How to Find God

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Preacher: John Lau

[0:00] About 500 years ago, a new theory regarding the world started to emerge. People used to think the planet Earth is the center of the universe, and everything revolves around it.

But through observing the sky and recording the location of few known stars over time, a few scientists concluded that the sun is the center of our galaxy, and we revolve around the sun, and there is something much bigger that is at the center of the universe.
Scientists and astronomers continue to explore the night sky in order to find out the size of our neighboring planets and their exact distance between each other in order to work out the size of the solar system and hopefully to work out the size of the Milky Way galaxy and the universe.
In early 1700s, astronomer Edmund Haley proposed that one way to calculate the exact distance between each planet of our solar system is to observe Venus moving across in front of the sun from different parts of the world.
So in 1769, Lieutenant James Cook travelled to Tahiti to observe the transits of Venus in front of the sun.
[1:31] The answer to great scientific question is in observing. By observing the sky, scientists were able to work out the exact distance between planets of our solar system.

After his work at Tahiti was done, Lieutenant Cook carried on his forager, down south to survey and charter what they can find.
And in April 1770, he landed on a huge uncharted landmark stand under, and he named his landing place Botany Bay.
The planet Venus not just helped scientists to work out exact distance between planets. It also led to the landing of which Australia, the land down under, was found.
Today, Psalms also tell us that the heaven and skies will help us to find out something very important for each one of us too. something as important as the finding of a new country and a new life.
[2:38] So let's pray. Father, as we start the new year and looking into your words, please help us to have attentive ears and an open heart for your words.

Please help us in this coming year to keep searching and looking for who you really are and have a true relationship with you. In Jesus, I pray. Please turn with me to Psalm 19 again.
I would like to use today's passage to answer the question, how do we know God? There are three areas that I want to explore with you.
First one is, how is it possible to know God? Secondly, what does nature say about God? And lastly, what is the way to know God?
So let's start from Psalm 19, first one to four. The heavens declare the glory of God.
[3:44] 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. When we start thinking about God, what does that make you feel? If I tell you, you are now in the presence of God, does that wake you up and cause you to sit up straight? Or does it make no difference because you think you already know God and be in his presence all the time?
For many cultures, God is someone who hovers above us, waiting to send down thunder and lightning when we do something that he disapproves.
We often associate God with punishment and retribution. How often do you think about the glory of God and the works of his hands?

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[4:54] The heavens declare the glory of God. The skies proclaim the works of his hands. Do you believe God as a personal God that you can approach or a mysterious, powerful force that you need to reckon with?

The Jewish tradition believed the divine name of God is too sacred to be uttered. So they used an equivalent of the Lord instead of calling God directly.
They do not dare to call God's name directly out of fear and respect. The Chinese believe the realm of God is about three feet above our heads.
So as we grow up, we are told we need to sit properly at our dining table and do not hit the table with our chopsticks because it will upset the gods above us.
And what God will do is he will send us nightmares and make our teeth fall off when we sleep.
Some believe God is localized in each particular culture.
[6:03] So the God of the Bible is a Western God and people from Asia should believe Buddha or people from Middle East should follow Allah.

as if God is how human beings make him out to be, as if we control how God is to be known. Just like what people used to believe the world revolves around the planet Earth, we believe we are the center of the universe and everything revolves around us.
If we hold to a very unhealthy and unrealistic view of God, how is it possible for you to know God?
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. The knowledge of the glory of God and the work of his hands is revealed to us through God's creation.
[7:07] It is possible to know God because God has revealed that knowledge to us. the heavens and the skies are calling out to us to say that there is much more to what we think we know about God.

In verse 3, they have no speech. They use no words. The sound is heard from, no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into the earth.
Their words to the end of the world. There is something very fundamental about God. It is so fundamental that we humans often miss it.
We are often too busy working out how to keep the world revolving around us that we forget to observe the fundamental truth. It is there in the second half of verse 4.
In the heavens, God has pitched a tent for the sun. The God of the universe, the God of our world, has everything under control, even the sun.
[8:14] God has pitched a tent for the sun. He has set the course for nature in place of his glory to reveal the knowledge of the work of his hands. God is not a concept of human imagination to somehow make us feel better about ourselves or to help us to parenting our kids.

God, not us, not you or me, is the center of our universe and he is active in reaching out to us for us to know him better. So, how is it possible to know God?
It is possible to know God because God has revealed that knowledge to us. It is possible to know God because God is much bigger than what we can imagine him to be and he is under control.
Everything in nature has its proper course for us to know God. In the heavens, God has pitched a tent for the sun. It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, like a champion rejoicing to run his course.
It raises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuits to the other. Nothing is deprived of its warmth. God has said the most powerful thing in nature, the sun, in a circuit.
[9:36] God has pitched a tent for it. What is the meaning of that to us? What does that say about God? I believe it says that no matter how powerful we think the nature is, it is not God.

For many years and even now, many cultures worship nature. They worship the sun, the moon. However, nature is only the reflection of the glory of God.
God has a power and ability to manipulate nature to achieve his goals. But not every natural phenomenon is a result of God's manipulation.
when natural disasters strike, like a tsunami or earthquake, to attribute them to God and saying God is pronouncing judgment is very irresponsible and wrong.
The same attitude can be applied to our lives, ups and downs. Not all the ups are the reward of God and not all the downs are the punishment from God.

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[10:44] God is not the purpose of the sun to run its course is that nothing is deprived of its warmth. The presence of the sun is unavoidable.

It hits every senses of our body. The bright light hits your eyes, the warmth you feel on your skin. The presence of God is even more unavoidable and undeniable.
My family went to Hokkaido, Japan on Christmas Eve and we got back just after the New Year. In Hokkaido, there is no New Year Eve countdown or firework.
So we followed the Japanese tradition and we got up around 5 in the morning on New Year Day. We caught the cable car to man Mao and to welcome the first sunrise of 2019.
The sun meant to come out at 7 or 3 in the morning but it was very windy and stormy. The snow was just blowing very heavy. So we didn't see the sun until about 8 o'clock.
[11:55] But we feel the sky brighten up. The temperature when we get up to the mountain is negative 3. Just before the sun rises it drops to negative 6. But after the sun rises it becomes 0 degrees.

So we feel the warmth swell a little bit. The presence of God like the sun is undeniable. David in another psalm in Psalm 139 verse 7 to 10 says this.
Where can I go from your spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heaven you are there. If I make my bed in the death you are there.
If I rise on the wings of the dawn if I settle on the far side of the sea even there your hand will guide me. Your right hand will hold me fast.
nature tell us that God like the sun will surely rise after a long dark night to provide us with warmth.
[12:58] God is everywhere and he knows our coming and going and the works of his hand is to guide us and hold fast to us. You might for some reason want to run away from God.

You might want to go from his spirit and flee from his presence but no matter where you run to he will be there up to the heavens or down to the death.
God is there not to punish you but to celebrate your life with you like a bridegroom running out of his chamber like a champion rejoicing in running his course.
God will go from one end of the heavens to the other end to make sure you fulfill the course that he set for your life and declare the glory of God. Do you look at God with this kind of understanding? What do you think is the purpose of life God has intended for you? Or are you currently trying to flee and hide from the presence of God? One other thing we can learn from the metaphor of the son is that God is concealed from human sight for a reason?
[14:14] In our stupidity, we often think that we can handle the ray of the sun blinding ourselves. We often think that we can handle God.

We say things like, if God is so loving, why did he allow suffering to exist in this world or in my life? If God is for me, why don't things go my way?
God is the most important thing of this universe. He set everything into motion.
He is in control, and he is the only one that really knows what is best for you and me. So let me encourage you to look into nature and be amazed of the glory of God that he declares and proclaims.
Let me encourage you to run towards him and not away from him, for he will guide you and hold fast to you. We can know God because God has revealed himself to us through his creation, through the heavens and the skies.
[15:24] The nature tells us God is much bigger than what we can imagine him to be. God is everywhere and all-powerful, and he controls even the sun. So how do we really know God?

Is looking at nature and God's creation enough to let us know God intimately? Let's read on from Psalm 19, verse 7.
And we look at the last point, what is the way to know God? Verse 7. The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statue of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple.
The precepts of the Lord are bright, 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. The Psalms tell us that by our serving nature, it's not enough to know God intimately.
[16:33] We need something more from God. The law, statutes, percepts, commands, and decrees of God referring to his words.

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These are what we can find in the Bible. Nature is only a pointer, pointing us to the specific revelation of God through his words.
The Bible is given to us as the most reliable source of knowing God intimately to build a personal relationship with God. The Bible is perfect, it's trustworthy, it's right, it's radiant, it's firm.
It refreshes the soul, it makes simple people wise, it gives joy to the heart, gives light to the eyes, and all of it are righteous. As we know God intimately, as we build a personal relationship with God, we shall have a sense of fear towards God growing within us.
This is not the same fear that most cultures don't know about God personally have. It's not a fear of punishment or retribution. As we experience the greatness and glory of God, as we come to realize how precious is our relationship with God, how sweet it is to be loved by the creator of the universe, his word warns us that in obeying God there's great reward.
[18:09] Do you find it strange that we are warned about a great reward? Wouldn't it make more sense to say in disobeying there's a great punishment?

But instead say that's a great reward. God is not hovering above us, waiting to punish us, but he knows that we are so feeble that we cannot discern our own error or keep ourselves from sinning against him.
So he became one of us and lived among us and paid the price for our disobedience on the cross. God had done the impossible to make it possible for us to be in loving relationship with him.
by trusting him for his grace, he will forgive our hidden thoughts because the punishment for our disobedience has fully paid out.
There are only rewards left within our relationship with God. Apostle Paul is so overwhelmed by the greatness and majesty of God, he breaks out with these words in Romans 11, verse 33 to 36.
[19:21] O the death of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable is his judgment, his path beyond tracing out!

Who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor, who has even given to God that God should repay them? For from him and through him and for him are all things, to him be the glory forever.
Amen. By treasuring our relationship with God like pure gold and honey from the honeycomb, God will keep you from willful sins, from being ruled over by evil.
He will make you blameless and keep you in relationship with him forever. This is the right kind of fee, the right kind of attitude towards the almighty creator of this universe.
Take courage that God is full of wonders, big with mercy, and because of what he had done for you, he looks upon you with a smiling face.
[20:32] We can find God because he has revealed himself to us through his creation, used them as a pointer to point us to his words, the Bible.

The creation of God, nature of itself, cannot help us to build an intimate personal relationship with God. The word of God is the way to know God.
How are we to know God? God is his own interpreter and he will make it plain to us. So forgive my hidden thoughts.
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 to your sight, Lord, my rock and my redeemers.
My wishes for you in the new year are to discover God through his word, to discover your rock and your redeemer, to have a pleasing personal relationship with God.

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