

Reason Revelation Redemption And The Rock

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[0 : 00] May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. Amen. For your consolation on this dreary January day, it's let me down. I hadn't thought of it being like this.

I brought a daffodil. And I just realized this week that the great thing about daffodils is that sometime a very long time ago, most of us as small children, in a lovely spring day, encountered the wonder of our first daffodil, and we've been buying them ever since, hoping we could repeat the experience.

Daffodils, I'm told, were the reason for one of the families that are in this congregation, I think, coming to Vancouver because the husband came out on a business trip in mid-February and took home to his wife in Saskatchewan, need I say more?

A bunch of daffodils. And from that day on, the whole family shifted and moved out here. I mean, that was the beginning. And I want our consideration of Psalm 19 to be the beginning of a basic shift in all of our lives, too. So I hope you're ready.

Not daffodils, but I thought there are four roses here that I could present you, that as the kind of Psalm 19, as a kind of bouquet for the season of January and February, something that will revive and renew you and give you a brand new determination, that your life will be lived on a wholly different basis. It is a magnificent Psalm.

[2 : 09] The four roses are entitled, Reason, Revelation, Redemption, and the Rock. Got it? You can find them all here.

The first of them is Reason. And on Friday night, I stood alone at dusk, with the air wet with the day's rain, but the sky clearing in the west, and the breeze blowing through like clear claret. It was a lovely, lovely air that you had to breathe.

And the night was closing in, and the last and lovely light of day, you know how soft it can be at that time of night.

And there was a little part of the sky that was robin's egg blue that faded into a kind of yellow, and then that all was surrounded by dark clouds.

And it was a lovely, lovely experience in that direction. And then in the other direction, up through the fir trees came the moon.

[3 : 22] And it was one of those experiences of total loveliness, which leaves you totally dumbfounded. You don't know what to say.

Because you have experienced Psalm 19, the heavens declaring the glory of God, and the firmament showing his handiwork.

And I was wonderfully reminded how very important the night sky is. Because in the night sky, you suddenly see how vast a universe you're a part of.

And there you see, reason is compelled to find answers, but reason can't find the answer. And somehow, the fact that the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows his handiwork, is an unmistakable reality, which reason demands to know the secret behind it, and reason can't find the secret behind it.

And that's the problem of our life. It's an experience we all have.

[4 : 44] I'm not saying there's anything unique about my experience. But you feel you should be able to say something. You should feel you should be able to explain it.

You feel you should be able to understand it. But all you can do is stand dumb before the overwhelming immensity of the experience, and you don't know what to say.

And Psalm 19 helps when it begins. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows his handiwork. Day to day, and night to night.

And then there's a lovely picture in verse 5, which talks about the sun, and how the sun comes forth like a bridegroom, and the passage ends with, nothing is hid from its heat.

And you realize, and I think this is where reason leaves us, in a sense, as far as we can go, that God remains hidden, but there's no place for us to hide.

[5 : 58] And you get that kind of thing. But then comes the second rose, if you want, in this bouquet, and that's revelation.

And that begins with verse 7. And you get this kind of wonderful exaltation when he says, the law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul.

And that great lesson from Nehemiah, where Ezra stood up, and read the law to the people, and their hearts were broken, and they wanted to weep, and they were told, this is a day of rejoicing, eat the fat, drink the sweet wine, and rejoice, because this is the Lord's doing.

And so we come to a place of rejoicing, as we contemplate the perfection, of who God is. That's what we're required to do.

The law of the Lord is perfect. And we are so imperfect. But don't, let me get on to that. The law of the Lord is perfect.

[7 : 11] And if you look, you see, that it does certain things to us. It revives our soul. That I'm told is, as it is in Psalm 23, the same as, the Lord is my shepherd, and that he restores my soul.

And most of us would pay a lot of money to have our souls restored. We would travel to the ends of the earth for that.

And that belongs to us, we're told, in the contemplation of the perfection of the law of the Lord. How things were meant to be.

And how God purposes that one day they will be. And all that is revealed to us in the law of the Lord, in which the Lord himself makes himself known to us.

Because I don't think you can separate the law from the law giver. And I think this psalm, in a sense, sees beyond the law to the law giver.

[8 : 32] And we are compelled to recognize that the law of the Lord is perfect and our souls are revived by it. And the testimonies make wise the simple.

That lovely program on George Grant on the CBC the other night, in which he quoted somebody who said that the village idiot with a love for the good is wiser than Aristotle.

And somehow the contemplation of the perfection of the goodness of our God makes the simple wise and it leaves our hearts rejoicing.

We cannot weep. We may have all sorts of occasions to weep and to mourn and to feel sorry for ourselves, but the contemplation of the perfection of who God is and the way in which he has revealed himself to us as Lord, as the Lord, demands that our hearts rejoice not because of our circumstances, but in spite of our circumstances.

And the next thing that you discover here is that the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes so that you can see what others are blind to because the law of the Lord opens your eyes to see something which transcends all the blindness and the darkness so that I think of an example, perhaps Mother Teresa in Calcutta.

[10 : 25] the law of the Lord enlightened her eyes so that she could see something of the beauty of God in the tragic circumstances of that great city.

The law of the Lord, the contemplation of the perfection of who God is and how he has revealed himself, enlightens the eyes, rejoices the heart, makes wise the simple, restores our souls and establishes in us, may God grant this contemplation, a fear of God.

You see, I think that most of us live our lives in fear, in fear of what people will think, in fear of what people will do, in fear of the disasters that await us, in fear of failure, in fear of being discovered.

All those things surround us with fear and we guard ourselves and insulate ourselves and hide ourselves so as not to be exposed to the things that we are afraid of.

But the contemplation of the law of the Lord strips all that away and leaves you with one fear that dominates your life as it alone should and that is the fear of the Lord and that makes your life in a sense vibrate in response to the awful reality of the Lord and who he is and the perfection of his law and his demand and you live your life in fear of God.

[12 : 17] and that's an inestimable privilege which we in our callous, cynical, materialistic indifference have lost and must be restored through the contemplation of the perfection of the law of God.

well that's revelation for you and then we come to redemption or to the redeemer and you have to go to the last verse for this word it says oh Lord my rock and my redeemer and what does a redeemer do?

A redeemer is the one who takes that which has been lost and restores it when I have sold out my redeemer is the one who comes and buys back what I have thrown away and restores it to me and how did I throw it away?

well you see this contemplation of perfection leads in verse 11 and following to an awareness that the perfection of nature which reason has to engage and the perfection of revelation which is in the contemplation of the perfection of God's law that forces us to look into our own hearts and when we look into our own hearts what do we find?

we find that we need to be warned that is we discover that the great flaw is in us if you want to know what the trouble with the world is G.K.

[14:12] Chesterton said it's me when you contemplate the law of God that discovery comes home to you with great force and so with the psalmist you say thank God that I am warned by this law and then he goes on to say not only am I warned by it but in keeping of it there is great reward that is you know the kind of thing it's it's by keeping it that I discovered that God is keeping me as by forgiving I discover I am forgiven and loving I discover I'm loved and in searching I discover that I've been found and he goes on who can discern his errors who wants to but we need to don't we we hide from it discerning our errors but you can't hide from it because

God the redeemer has got to have something to redeem and you've got to know that the thing you need most is to be redeemed and in order to know that of yourself because of our pride and self centeredness and self sufficiency we need to discern our errors and we need our hidden faults to be made open so that we understand them and again I'm told these hidden faults are the things which are so characteristic of our lives that we no longer regard them as faults and our life is full of that isn't it things we're no longer even remotely sensitive about we don't even regard them as faults and in the same way with regard to presumptuous sins they are so ordinary in our world that we presume it's our right to do them everybody else does and so we sin presumptuously and we discover that death has dominion over us but we want to be free of that we long that death will not have dominion over us and somehow strangely within the heart of each one of us look at this I find this quite devastating that longing which is there and which persists in the midst of us in the midst of our lives when it says I shall be blameless and innocent of the great transgression how could we ever presume that that would happen it could never happen except in the area of our presumption unless there is a redeemer who can buy back what we've lost who can restore what we've thrown away of course Christ indeed is our redeemer and has restored us to the thing which in verse 10 if you go back there for a moment to restore us to the thing which is more to be desired than gold sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb and I love the fact that the scripture deals with our desires because we think of ourselves as consumed with desire which cannot be expressed and which cannot be fulfilled what is opened up to us is the true nature of the longing and the desire that we have which is for more than gold a longing and a desire which gold can never fulfill which honey for all its sweetness there's something more than that and it's that which comes to us in Jesus

Christ our redeemer so that reason is questioned revelation is contemplated redemption is recognized in the person of Jesus Christ at the words of my mouth he prays at the end the thing which comes you know I spend lots of time with people and I am one of them myself having said something in a meeting which my cheeks burn with the remembrance of what I said and I wish that I could take those words back but this man this psalmist says that he doesn't wish for that what he wants is that God will so search his heart and know his heart that the words of his mouth and the meditations the words of my mouth the meditations of my heart will be acceptable in his sight from the deep part of my life from which so much of this garbage comes out that God will deal with me at that level with the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart because he is my rock the rock on which

I stand the rock which I confess the rock within which I hide oh Lord my rock and my redeemer there they are reason revelation redemption and the rock that's what our life is all about and that's what we need to know the sermon is now over oh no it is just a minute let me just tell you one more thing about that this is this is the thing that this this is the reality I think that underlies the whole of our lives this is the thing that searches us most deeply and

[21 : 39] I long that we come back to this again and again and again that every day probes our reason that every day we probe the law of God that every day we recognize the wonder of the work of our redeemer and every day we find the reality of the rock on which we stand and in which we hide and if your life is not based on that and if you long that it should be there it is for you on a platter there is the bouquet for you to pick up which is Psalm 19 and to delight in what

God has done for you most of us are mad at God because he's made us bad and wants us to be good and we don't understand him and the difficulty is you see we don't recognize that he's working in us right now that he is still busy with us to accomplish his purpose in us we have to be open to letting him do that if you want to see the perfection of his purpose give your mind to the contemplation of Psalm 19 Amen