-boggling. Whatever it discovers will surely broaden our knowledge of space and give us all the more reason to hear God speaking through his creation.

Paul argues that because the knowledge of God is revealed in creation, this is Romans chapter 1, no one has any reason to disbelieve the existence of God.
This is what he says. What may be known about God is plain. God has made it plain. 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 people are without excuse.
In other words, Paul is saying, there is no such thing as an atheist. However, creation, with all its beautiful and glorious variety, falls short of providing us with all the information we require to know about God.
And this is why David goes on to describe how God speaks through his word. And that's our second head. God speaks through his word.
[11:39] Verses 7 to 9 describe another way in which God reveals himself. Through his written word. Now, there are six different things mentioned in these verses.

And we're going to try to unpack them just now. There's a lot of information in it. But let's look at these verses. Six different words to describe God's revealed word.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

Now, notice that each comes with a description and with a purpose. First of all, then, in verse 7, God's law, that is, his revealed will, is perfect.
What does it do? It revives the soul. God's law, one of the words for God's word, God's law, which is his revealed will, the psalmist says is perfect.
What does it do? It revives the soul. Secondly, in verse 7, God's testimony, God's testimony is sure or trustworthy.
[12:52] What does it do? It makes the simple wise. It is educational. Then, in verse 8, we discover God's precepts.

God's precepts. What's a precept? A precept is a principle for regulating our thinking or behavior. Well, God's precepts are right.
What do they do? They rejoice the heart. Verse 8, God's commandment. There's another word for his word, for his law.
God's commandment, what is it like? It is pure. It is radiant. What does it do? It enlightens the eyes. It is enlightening.
And then, in verse 9, the fear of the Lord, the psalmist describes, is clean. It is flawless. What does it do?
[13:50] It endures forever. And finally, in verse 9, again, God's rules. God's rules are sure. They are true and dependable.

What do they do? They are righteous. They are moral. They tell us the difference between right and wrong. And so it is that the psalmist says that they are more desirable than gold, sweeter even than honey.
But what do these words actually mean in practice, in our own experience? What practical value can we take out of them?
How does God reveal himself to us through these things? Well, God's laws provide us with a moral framework for living.
The moral law, summed up in the Ten Commandments, gives us guidelines for our attitude and behavior towards God and towards others. God's rules are righteous.
[14:56] God's word gives us peace and strength in times of trouble. I remember hearing Jonathan Aitken, who was the disgraced conservative MP.

He was taken to court and found guilty of perjury and consequently landed up in Belmarsh Prison. And the first night of his time in prison, the other prisoners heard that this toff was coming and they started what was called a hooli, starting making a great noise and racket, claiming that they were going to get this toff in the morning.
Jonathan Aitken, it had been his practice to read through the Psalms and to pray through the Psalms. And that night, it was the turn of Psalm 130. He read that Psalm and he had the best sleep of the night.
And in the morning, the prisoner said, it's okay, Gov, just a joke. But he found peace in the word of God. God's word also helps us in our decision making.
God's commands are radiant, giving light to the eyes. When we're searching for a decision in life, what are we going to do? Where should we go? Should I apply for that job?
[16:17] Should I not? Then the word, as we read it, helps us giving guidance, giving light. And God's word provides us with a resource to help us conquer temptation.

Wasn't it the scriptures that the Lord went to when he was being tempted by the devil in the wilderness? And God's word also convinces us of the truth.
I remember as a fifth-year school pupil, which was a long time ago, reading the book, Who Moved the Stone? by Frank Morrison. Frank Morrison was an American lawyer who was an atheist and he wanted to set out to write a book that would disprove the Gospels.
But as he studied the Gospels in detail, he became convinced that they were true. You see, God's word was trustworthy.
It enlightened him. It gave light to his eyes and helped him to become convinced of the truth of God's word. But the word also, the psalmist says, gives joy to the heart.
[17:31] This is a lovely expression, isn't it? I'm sure some of you, most of you probably have heard Dr. Adam speaking. He's due to be back in this country in September.

We look forward to seeing him again. But I remember him telling me, telling more than me, it was in a meeting, the story of a Muslim wedding that he had been invited to.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

And to cut a very long story short, he had written a letter for the groom. And in the letter it said, a friend of mine has said, it is more blessed to give than to receive.
And when the groom's father opened the letter, he wasn't supposed to read it, but he read it out. And when he read this, he said, who said this? This is wonderful. I want to find more about this. And Adam was able to give him a testament with the words underlined that Paul had recorded our Lord saying. And the next day he came back full of joy. He said, this is wonderful. I want more of these books to get to my friends.
[18:34] And he discovered the joy of giving away from his wealth. Yes, God's word gives joy to the heart.

It is more blessed to give than to receive. But notice also that God's word convicts us. It convicts us of our sin and our need of forgiveness.
Is that not what Paul says in these verses? You see, the effect of God's law is to convict us of our shortcomings, as David realized in verses 12 to 13.
Is that something that we have experienced ourselves as we read God's word? Does it convict us of our sin and our need of forgiveness?
Well, here we have in these verses a comprehensive description of God's word or law, which revives, educates, gives joy, enlightens, endures, and is sweet and palatable.
[19:42] Let me quote the message once again. The revelation of God is whole and pools our lives together. The signposts of God are clear and point out the right road.

The life maps of God are right, showing the way to joy. The directions of God are plain and easy on the eyes.
God's reputation is 24 carat gold with a lifetime guarantee. The decisions of God are accurate.
Yes, we have been made in God's image or nature, which has a moral dimension. So, despite our fallen human nature, have an awareness of right and wrong.
According to Kant, two things fill the mind with ever new and interesting admiration and awe. The starry heavens above and the moral law within.
[20:53] Yes, we have been given an amazing revelation of God through creation and through the law.

But God has gone even further by giving us a fuller and final revelation in the word made flesh.
And that is our third heading. God speaks through his son. God speaks through his son.
Notice the hint of this in verse 10, where the psalmist says, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.
Remember, we're reminded of the writer to the Hebrews, in the verse to verse of that book. In the past, God spoke to our forefathers, through the prophets, at many times and in various ways, that in these last days, he has spoken to us through his son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through him, through whom he made the universe.
[22:11] These wonderful verses in John's Gospel, chapter 1. In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.

He was with God in the beginning. Through him, all things were made. Without him, nothing was made that has been made.
Here we find the creator of the universe, the one who we were thinking about, with the starry skies, and the heavens, and the mountains, and the rivers.
The creator of the universe takes human flesh to speak to us in a way that we can understand. The creator, not just then of the hills, the mountains, the heavens, and the starry skies, but as we read in Colossians chapter 1, which we read earlier, the creator of things visible and invisible, thrones and powers, rulers, authorities, all things have been created through him and for him.
The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us and says John, we have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only son who came from the father full of grace and truth.
[23:46] We have seen the glory of God in creation. We have seen the glory of God in his law. Have you seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, the creator?

The one who spoke through what he created went further by not sparing his own son, but giving him up for us all. The creator of the universe taking human flesh to speak to us more fully and completely.
This then was the final way which God speaks to us through his son, the word made flesh. And what is God saying in this revelation?

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

He's saying, look at Jesus, that is what I am like. When you look at Christ, you're looking at God. Now of course, this is a sermon in itself which we don't have time to go into.
But just let's notice three things to sum up about the character and the person of the Lord Jesus. Christ is our prophet. He is a teacher.
[24:59] He is the fulfiller of the law. He is our priest. He is the mediator between God and man through his finished work on the cross. For we read in Colossians, for God was pleased to have all this fullness dwell in him and through him to reconcile to himself all things whether on earth or things in heaven by making peace through his blood on the cross.

Yes, he's prophet, he's priest, but he's also king. The royal rule over his redeemed people. The one before whom every knee will bow.
Every tongue will confess that he is Lord. Have we bowed the knee to confess Jesus as Lord? Because one day we will even if we haven't done it now.
And remember what the king said. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to him. And on this authority he has commissioned his disciples to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations.
So here we have God speaking not only through his son but speaking through his disciples as they spread his word. Yes, God is our redeemer as David hinted at in that last verse of Psalm 19.
[26:29] Well, as we conclude our study our very brief study of this Psalm this evening this morning we have noticed that God has revealed himself through the beauty of the created world.

God is a God of infinite beauty order and reliability. More than that he has gone further to reveal his character in his given law. but the greatest revelation has been given to us through his beloved son. In Christ we see God to be a loving personal and compassionate saviour. The question for all of us is how do we react to this revelation?
How do we react to what God is saying? Surely in bowing down in worship at his awesomeness in love thanking him not only for the loving world that he has made but also in sending his one and only son to be our saviour.
Just believing in a creator God is insufficient because even the devils believe we see. Although Yuri Gagarin claimed that he didn't see God on his cosmic travels it's good to be able to quote from another space traveller Neil Armstrong the first man to walk on the moon in July 1969 and this is what he said it's a great thing for a man to walk on the moon but it's a greater thing for God to walk on the earth.
[28:18] We thank God that he went to such lengths to do just that to give us such a full and exciting revelation of himself.

Let us pray. Our Heavenly Father we have entered scenes of holiness and awe we have seen glimpses of your glory glimpses of your purpose in sending your son to be our redeemer and we thank you for this great act of generosity for this great sacrifice help us we pray to respond by presenting our bodies as living sacrifices holy and acceptable to you as a reasonable service we pray in our Saviour's name Amenici
Si de apostles

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host