

Knowing the Invisible God

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: 13 August 2023

Preacher: Dr. Wes Feltner

[0 : 00] All right.

If you've got your Bible, go to Psalm 19. Psalm 19 is where we're going to be this evening. Show of hands, how many of you knew all four of those hymns? Really? I stumped that many of you? Yes. How many of you knew half of them? You knew two of the four. Okay. Well, you should really freshen up on your hymnology, all right? I knew every single one of those songs without even lyrics on the screen.

I mean, I sang them probably a thousand times as a kid. And so I'm kind of glad I taught you some new songs tonight. But those are some great old hymns. To God be the glory.

Revive us again. Just great hymns. So I hope you enjoyed your hymn sing tonight. And now we turn our attention to Psalm 19. We've been in a series now for half the summer called Summer in the Psalms.

[1 : 20] Many of you have requested psalms that you wanted to be preached. And so I'm doing my best to make it through as many of those psalms as possible. There is no way I'm going to be able to cover all of that.

I was just commenting earlier before the service, I don't think you can preach summer in the psalms in the fall. So I think the series has to end in a few weeks just when summer's up.

But we'll see. Psalm 19 is where we're going to be tonight. And if you are ready to get after it and you are able to stand, please do so as we honor the reading of God's Word.

Psalm 19, the Psalm of David, goes like this. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims His handiwork.

Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words whose voice is not heard. Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

[2 : 22] In them He has set a tent for the sun, which comes out like a bridegroom, leaving his chamber, and like a strong man, run its course with joy. Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit is to the end of them, and there's nothing hidden from its heat.

The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.

The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever. The rules of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold, sweeter also than honey, and the drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is your servant warned, and keeping them there's great reward.

I mean, who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from hidden faults. Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins. Let them not have dominion over me.

[3 : 28] And then I shall be blameless and innocent of great transgression. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

This is Psalm 19. Pray with me. Pray for me to ask God to teach us tonight. Lord, we ask now that as we enter into this time of studying your word, that you would come and speak to us, that we would draw close to you, that this would be a sweet and intimate time of worship as we learn and we listen for your voice.

Because we believe, regardless of the messenger, when your word is opened and your word is proclaimed, you speak, you reveal, you talk to us. So we pray tonight that you do that to each and every one of us in this place.

In Jesus' name we pray. And God's people said, amen. Amen. And you can be seated. Do we have any sci-fi fans in the room? Any sci-fi fans? Show of hands. Okay. Yeah, a few of you.

A few of you big sci-fi fans. Well, if you're a big science fiction person, you've probably heard of the name H.G. Wells. Wells was actually a very famous author back in the early 20th century.

[4 : 42] And he's considered the, if not one of the, fathers of science fiction. Now, if you're not big into sci-fi or you've never heard of Wells, you may have heard of some of the stories that he produced.

Stories like the time machine or the war of the worlds. Maybe his most famous story of all was the invisible man. And the invisible man, it's a story about a scientist by the name of Dr. Jack Griffin. And Griffin develops this chemical solution that turns him invisible. The problem is he doesn't know how to reverse it.

He's stuck invisible. And this creates a lot of issues. And so now for people to even see him, for him to even be visual to people, he has to wrap himself in bandages.

But he walks around wrapped in bandages and now everybody does not know who he is and they don't know what's wrong with him. And so eventually there comes a point when he has to reveal what he's been trying to hide to everybody in the town.

[5 : 50] He has to show them that he's the invisible man. Stop where you are. You don't know what you're doing. I know what I'm doing, all right. Come on. Get in a hole of me.

Lock him up. All right, you fools. You brought it on yourselves. Everything would have come right if you only left me alone. You've driven me near madness with your peering through the keyholes and gaping through the curtains.

And now you'll suffer for it. You're crazy to know who I am, aren't you? All right, I'll show you.

There's a souvenir for you.

And one for you. I'll show you who I am and what I am. Look, he's all eaten away.

Huh? How do you like that, eh? Pretty spooky, huh? Right? Well, now that it's revealed, now that it's known that Griffin is the invisible man, as you can imagine, like chaos breaks out in the town.

[6 : 57] He's unable to fit in with people. He's unable to build relationships with anyone. Everybody in the town is afraid of him. Anytime something goes wrong in the community, everybody blames him.

And you feel this tension build throughout the story about how difficult it is to relate to an invisible man. Now, faith family, I want you to put all that science fiction aside for just a moment.

Because all of us know the reality of that. The point that that's making is absolutely true. Namely, listen closely. It's hard to have a relationship with someone you can't see.

It's hard to have a relationship with a parent that's never at home. It's hard to have a relationship with adult children that never call and never visit.

It's hard to have a relationship with a spouse that's never present. It's hard to build friendships and relationships when all you ever do is stay home and by yourself.

[8 : 01] It's one of the real concerns of living in a digital age. Namely, that you can have, listen, an artificial presence without ever being present.

That you may not actually be invisible, but functionally you are. And if it is true, and I believe it is, that it's a struggle, it's really, really hard relating to or building a relationship with another human being you don't see, then how much more the invisible God.

The struggle of having a relationship with or relating to God who you can't see. Have you ever struggled with that?

I guarantee you have. At some point in your journey, you've said things like this. God, would you just speak to me? Like, could I just, like, audibly hear your voice?

God, would you just reveal yourself in some physical or practical way? You've struggled with how can I know God when I can't even see God?

[9 : 14] That is a real struggle in the Christian life. Amen? And listen, when you're there and when you're struggling with how to relate to an invisible God, turn to Psalm 19.

Because listen to me. Psalm 19 is all about how the invisible God reveals Himself to the visual world.

Look how the psalm begins in verse 1. The heavens declare the glory of God. The sky above proclaims His handiwork. Day to day pours out speech.

And night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words whose voice is not heard. Their voice goes out through all the earth.

And there are words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tent for the Son. In other words, these first few verses reveal the visual revelation of God in creation.

[10:25] The visual revelation of God that is seen in creation. And I'm going to ask if you'll go back to that slide where we read those scriptures and look at all the emphasis on the speech words.

Do you see that? Where the heavens declare. And the skies proclaim. And the day to day pours out speech. And reveals knowledge.

And the voice that goes throughout all the earth. And the words to the end of the world. Don't you see? What David, who remember, was a shepherd. And had spent many, many nights looking up at the starry sky.

David is saying in this psalm, do you realize that creation has a message? Do you realize that creation, listen, is a 24-7, 365 sermon.

Declaring, screaming, proclaiming to you that God is glorious. And God is powerful. And God is great. And God is beautiful in all His ways.

[11:28] You are seeing a sermon every single time you walk outside. The heavens declare. The earth is proclaiming God.

The invisible God is revealing Himself in visual ways in creation. And Psalm 19 is not the only passage of Scripture that speaks to this.

Look at Psalm 8, verse 3 and 4. When I look to your heavens, the works of your fingers, the moons and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?

Creation is so majestic, revealing your glory. What am I? Who am I? Romans 1, verse 20. God's invisible attributes, namely, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world in the things that have been made so they are without excuse.

Don't you see? God's invisible attributes. He is the invisible God. He has revealed Himself in visible ways in creation. All of creation is declaring the glory of God.

[12:51] I want us to take just a moment to consider creation. Okay? Put your seatbelt on, on your mind, and hang with me as we go light speed, pun intended, through thinking about how the heavens declare the glory of God.

God, our universe is so big, we measure it in light years. That's 186,000 miles per second. That's 671 million miles per hour.

That's a whole lot faster than your Dodge Stratus. Okay? A lot faster. And the distance around the earth is 25,000 miles, meaning it takes light to go around the earth seven to eight times in a second. From earth to the sun is 93 million miles, meaning it takes light about eight minutes to go from the sun to the earth. To get to one of our brightest stars in the galaxy, it takes 520 years, reminds you, traveling at the speed of 186,000 miles per second to get to us.

That means light that left there on October the 31st, 1517, which is when Martin Luther nailed the 95 Theses to the door in Wittenberg and the Protestant Reformation began.

[14:12] That light that left on that day won't get here for 14 more years. And we live in the Milky Way galaxy. To get from the sun, which is 93 million miles from us, to the center of our galaxy, traveling at 186,000 miles per second, would take you 33,000 years.

The Milky Way galaxy contains 200 billion stars. If you counted them one per second, it would take you 25,000 years to count them all. And the Milky Way galaxy is 100,000 light years long.

There's an estimated 100 billion galaxies. If your family decides you'd like to go on vacation to another galaxy, or if you would like to send someone you know to another galaxy, amen?

Right? It will only take you 2 million years to get to the next galaxy. 20 billion years to get to the outer edge of the universe. That's a whole lot of, are we there yet?

Are we there yet? Oh, just about 10 billion more years and we'll be there. If North America was the universe, our galaxy would be a golf ball. And planet Earth would be one spot on that ball.

[15:31] And you wouldn't even be on the map. We are literally living in the flower, like in Horton Hears Who. We're that little bitty speck in this grand heavens and glory that is creation.

And listen, that doesn't even include all of the greatness of just planet Earth. I mean, I could take time to talk about the vastness of the ocean. I could talk about the beauty of the creation just here on planet Earth.

I could talk about the details of humanity and how the human body is put together. And on and on and on we can go. But what I'm telling you, what Psalm 19 is telling you, is creation is preaching a sermon.

Creation is declaring a message. It is screaming for billions of miles that God is great and big and majestic is His name in all the universe.

The invisible God has made Himself known. And He has made Himself known in creation. And what does this creation tell us about the invisible God?

[16:35] Again, I'm going light speed. Not quite that fast. But hang with me. Verse 1 again. The heavens declare the glory of God and the sky above proclaims His handiwork.

At first it declares the existence of God. The evidence for God's existence extends throughout all the world. Listen, I believe this with everything I am.

Listen to me. The reason people do not believe in God is not intellectual. It is moral. In other words, it's not for a lack of evidence.

They simply do not want to believe. In fact, that's what Romans 1 tells us. That sinful man has all the data. The problem is they suppress the truth because they don't want to believe.

Notice this on the screen. People reject the existence of God not because there's a lack of evidence, but because there's a presence of sin. We do not want to believe.

[17:34] We want to be God. Sin takes us to ourself, not to surrender before the existence of God.

Look at verse 4 of chapter 19. Their voice goes out through all the earth and their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tent for the Son. Not only the existence of God, but the omnipresence of God.

Psalm 19 talks about the glory that creation reveals. Listen, extends to the ends of the earth. It's like light covering all of the earth, declaring God is everywhere.

He is everywhere you go. God is. Look at verse 5. The first part of it. Which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber.

So we also see the splendor of God. David here is comparing the Son to a groom coming out of his chamber radiating with light.

[18:37] This is a picture of God's beauty. Have you ever had creation take your breath away? Anybody? Have you ever seen a sunset or a waterfall or been at the ocean or something and you just had to catch your breath?

It was so beautiful. It was so glorious. It was so majestic. What is that telling you? It's telling you, listen, if you think that's beautiful, you should see the one who created it. If you think that's beautiful, and remember, creation that we see is still stained with sin.

Imagine the world before sin entered in. And the one who thought of it all into being is the invisible God that has made Himself known.

We see His beauty, His splendor in the sunrise, in the mountain view, in the ocean deep, in the perfect day. Yes, maybe even in the snow.

Verse 5. Had to throw that reference in. The second part of verse 5 is like a strong man runs its course with joy.

[19:45] So we see the existence of God and the omnipresence of God and the beauty or the splendor of God, but we also see the power of God. The power of God. It's like a strong man, David says, that runs his race.

When you think about how expansive and detailed creation is, you reflect on the fact that God spoke it all into being. Like, have you ever just stood at that mountain and just been like...

I mean, you could have all the human beings in the world, you couldn't lift that. And God just said, let it be. You know that light that's traveling at 186,000 miles per second?

God just said, let there be light. And there was. He is a powerful God. And He has revealed His power in creation.

Look at verse 6 now. Its rising is from the ends of the heavens and its circuit is to the end of them and there is nothing hidden from its heat. We see also the faithfulness of God.

[20:51] David here is talking about how the sun faithfully rises. The seasons faithfully change.

The sun comes up. The sun goes down. It comes up and goes down and comes up and comes up.

What does the faithfulness of creation, the continuation of the created order point to? The faithfulness of God. That just as the sun comes up in the morning, God is there in the morning.

So the invisible God is not just only seen through the visible creation, but the invisible God is also heard through actual words that have been written down for us in the sacred Scripture of God. Now David gives us an overview in the Old Testament of the doctrine of Scripture. I'll just hit this quickly again. I'm going light speed here. He talks about the nature of Scripture. That is what it is. David here says that the Word of God, the law of God, the precepts of God, the command of God is perfect. It's complete. It lacks nothing.

It is sure. That is, it is dependable. It is right. That is, it's always true. It's pure. That it is flawless. He talks not just about the nature of Scripture, but the effects of Scripture.

[27 : 03] That is what it does. This Word is, Hebrew says, living and active. Amen? That's why it revives the soul. It brings renewal in life.

It's why it makes wise. It teaches you how to live. It rejoices the heart. It takes a hard, bitter heart and gives it joy. It enlightens the eyes.

The Scripture gives you vision and direction and purpose in life. It exposes errors. That is, we don't have an accurate image of ourself. We think we are far better than we actually are until we look in the mirror and the Word of God reveals who we are.

David also talks about the origin of Scripture. That is, whose it is. Why is this Word perfect and sure and right and pure? And why is it? How is it able to revive the soul and make wise and rejoice the heart and enlighten the eyes and convict six times in verses 7 through 9 is the phrase of the Lord. These words come from God. They are more than ink on a page. It is the breath of God. Do you believe that?

[28 : 20] That it didn't come from a printing press. It came from the mouth of God. The New Testament teaches this as well. 2 Timothy 3.16 All Scripture that is old and new is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof and correction, and for training.

This is why at Faith Family we preach the Bible. You need to encounter God. That was a great place for an amen. Amen. We'll go light speed backwards and try again.

We were created to know God, so we need to encounter God. So if we're going to come into a worship service, we don't need to talk, and we don't need five steps to how to train your pet.

We need the Word of God. If you're going to encounter God, you have to be in the Word of God. And so that's why preaching the Bible is so important.

And then notice verse 10. Verse 10. If this were all true, what would our approach to this Word be? Verse 10 says, More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold, sweeter also than honey, and the drippings of honeycomb.

[29 : 39] That is, David says, because these words are God's words, and because I want more than anything in life to know God, I desire this Word more than anything.

Like, offer me, offer me a wheelbarrow full of gold or the Word of God. I take the Word of God every time. And you say, how much gold's in the wheelbarrow?

Doesn't matter. It doesn't matter. You give me the sweetest honey, the best meal, like forever and ever, the best food, I take the Word of God over that every day.

Because these are His words. Faith family, I wrote this, that this book will only be precious to you when God is precious to you.

Right? When you see what the Bible actually is, and when you believe what the Bible actually is, it will change your posture towards it. As long as you think it's just a book of rules, as long as you think it's just a bunch of tradition, until you see these as the invisible God revealing Himself in actual words, will you treasure it with all your heart?

[30 : 59] It reminded me of a woman that I read about one time who kept an old answering machine. Anybody got an old answering machine? I'm not counting your voicemail on your cell phone. I mean, how many of you actually got one of those old answering machines?

Don't raise your hand, because I would not admit that in public, okay? Of course he would. Of course he would. But there was a woman I read about who had kept this old answering machine, and it only had three messages on it.

And the messages, she listened to over and over again, and every time she'd listen to them, she'd always be very careful not to hit delete. And the messages themselves weren't really all that significant.

One of the messages was about the weather. One of the messages was about the delivery of a package. And the other message was simply wishing her Merry Christmas.

But the reason why she clung to that old answering machine is because every one of those messages was the voice of her father. Her father that she had lost several months before.

[32 : 05] And she said, if anybody offered anything to me for that old answering machine, I wouldn't take it. Because I will not get rid of the voice of my father.

When you begin to realize that this book is not just words on a page, it is actually the invisible God revealing himself in visual ways, namely through words, will you cherish it more than gold?

Amen? So how can we relate to and be in relationship with the invisible God? Well, the visible revelation of creation, as well as the verbal revelation of Scripture.

But listen to me. These aren't enough. Heresy. Burn him at the stake. Drag him out here. On 42, let's kill him.

Because how in the world could you publicly say that Scripture isn't enough? That Scripture isn't sufficient? I am telling you that Scripture, just on its own, and creation, just on its own, is not enough to know the invisible God.

[33 : 20] And here's why I'm saying that. And while I'm risking you misunderstanding what I'm going to say, I hope you listen closely. The reason why I'm saying that is because if you don't get this last point, you've missed the point of creation, and you've missed the point of Scripture.

If you don't understand the ultimate way the invisible God has revealed himself to us, it doesn't matter how much you look at creation or how much you read Scripture.

Notice how the psalm ends. Verse 14. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock, and, say it, my redeemer.

Huh. Huh. I wonder what that's about. What you see here, thirdly, is the personal revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

That's what verse 14 is foreshadowing. It's what verse 14 is getting you ready for. This is beautiful. Watch. Watch how Psalm 19 narrows. It starts broadly with creation.

[34 : 36] Then it narrows to the Word of God. Then it narrows even more to a Redeemer. And who is the Redeemer of Psalm 19?

None other than Jesus Christ. He is the ultimate rock and Redeemer. That is what the New Testament reveals. Look at John 1, verse 1.

In the beginning was the Word. I'm already so excited about this. Okay, listen. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God. Say it with me. And the Word was God.

The Word was God. This Word is the invisible God. Verse 14. And that Word became flesh.

And actually dwelt among us. Oh, listen to the Psalm 19 language here. And we have seen His glory.

[35 : 44] The glory of Psalm 19 that the heavens declared is now seen in the Word made flesh. The glory of God is now seen.

The glory is the only Son from the Father full of grace and truth. Do you see what I'm saying? The glory that the heavens are declaring in Psalm 19 is the glory we see when the Word comes down. But I ain't done yet. Hebrews 1, verse 1. Long ago, and at many times, and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets.

But in these last days, He has a word. He has a revelation. He has spoken. How? How? To us by His Son.

Whom He appointed the heir of all things. To whom He also created the world. And if I haven't made my case yet, this last verse is the nail in the coffin.

[36 : 57] It's the bullseye. It brings it all together. Listen to Colossians 1.15. It says, He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

So how does the visual revelation of God in creation and the verbal revelation of God in Scripture come together? And the answer is, in the ultimate and eternal Word of God, namely the person of Jesus Christ.

And what that means is, that you cannot know the invisible God apart from a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. You can stand in awe of God's creation all day long, and you should.

You can read God's Word all day long, and that's great. But apart from Jesus Christ, you will never know God. For Jesus is the final and ultimate Word.

So faith family, we all know that it is difficult to relate to someone who's invisible. We've all had that struggle before, a relationship where someone isn't there.

[38 : 02] And how much more difficult that is to know the invisible God. And that's why God, in His amazing grace, didn't remain invisible.

He has spoken, and He has revealed Himself, and He has given us His glory in creation. He's given us His words in His very Word.

But most of all, He has given us His Son, crucified for our sins, and risen on the third day, so that we can know God forever.

And faith family, I promise you this, if we are willing to stop and see the glory around us, if we are willing to stop and cherish the words that God has given us more than gold, and trust Jesus as our rock and our Redeemer, the invisible God won't seem so invisible after all.

Let's pray together. Amen.