

# Psalm 19:7-10 “God Speaks to Us”

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[ 0 : 00 ] You are listening to a message from Southwood Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Alabama. Our passion is to experience and express grace. Join us.

We do pray that, Father. Speak, O Lord. Your servants are listening. Those you've called your friends.

Those for whom you've sent your Son, that your words would make an impact on eternity. You saw it before the foundation of the world.

God, would you now open our eyes that we would behold wonderful things in your Word. We know that the grass withers, the flowers fall, but the Word of God stands forever.

It makes us to stand. It gives us a firm foundation. It brings us into a relationship that will impact eternity.

[ 1 : 08 ] So speak to us, Lord. Even now, by your Spirit, through your Word, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Kids, I want to start by talking with you for a couple minutes this morning.

If you'll come and join me up here on the steps. You don't have to be coming to Bible school to come up here this morning. You can be older or younger. Come up here and we're going to talk for just a minute about some of the things you're going to learn this week.

All right. Some of you have been up here already helping to get ready for VBS. Who's excited for VBS?

Anybody? Yeah? Okay. Okay. Awesome. It's going to be a great week. I'm so ready is right. So are all these people who've been up here decorating the church to get it ready for this week.

Do you all see all these undersea decorations? What's the best thing you've seen so far? What's your favorite part, Caroline? Coral. There's coral. Yeah, there's a background back there.

[ 2 : 14 ] There's coral all over the place. There's sea creatures swimming through the hallways in the ocean. Yeah, some of y'all helped with that. Thank you so much. There's lots of sea creatures.

Isn't that awesome? And you know why all this undersea stuff is here? It's because this week at VBS, we're talking about diving into friendship with God.

God. Friendship with God. Did you know that? Did you know that the adults are talking about the same thing this summer? About being friends of God, having a relationship with Him?

What is something that a friend does with you? What's important about being a friend? Yeah, Tripp? Tripp. What do you do with a friend?

Help play and try to advise and help each other. Yeah, so you play. You help each other. What else? You can work together to make up games to play.

[ 3 : 16 ] Lots of things you can do with a friend. It might be video games. You might be playing sports. You might be playing dolls. You might be texting your friends. None of y'all yet because no phones yet, right? No phone.

I have a watch. Well, okay, no texting. That's for the older kids, okay? But no matter what, when you're with your friends, you have to communicate with them, don't you? You have to talk with your friends so that you can have fun playing games together, right?

Isn't it fun that you get to talk with your friends? Did you know the most important way that our friend God talks to us? What is the most important way that God talks to us?

When we pray, we talk to him and God talks to us through the Bible. That's right. When we read the Bible, when we memorize it at VBS on Sundays, when one of our pastors is preaching and if you look up there when you're back in your seats, you'll be able to see the Bible open.

What if I told you before is the most important part of the sermon? It's when we read God's word, when we listen to God speaking to us, isn't it? That's the most important part for you to pay attention to every time.

[ 4 : 30 ] So when we read the Bible, I want you to look up, anytime you look up during the sermon and you see the Bible open up there on the pulpit, I want you to think, God is speaking. God talks to me because he's my friend and he loves me, okay?

What a great friend it is that he talks to us all the time like that. Isn't that part of being a great friend? And we talk to him when we do what? When we pray. That's right.

Let me pray for you right now, okay? Let's pray about this week. God, I pray for each of these kids and the dozens more who will be here learning about what it means to know you, to talk with you, to hear from you, to have a friendship with you.

I pray that you would open the eyes of their hearts, that you would give them joy and excitement about knowing you and loving you. I thank you for all of the volunteers, those who've been working so hard already and are those getting ready to start this week, that they too would see and share the joy of a God that we can know and trust and walk with day by day.

And I pray it would be a special week that would impact eternity, that the echoes of the things that you say into the hearts of these kids this week will echo through the years to come and through heaven for eternity.

[ 5 : 55 ] We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen. All right, kids, when you go back, I want you to make sure to get a Bible and listen and follow along when I read God's Word speaking to us, okay?

Can you do that? There's some in the pew if you need to borrow one this morning. Thank you all for coming up here. By the way, if you're not scheduled to serve at VBS this week, show up sometime between nine and noon Monday to Thursday and it'll encourage your heart.

We started last week a summer series on our relationships with God, walking with Jesus. We saw how much Jesus values and longs for that kind of relationship with us, that he's at the door, so to speak, of our hearts knocking and offering to come in and to sit and eat with us.

So we're going to talk now for the next few weeks about how we do that. Day by day, step by step, we can be, as we just talked about with the kids, in conversation with God.

As he speaks to us in his Word, as we speak to him in prayer. See, that's the nature of our relationship with God is grace.

[ 7 : 23 ] It is one where we remain completely dependent on him. And he completely meets our needs, all of them, even though we don't deserve it.

That is grace. So the pathways of grace that we're talking about, where we walk with Jesus, those are ways that Jesus brings his grace into our lives.

It's how we experience, tangibly and practically, having a relationship with him, okay? We're going to start this week and next week with the Word of God, the Bible.

I'm not going to focus primarily on how we can be confident that what we are holding is God's Word, the right books and that it's been preserved and passed down correctly and translated well and all of that.

That is really important and I'm actually reading a lot about that right now. And there is so much to encourage us in that regard that we are holding God's Word and we can trust it way more than most of the popular religion teachers will be telling you right now.

[ 8 : 35 ] The scholarship on this is just great these days. But more so, I want us to ask today, what is so great about God's Word that when we actually get time with God, maybe throughout the day, maybe it's just your one time of the day, why, when I'm just the two of us with God, should His Word regularly be open before me, guiding my heart?

What's so great about it? There may be no better place to start than Psalm 19, partly because it's a lot shorter than Psalm 119 and we'd be here all day.

But also because it is all about God revealing Himself so that we know Him and love Him.

That's what the whole psalm is about. He starts by talking about His world. He reveals Himself in His world and then in His Word. Grab a Bible now.

Turn there with me, kids. We're going to be reading at verse 7, a little ways down, of Psalm 19. God speaks through His holy Word.

[ 9 : 52 ] 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 drippings of the honeycomb.

Beautiful poetry, isn't it? In praise of God's Word. The law, testimony, precepts, commandment, rules.

These are basically synonyms for the Word of God. His covenant instruction to His people. His story of His special relationship with them.

[10:56] Okay? Every line of those verses, whatever one of those words is used, it's Yahweh's law, testimony, rules.

It's the fact that it is the Lord's, the law of the Lord. That's what makes it perfect. Perfect in every way.

Just notice them briefly. The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. It gives life to us in the deepest part of our being.

When God speaks, life happens, right? All the way back to creation when He breathes life into us by His very Word. And then when He brings us into relationship with Him, there's life.

No one else's words are like that. Life-giving. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

[11:56] The simple are those who are just kind of wandering through life, not sure which way to go, uncertain even about the destination or goal that would be best to pursue.

I bet you can relate to feeling that way at some point in your life, maybe right now. And right into that moment, God's Word enters with stability and direction which makes us wise.

We can always count on it to orient our life, our priorities, our steps as they should be. Thy Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path, right?

The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. God's Word is inerrant, has no errors.

It's always right, which causes our hearts to be joyful. Why so much? Why so much joy? Because we're searching for reliable truth, aren't we?

[13:03] For certain direction, for something we can anchor our souls in a true north for our compass. And here it is. God tells us how life is designed to work.

We're not rudderless anymore, not hopeless, not directionless in this world. The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

It is so clear, so bright that it gives light to our eyes so that we see things as they truly are. So that we are properly directed in the way that we should go.

That's what we mean when we say that the Bible is not only inerrant, but it's also infallible. It doesn't fail to accomplish the purposes that God has for it.

It doesn't mislead us when we follow its path. We don't have to worry or wonder if it will never. Will it lead us in the wrong way? And God's Word endures forever.

[14:07] We're told here and elsewhere in Scripture. It is righteous altogether, which leads us here to nearly unparalleled praise, right? For God's Word, more to be desired are they than gold.

The gold standard. If you have the choice to have God's Word or to have gold, you choose God's Word.

In fact, you choose God's Word over much gold. In fact, you choose God's Word over much fine gold. It's no contest.

It is more valuable, more precious than the most precious thing. A lot, a lot of the most precious thing we know. In other words, if you read an article that tells you how and helps you to make a million dollars, you should be very excited.

Would you be excited if that happened to you? You read something and it helped you make a million dollars? You should be more excited than that when you read God's Word.

[15:17] It is not hyperbole to say that. It is honest, true evaluation and comparison. More to be desired.

More valuable. More beneficial than anything else. And that is not to run down everything else and say there's nothing else in the world that has any value. No, this is to say how incredibly, inestimably valuable is God's Word.

That is the heart of David as he writes this psalm. In other words, I love books. I have a lot of them. How much more should I love this one?

I enjoy listening to podcasts. How much more should I want my mind shaped by this message? I have learned very, very much conventional wisdom from many different people's experiences.

How much more eager should I be to have my path directed by this divine counselor? Psalm 119, 23.

[16:31] Even though princes sit plotting against me, your servant will meditate on your statutes. Crisis, trouble, fear is building the powerful or preparing to come against me.

Do I need to run for help? Maybe. Maybe. Maybe. Do I need to get advice? Maybe. Do I need to meditate on God's Word?

Definitely. Number one priority. Not even getting up. Not even interrupting my one time that directs all my other time. Here I am, God, with your Word.

I don't need to go anywhere else right now. Is that your first instinct? Is that how you respond to difficulty, to crisis in your life? God, there's nowhere else I need to be. I am asking God to shape me right now by His perfect Word.

There's nowhere else perfect that you can go. The Bible is so good. You want to know how good it is?

[17:42] How good is it, Pastor? You don't have to say that. It's so good that it is good for you and it tastes good.

In other words, it is not broccoli or Brussels sprouts. Those are good for you. You have to eat those. God's Word is, it is nutritious, warm chocolate chip cookies.

That is not an inspired analogy. That is me helping you taste it. Sweeter also than honey. This is an inspired comparison.

Sweeter also than honey. And drippings of the honeycomb. The sweetest delicacy you can imagine. If you let God's Word shape you, it will bring such rich life to your soul.

That your taste buds, the taste buds of your soul will long for more. I want more of that. It's no burden to sit and read.

[18:51] To drive and listen. To study and share. It is a delight to be in the life-giving, path-directing, wisdom-imparting, perfect Word of God.

Well, wonderful. Sure, but what does this mean for us? Let's think about our own hearts and lives. Can you imagine finding the fountain of youth?

After centuries of people searching for the fountain of youth, you finally discover it. And it's not even in Florida. It is in your backyard. The fountain of youth.

And can you imagine building a fence around it? And selling tickets for people to come see it from behind the fence. But never once go inside to bathe and have your body healed and your life changed.

Can you imagine that? Can you imagine, kids, getting a huge Lego set? The Lego set of your dreams with thousands of tiny little pieces.

[19:57] And it comes with this thick instructional manual. On the front is a picture of what it's supposed to be like. What it's designed for you to build. Can you imagine having that instructional manual that tells you step-by-step how to make this glorious Lego creation?

And you just kind of toss the instruction manual on the shelf. And you spend day after day, year after year, playing with the tiny pieces. Trying to fit it all together.

But somehow sensing that it's just not really right. It's not exactly what it could be. Can you imagine uncovering the secret to happiness at the end of a massive treasure hunt?

And you dig in the X marks the spot and you find the envelope labeled secret of happiness. You're so excited that you never open it up and read the secret.

Can you imagine finding the pathway to the good life? You see it down there. You can even see a glimmer of light at the end of it. And you feel stuck in this dark and discouraging forest.

[21:05] You're getting increasingly hopeless. And then you see the path and the light at the end of it. But you just kind of keep glancing every once in a while. And you stay far away from the path.

You don't ever get on it. But you just kind of look over every once in a while to make sure it's still over there. While you go on dark and discouraged in the forest. Wondering what it would be like to actually find light.

And yet, the God of the universe. The one who made this world. Spoken into existence by the power of his word.

And loves us dearly. Gives us his perfect word. The light of life. The light of life. The revelation of truth.

And the beauty. And the goodness that we have been longing for. The way that we can know him. And have relationship with the best friend ever.

[ 22 : 07 ] And we neglect it. Or we read it casually. Or we analyze it at arm's length.

Or say maybe next year. Or we embrace it theoretically. And we talk a lot about it. While trusting our own instincts for how to live life more.

We do all those things, don't we? We wouldn't miss Taylor Swift singing to us. Or Coach Sabin giving a post-game speech.

How could we neglect God himself speaking to us? Well, some of you might say.

And I've had this feeling before myself. Life is so busy. And it is so confusing. And there is so much to figure out.

[ 23 : 06 ] And honestly, Pastor, the Bible just doesn't help that much. It is so old. It's so irrelevant. It doesn't say anything about Instagram.

I looked. There's nothing in it about American politics. There's no instructions on how to be a better engineer. I can't find that section. Well, not so fast.

God's word is also not just perfect. It's profitable. It's practical. It really does speak into our lives.

Right now. Right where we are. More than we sometimes realize. That's part of its incredible perfection. 2 Timothy 3 at verse 16.

All scripture is breathed out by God. Just stop there for a second. All scripture is breathed out by God.

[ 24 : 12 ] He's the perfect one. He's the one who designed this world and knows how it should work. And he created you and gave you life. So what he speaks as a result of it being God's word, it is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.

That the man of God. That the man of God. The woman of God. The woman of God. The child of God. May be competent. Equipped for every good work.

The Bible teaches us positively. It rebukes us negatively. It corrects us when we're off track. It trains us in proper relationship with God so that we grow up in that relationship and are equipped for everything God prepared for us to walk through.

In other words, it directs our fundamental and most important relationship. Our relationship with him. And that relationship sets the course for all of our other relationships.

That's how it practically impacts our lives. In fact, it gives us instruction on being a parent or a child. A boss or an employee.

[ 25 : 36 ] A friend. A steward of time and money. A neighbor. All of those things. All those relationships. Plus, it's the sword of the spirit.

Right? Part of the armor of God. Even more real than the physical world that we see before us is the spiritual warfare we are engaged in every day. For which we must be armed with the sword. If relationship with God or neighbor or spiritual warfare was just a Sunday activity. That's just kind of a once a week sort of thing that you participated in.

Then I would tell you that maybe one sermon a week would be enough of God's word for you each week. But those are constant in our lives, aren't they?

Relationship with God. Relationship with neighbor. Spiritual warfare. See, when you look up here and we're preaching and you see this Bible open, as it inevitably is, you are to remember, as I told the kids, that God is speaking through his word.

[ 26 : 52 ] And we prioritize that when we gather on Sundays as God's people because it's to be a part of our lives every day. Not just on Sunday. This open Bible on Sunday is supposed to highlight the open Bible that you have before you every day.

That is how we walk with Jesus day by day in the pathways of grace. We have to hear his voice, don't we? There are so many voices yelling at us.

We have to hear his. We have to know which way to walk, don't we? There are so many tempting paths. Many of them look very good. We have to know which one is his path.

We have to remember our relationship with him wherever we go, don't we? There are so many things that make it easy to forget who we are. And he tells us.

Nobody else. He tells us who we are in relationship with him. Now listen, I want to be really honest when I paint this picture of day by day opening God's word and walking with him.

[ 27 : 57 ] And we put this nice, beautiful picture up there. Sometimes we don't open our Bibles at home because it doesn't always feel like a beautiful, life-giving walk in the park.

Anybody ever had that experience besides me of sitting down with God's word and maybe feeling like you're struggling?

Like it's a battle? Like I actually opened God's word and I want to argue with him? And so I don't want to give you the impression that that one time you have feels the same for everybody.

Or that it's the same every time for you. Or that it's not hard sometimes to sit down with God's word. In fact, you might feel that way right now. If that's where you're feeling right now. If that's why you're not often running to God's word these days.

Listen, I want you to know it's not a guilt trip. He still loves you and delights in you. In fact, he's calling you back because of that right now to hear his voice again.

[ 29 : 01 ] He's saying, come and talk with me. Come and listen to me. And nowhere else can we count on hearing his voice without fail than in his word.

I'd encourage you if you're there, maybe just take the next few weeks to read just one little section of Psalm 119 each day. It's really long. You won't run out of verses anytime soon.

It's a song of praise about God's word. Read just a few verses. If it's a struggle to do it on your own, read it with a brother or sister in your grace group.

Find someone to read it together with you. And y'all talk to God about it and how it makes you feel. Whatever those emotions are. Just opening your heart up to him. Listen to him speak.

And ask him to shape your heart to love his word. To love his word more. Maybe you've delighted in his word already. You'd long to know him more.

[ 30 : 02 ] See, God's word is perfect and profitable. It's practically useful in our lives and helping us walk with Jesus. In part because it is the only thing that we can count on always to point us to Jesus.

Our lives are off kilter. Misguided when we lose sight of Jesus as the hero. The risen Jesus explains to some of his followers in Luke 24 how all the Bible is moving towards him.

Beginning with Moses and all the prophets. He's going through the whole thing. He interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. He says something similar in John chapter 5.

You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life. And it is they, the scriptures, that bear witness about me. Jesus said, I'm the one they're talking about.

They're pointing you to me from beginning to end. Many of you have marveled at the picture that Pastor Derek shared with us a few weeks ago about the Bible. Right?

[ 31 : 14 ] One book written over thousands of years. Across thousands of miles by dozens of different authors. And if you haven't seen it, these colorful arcs are cross-references from one part, the Old Testament starting over here.

That long line is Psalm 119 right about in the middle going down. All the way through the New Testament. Look at how the Bible is referencing itself.

The Bible is connected. It's one glimpse at how well all these different authors connect their story together. Pointing us to what?

What's that good evidence for? That there is one author who is telling one beautiful story. Who in fact is moving all of history towards the hero at the center of it.

I've got to read you how Sally Lloyd-Jones says it in her Jesus Storybook Bible. This is a good one no matter how old you are. No, the Bible isn't a book of rules or a book of heroes.

[ 32 : 23 ] The Bible is most of all a story. It's an adventure story about a young hero who comes from a far country to win back his lost treasure. It's a love story about a brave prince who leaves his palace, his throne, everything to rescue the one he loves.

It's like the most wonderful of fairy tales that has come true in real life. You see, the best thing about this story is it's true. There are lots of stories in the Bible, but all the stories are telling one big story.

The story of how God loves his children and comes to rescue them. It takes the whole Bible to tell this story. And at the center of the story, there is a baby. Every story in the Bible whispers his name.

He's like the missing piece in a puzzle. The piece that makes all the other pieces fit together. And suddenly, you can see a beautiful picture.

You like love stories? The Bible is the best. You like adventure stories? The Bible is a cosmic level thrill ride.

[ 33 : 30 ] Do you like biographies? The Bible tells the story of the most important person who ever lived and walked on this earth through the lives of many, many others. It is a story that is bigger

than us, which is wonderful.

And at the same time, we are not too small to be significant characters in this story of the word. The son of God who made us for himself.

Who came to rescue us and bring us back to himself. Who died to make us his brothers and sisters, sons and daughters of the king. Who now live to trust his grace and to share his grace with others. Who will live like that until he comes again to be with us forever in a world that he remakes in absolute perfection forever.

Now, depending on where you are in the story, when you open it up this afternoon, you might not read the name Jesus on your page. The whisper of his name may be really soft.

[ 34 : 38 ] It may be showing you how desperately we need him and his rescue. It may be urging us to trust him and to live following his direction even when it doesn't make sense.

And even when we don't know what he's doing. But wherever you are, Jesus is always the hero. The Bible will always perfectly and profitably point you to him.

We want this summer to be practically helpful to all of us in our relationships with God. So, while we're talking about God speaking to us in the Bible these couple of weeks, your leaders have compiled some resources that we think might be helpful.

What I'm about to say is dangerous and not usually done during a sermon, but you can take out your phone right now. You can scan this QR code. There's another version of the same QR code in the announcement section of your bulletin if that's easier for you.

I'd love to look at it with you for just a moment. At the top, a couple of places to start if you're wondering, where do I start in reading the Bible?

[ 35 : 56 ] Our church family is on a two-year Bible reading plan. Some people really enjoy reading through the Bible chronologically. You can easily get a version of that that lines it all up in that order for you to understand.

Study Bibles can be a big help when confusion creates frustration for you and you just can't get past the things you don't understand. There are also a couple of great apps there that will help you with audio and or visual means to help you engage with the story and what's going on.

Sometimes that's really helpful to encourage your heart towards being in God's Word. Young people, we have even a longer page for you. There are even more of those similar resources including Bibles that might be helpful to you.

The book I just read from is on there. There are songs from God's Word. We are never too young. Y'all, this is part of what I want you to hear.

We're never too young or too old to be walking with Jesus and listening to Him speak. No matter how deeply you are in God's Word or how unfamiliar you are with God's Word, there's an opportunity for each of us this summer to grow.

[ 37 : 12 ] For our engagement with God's Word, reading it, studying it. Perhaps if you study, memorizing it. Singing it. Use one of these tools.

Don't try them all at once, okay? But I'd encourage you, if you don't do QR codes, there's some hard copies in the narthex. I'd encourage you to look at them and prayerfully to contemplate, not human resources about it, but what could actually help your heart engage with God's Word more? That you would know Him and love Him and have your life shaped, walking with Him day by day more than you experience right now. Okay, now I want to ask something harder, which is for you to put your phones back away.

You can look more at these later. We won't take the site down. Ask any of us if you want more info on any of these resources. But right now, I want you to hear Jesus inviting you again back into relationship.

That's what His Word does every time we open it. Into walking with Him because the Bible is perfect and profitable, largely because it points us to Jesus.

[ 38 : 28 ] It shines light on our path so that we walk in His steps. It equips us for every good work by reminding us of our need for a Savior and of the gift of His Spirit.

It gives joy to our hearts and life to our souls through pointing us to the hero who comes to earth and goes to the cross to rescue us from certain death to everlasting life.

And so that's exactly what this table, this visible word for us this morning does, is it points us to the hero of the Bible story who is actually here to eat with you and to renew your relationship.

It's why He's given it to us. It's why that on the night that He was betrayed, Jesus took bread and He broke it and He gave it to His disciples.

As I, ministering in His name, give this bread to you, He said, take and eat. This is my body given for you. I'm the one who will do what you need, so you do this in remembrance of me.

[ 39 : 36 ] And in the same way, He took the cup and said, this cup is the new covenant in my blood. The hero of this story is the one who sheds His blood for the forgiveness of sins so that it wouldn't be ours.

His blood shed for many for the forgiveness of sins. Drink from it, all of you. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim His death.

You proclaim He's the hero. You proclaim He's the one in whom I find life until He comes. The invitation to take this bread and this wine comes from Jesus Himself.

To all who by faith in Him are active, baptized members of His body, the church, which is an imperfect family, made perfect only by the perfect love of the perfect Word of God.

If that doesn't describe you today, or if you're presently maybe a part of that body, but right now you're unwilling to repent of your sins and to trust that this is the one who provides the forgiveness that you need and you can run to Him, then don't this morning come and eat and drink, but come and observe and pray and consider the hero of the Bible story being the hero of your story for the first time or again today, right there where you need Him in your sin, His forgiveness, His blood in your place.

[ 41 : 15 ] Let's pray and we'll come celebrate together. Jesus, we thank you for what you have done and the fact that you have even given us your written Word and your visible Word to point us to the good news of your love for us and your heart to be in relationship with us.

From the youngest age, you've marked us as your own and now you give us your body and your blood so that we'll never forget your love. Help us to walk in that, not just in this moment, but throughout this day, this week, and our lives.

We ask it in your name. Amen. For more information, visit us online at [southwood.org](https://southwood.org). Thank you.