

The Power Of God's Word

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: 23 February 2020

Preacher: Rev Kenneth I Macleod

[0 : 00] Psalm number 19, and it's from verse 7 that we're reading. 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. Moreover, by them is your servant warned, and keeping them there is great reward. Who can discern this error?

Declare me innocent from hidden faults. Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins. Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless and innocent of great transgression, and so on.

[0 : 59] So, a man, a long time ago, said that two things that fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe.

And one is the starry heavens above, and the other is the moral law within us. And this psalm really is a celebration of both.

It's a celebration. It speaks to us of God's general revelation. And these first few verses, we're not looking at them just now, but these first few verses are absolutely powerful.

This psalm opens and says, The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. And then it runs on. And this is one thing that the Bible over and over tells us, as it does, like for instance in Romans 1 and so on, that the creation and this whole universe, when we look up into the sky, and whether it's the sun we look at, or whether it is the moon and the stars and the planets and all these things, they speak to us about the amazing power of God, and they reveal to us his handiwork.

And that shows us that men and women, boys and girls, are without any excuse. Nobody at the end of the day can say, You know this, I didn't know that there was a God.

[2 : 30] Because the creation speaks very powerfully and very forcibly to everyone. That's what Romans 1 tells us, that everybody is without excuse.

It's a waste of time, people saying there is no God. And it's extraordinary how many people today, there's an increasing boldness, where people are asserting as if they really know there is no God. There is an aggressive atheism afoot today, and people are using their God-given talents and energies into trying to proclaim and make people doubt and believe that there is no God.

But they're inexcusable. The Bible tells us that. Because the creation reveals to us very clearly, it says at the very beginning, the heavens declare the glory of God.

So for a person to arrive at an atheistic point of view, they have to suppress the truth that's all around them. They have to go into a denial, and they have to try and push down all the evidences that this whole creation is shouting out.

[3 : 45] The creation is telling us. Day to day pours out speech. In other words, it's like the whole creation is shouting out. God is. This is his handiwork.

Look at it. And there is no speech, nor there are words whose voice is heard. And the measuring line goes out through all the earth, and the words to the end of the world.

In other words, there's nobody that doesn't know that God is. At the end of the day, people will have absolutely no excuse. But the wonderful thing is that God hasn't just left us with the general revelation.

Because the general revelation that we have speaks to us, we're told in Romans, of God's eternal power and Godhead. That it reveals to us that God is. You know, some people will say, Why

doesn't the Bible begin by trying to prove the existence of God?

I've heard people say that. Well, there's no need to. Because the creation already proves that. Everything around us proves that God is.

[4 : 53] So it would be absolute folly to start trying to prove what is already evident. But God has given us, in his word, over a growing, as it were, revelation, the more areas and aspects of his being that we couldn't work out from the general revelation.

And so we have what is termed his special revelation. Where we're able to discover more and more of who he is, of who we are, of our responsibilities to him, and of course the greatest thing of all is that God has provided a way of salvation for us.

Now, we could stop at every verse here, but we're just going to run through very briefly. But you'll notice that from verses 7 to 10, there are 6 times 6 times 6.

In other words, first of all, there are 6 titles for Scripture. There's the law, there's testimony, there's precepts, there's commandments, there's fear, and there's rules or decrees or judgments.

And then there's 6 characteristics of Scripture. It's perfect, it's sure, it's right, it's pure, it's clean, and it's true.

[6 : 16] And then you see the 6 effects of Scripture upon us. It revives or restores, it makes wise, it rejoices, it enlightens, it endures, and it's righteous.

So straight away you can see the amazing impact that God's Word has upon us. And the Lord, of course, it's amazing how you see here that every title of Scripture is given is of the Lord.

You'll notice that, you'll see that over and over again, that it's of the Lord. The law of the Lord is perfect. The testimony of the Lord.

The precepts of the Lord. So you see, it's reinforcing that our Bible is the Word of God. It's of the Lord. This is not man-made.

Nobody, you know, this is one of the wonderful things about the Bible. That although we might have different translations over the years, and that is because there is an obligation that the Bible ought to be in the language of the people.

[7 : 29] But when we get, say for instance, we have the ESV, which was a new translation, it was translated exactly from the original manuscripts of the Hebrew and the Greek.

And the wonderful thing is that you never have to get a committee saying, you know, we ought to update the Bible. I think there are things that, see, we're living in this politically correct age.

I think there are things maybe we ought to remove from the Bible, or there are things we better change in the Bible. No, that doesn't happen. This is a complete Bible, complete Word of God for every age, for every person worldwide.

That doesn't mean that God, that every person is going to be comfortable when they read it. They're not. Neither are you or I. Because there are aspects of it, we'll come to that in a moment.

There are aspects of God's Word that hit right into the heart. And it's like a knife going right in. And God intends it to be like that. And in this age that we live in, a lot of people can't take that.

[8 : 35] They want rid of the Bible. Because the Bible makes them feel uncomfortable. But it is the Word of God. And it endures forever. You know, people have tried, nations have tried, to get rid of the Bible, to burn the Bible, to ban the Bible.

And the Bible continues to be the best read book in the whole wide world. Generation after generation in places have tried to ban it. And it's still, it is still at the forefront of everything.

And will be. Because we're told that the Word of God endures forever. Because it is His Word. Now we're told that the law of the Lord is perfect. And, in other words, we can't better it.

This Word that God has given us is for the benefit of our lives. You know, there's people who think that God's Word and God's law, that it destroys enjoyment of life.

And people will say, oh, you don't want to live according to the Bible. Because if you go that way, you're going to miss out on so much in life. They couldn't be further from the truth.

[9 : 42] God's Word is liberating. Jesus said that. The truth will make you free. You want no freedom in life? Well, here it is.

Come to know me. Because Jesus said, I am truth personified. I am the living Word. So the Lord has given us this. It's a complete law. And we see the effect of that, that it, we're told this, that the law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul.

Now that means transforming the soul. And that's what God's Word does. If you're here today as a Christian, God's Word transformed your soul.

That's what happened in the new birth. It wasn't that you decided and said one day, you know this, you know what I want to do? I've got a few resolutions for my life. This is, I'm going to start living my life in a different way.

I want to become a Christian and I'm going to try and pattern my life on God's Word. Well, of course, a Christian does pattern their lives on God's Word. But the new birth is a radical, it's transforming.

[10:54] Your life, the day you became a Christian, changed. Yes, all the old lusts and all the old things are still there. That hasn't been taken away.

Everything you ever wear is still there. But, I was going to say, something new, someone new came into your life. Jesus came through the Holy Spirit and He changed your life so that you have new desires, new affections, new hopes, new goals, new dreams, you have a new destination.

All of the, all of this is part of what it means to be born again. There was this transformation took place in your life and that's what God's Word does.

And that's why it's essential if any person says, you know, I'd like to become a Christian, it is key that they read God's Word and if possible that they do come to God's house.

Because this is where God speaks to us through His Word and it is through His Word that we come to faith. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.

[12:09] And then we're told that the testimony of the Lord is sure. See, God's Word is absolutely true. That's one of the wonderful things. If you're a preacher or a Sunday school teacher or you're doing anything with God's Word, you know, it's a wonderful comfort that you have something that you totally believe in.

Some people, they have jobs, they might be salesmen or saleswomen and they're having to sell a particular product and they will give the best, they will sell it to the best of their ability.

But you know, sometimes you could be trying to sell something you don't really believe in. You're kind of 90% to believe in but not 100%.

There's kind of wee doubts here and there. But that's never the case with God's Word because we have total confidence in it. This is God's Word and God says, my Word won't return to me void.

This is a living Word and it is 100% true. So that's one of the great things as a preacher that although we might not preach very well, I might not preach very well, but at the end of the day, it's God's Word and He is able to do with that Word what I can't do with it.

[13:28] But the thing is, it's true. It's absolutely true. And that's one of the wonderful things when we deal with God's Word. And the great thing is that the effect of this Word is it makes wise the simple.

See, that's one of the things that happens when you become a Christian and you base your life on God's Word. A wisdom comes into your life. God's wisdom. So you start making the right decisions. So that you start looking at the Lord and saying, Right, Lord, what should I do here? And God will show you the way to go. He gives you discretion.

That's an amazing thing in life. Where you start to instinctively know what is right and what is wrong. That's something you can't learn from a book or from a college or anything.

This discretion. It's God's, it's God, God given. He gives you this wisdom. And that's something we should crave, that we should pray for, that we should desire.

[14:37] But it begins the moment we come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. So the Lord makes wise the simple. And it's, it's, it's one of the important things.

That's why every single day we, we always emphasize the importance of beginning the day with God's word. Have you ever find, found sometimes you're in a rush in the morning and you might go out and say, I don't have time for, I don't have time to read my Bible or pray today I have to go to work.

Okay, you might have a good day but sometimes you don't and then you say to yourself, you know this, whatever I need to make time for, I need to make time for God's word. It's like, I know some people skip breakfast and they say I'll eat something later on.

Well, I always have a breakfast before I go out. But you need, even more important than that, you need the breakfast of God's word.

You need to feed on it. Because this gives you a sustenance, it gives you a wisdom, it gives you direction for the day. So don't, whatever you skip, don't skip, if you're going to skip a breakfast, skip your eating breakfast or your natural breakfast rather than the breakfast of God's word.

[15 : 49] It sets you up for the day. And so that's one of the wonderful things about God's word. But then we see also that the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.

And this is another thing that God's word does. It brings joy into our heart. It's not a contrived joy, it's not a joy that we work up ourselves, it's part of what God does through his word and through his spirit.

As you go through the fruit of the spirit is joy. So the Christian has that joy that isn't dependent on circumstances. You know, you could be going through a hard time, I've seen it so often in God's people, that they're going through a really difficult time in God's providence.

And yet, deep down, there's a deep-rooted joy. And you say, this is unnatural. And of course it is. It is unnatural.

It's divine. It's divinely given. Divinely inspired. The joy of the Lord is your strength. That's what we're told. The commandment of the Lord is pure.

[17 : 01] In other words, there's no deceit. There's no defilement. There's no dross. It's altogether pure. There is a purity in God's Word.

There's a purity in God, of course. God is altogether pure. And this is one of the things that God's Word enables us to do, enables us to see, to see clearly.

Speaking of this, just very briefly on Thursday night, it's one of the things that we were looking at about the whole aspect of purity. You know, sometimes, like I'll say to the Lord, Lord, I'm struggling to see you.

I want to see, I want to get a clearer sight of you. What's happened? Why can't I? And then the verse might come to you, Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

In one sense, it's very simple. In one sense, it's very hard. It's very radical. But the impurity of our life, and our lives are filled with impurity, is one of the hindrances to seeing God as who He really is.

[18 : 12] And this is part of what God's Word does. It is a cleansing impact upon our life, so that we're unable to see the Lord more clearly. And that's what we say, Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

And the fear of the God, the fear of the Lord, is clean, enduring forever. The rules are true, and righteous altogether. You see, this is part of, there is, as we said there, tied into the purity, there's a cleansing aspect to God's Word.

God's Word is like a river flowing through, giving streams of water to nourish us, but also, not just to refresh us, but also to cleanse us.

And the closer we lived according to God's Word, and according to God's rules, then we will walk better, we will work better, we will serve better, we will love deeper.

The Lord will have from us a life that is more glorifying to Him. So, to sum it up, as we said, there are six terms given for God's Word, His law, testimony, precepts, commandments, fear, and rules.

[19 : 24] Six attributes given, perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, true, and six effects of the Word. It revives, makes wise, rejoices, enlightens, endures, and it's righteous.

So, it's no wonder then, at verses 10 and 11, the psalmist talks of the value and the effect of God's Word. Because he says, it's a great possession for those who discover it.

Gold is good. Much gold is better, but great fine gold is best of all. And that's what this Word, the Word of God is. It's greater than all the riches of this world.

Now, there's nothing wrong with having riches. Great blessing in that. There's so much good that you can do if you use it wisely and well. But, God's Word will do for you what this world's riches can't.

This world's riches can't do one thing for you as you die and go into eternity. Not one thing. You could have all the money of Bill Gates or whoever, and when you come to die, not going to do you one scrap of good.

[20 : 33] The richest man and the poorest man or poorest woman in this world, when they die, whether it was poverty or riches, it's a great leveler. It doesn't make you, no longer has any bearing upon what's going to happen next.

But God's Word does. Because it gives a richness to your life and it gives you a richness for your death and it gives you wealth for eternity as well.

So there's great, great value in having this. And there's also abiding pleasure because it talks there about more to be desired. Are they than gold, even much fine gold, sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.

Just to have, they're talking about the sweetness and the enjoyment of God's Word. But we then see that there's protection in God's Word. Verse 11.

Moreover, by them is your servant warned in keeping them there is great reward. You see, God's Word, part of what God's Word does is God's Word doesn't just encourage us.

[21 : 47] It doesn't just constrain us to do certain things. God's Word also restrains us. And you know, it's very important that we read through God's Word because if we only read the encouraging parts and the Word of God is full of encouragement, but if we say, I'm only going to read the good parts.

I don't want to read these parts that are challenging. I don't want to read these parts that get poor, that get right in under my skin. I don't want to read the parts that make me feel uncomfortable.

I just want to read the nice parts. Well, we're doing a disservice to God because if we say God's Word is not only there to encourage us, thankfully it does, and it does it more than anybody could ever do, but it's also there setting up barriers, setting up restraints within our lives.

And that's what it does. It's like putting the brakes on. Moreover, by them is your servant warned. Remember, when God opens doors for you, it's wrong not to go through them.

But it's also wrong when God closes doors against you to try and force them open. One is as bad as the other. And that's what God's Word does.

[23 : 03] God's Word puts the brakes onto our lives. And you know, there are times that, you know what I'm talking about, where God's Word has come all of a sudden as a rebuke.

And you realize, I'm wrong here. And that's so important that we listen to what God is saying. But it also tells us that the keeping of God's law, there's great reward in it.

not only in the world to come, but here and now. In other words, if our lives are built upon God's Word, we will find, just as we're saying to the young people, this is the way that the law works.

That if we are seeking to do well, to do good, that our lives are Christ-like and lived, seeking to model according to God's Word the way that the Lord has set before us, there is a way in which our life individually will be lived to the benefit of society.

And as we do that, we will have a sense of purpose and a sense of peace, a sense of the Lord within our heart. And you can't put a price on that where we're conscious of Him being with us and being in us.

[24 : 18] And so, this is all part of the great riches that God's Word is. But then from verse 12, we find that David comes and he says, Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins.

Or before, sorry, Who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from faults. Now, here we come to God's Word. This is what God's Word is like. It's a light.

And it goes right into our heart and it shows us who we really are. It's a light shining into the dark. And we're saying, Oh, I don't feel comfortable with this.

The Lord begins to show us sins that we weren't even aware of. He begins to show us something of the corruption and the deceit that's within our own heart. You know, sometimes when we're out, when we've done wrong and we say, Oh, I did that and that was wrong.

But then God comes in His Word and He shows us the problems a lot deeper than just what you did. The problem is right down and He begins to show us aspects of our nature and character that we'd never seen before and we go, Oh, I never saw that.

[25 : 33] Oh, no. The Lord, there's an awful lot that you haven't seen and that I haven't seen of what we're really like. And this is what the Word of God does. It shines right down and brings conviction of sin with us, to us.

Now, we often tend to think of conviction of sin as something that happens when we come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. That it's what happens before we come to salvation.

Well, that is often true. But conviction of sin doesn't stop once we become a Christian. I believe that David knew far deeper conviction of sin when he was a mature Christian than he ever did when he came to faith first.

When David, you read, we sang Psalm 51, that is a psalm of conviction, of real harrowing conviction of sin. And the Lord shows us at different periods in our life just what we're really like.

Dr. Kennedy, the great famous preacher who was in Dingwall after preaching one time, a hearer said to him after the sermon, oh, Dr. Kennedy, that's another masterful sermon.

[26 : 46] Beginning to praise him, what a wonderful man he was. And he said to this person, do you know this? If you knew the thoughts that were in my mind as I walked from the manse to the

church this morning, you would never ever speak to me again.

You don't know me. And do you know, that's true about us all. And that's what God's word sometimes does. Gives us a sharp intake of breath.

Oh, I didn't know that's what I was like. Now without, a non-Christian will never discover that. They cannot, it only comes through the Holy Spirit shining the light into our heart.

And then very briefly, it says, keep your servant also from presumptuous sins. Let them not have dominion over me. Do you know something? They're the worst sins of the lot.

The presumptuous sins. And it's no wonder David prayed that. Because you know, at the end of the day, though he prayed it here, it was presumptuous sin that took him into his worst sin.

[27 : 55] Presumptuous sin is where we sin fully in the knowledge of light. It's like where we don't care what God is saying. It's like where we know his command, we know what he's saying, and we like, we trample him into the dust and say, I don't care.

And we have this idea that, oh, I'm a Christian, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin. I can do what I want and I don't care. Christian can sometimes have that attitude.

That's presumptuous sin. And that's what David was guilty of when he went into the adulterous relationship with Bathsheba and when he had Bathsheba's husband murdered.

The presumptuous sin. Because he knew that they were the worst of the Lord. In fact, very interestingly, God's law back in, we read about it, I'm just going to turn here for a moment in Numbers, it was the only sin that there was no provision of an offering or a sacrifice.

The presumptuous sin. You see, there's lots of sins. There were intentional sins, unintentional sins. If a person sins unintentionally, he shall offer a female goat a year old for a sin offering and so on.

[29 : 05] You shall have one law for him who does anything unintentionally and so on. But the person who does anything with a high hand, that is, a high hand against God, where they blatantly and without any care, whatever, it's like putting, trampling God's word underfoot.

But the person who does anything with a high hand, whether he is a native or a sojourner, reviles the Lord and that person shall be cut off from among his people because he has despised the word of the Lord and has broken his commandment.

That person shall be utterly cut off, the iniquity shall be on him. Wow, that's solemn. And that was the worst sin and that's what David is saying, Lord, please, please, keep back your servant.

Because you see, sin is so powerful when it's like a whirlpool bubbling away in there. We said there's a radical transformation when we become Christians.

How true? But they're still there. The old is still there, gurgling away. And if we allow it to rise up and to begin to take control, its nature is that the more it rises up, the more it will push God's word out of the way and it will die and say, I'm going to rule the life and then it becomes, comes into the place where God's word is pushed underfoot and then they're living, as it were, with a high hand against God.

[30 : 39] It's the most dangerous because this is where it breaks out into the open and where the person is living in absolute defiance of God. No wonder David said, keep back your servant.

Let them not have dominion over me that I shall be blameless and innocent of great conscration. Then he finishes the psalm saying, let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

Now this word acceptable is the idea of like an offering of thanksgiving, an offering of a sacrifice to God. And, you know, when we praise God and when we thank God, particularly when we're going through a difficult time, supposing your life is a wee bit difficult just now, there are things in your life and it's just not straightforward, but you still praise Him.

The Lord calls that the sacrifice of praise because you see a sacrifice costs. When you make us, if you, we talk about giving sacrificially or doing anything in a sacrificial way, that means it's costing us something.

And that's what the Lord recognizes. When we praise Him and thank Him, even when there might be difficulties in our life, we are offering as it were, praise.

[32 : 04] Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me. Offers, it's like a sacrifice. Psalms talk about the sacrifice of thanksgiving, the sacrifice of praise.

And the Lord acknowledges that. You make sure that's part and partial of your life. Make this psalm, and particularly these last few verses, part of your own prayer, that the Lord through His Word will enable you to discover the secret faults of your life, and that He will keep you from the

presumptuous sin, and that you'll be enabled to walk in a right way before Him.
Let us pray. Lord, our God, we pray to do us good. We give thanks for your Word, which is that great rule to direct us, how we may glorify and enjoy you.
Lord, help us not to close our ears to your Word. We pray that our hearts will be open to it, that we will receive it with gladness, and that it will indeed bring rejoicing into our heart.
Bless the cup of tea, coffee in the hall, bless us as a fellowship, and go with us as we make our way to our different homes. Be with us in the evening, serve us as well, we pray.
[33 : 22] Cleanse us from our sin, in Jesus' name we ask all. Amen. We're going to conclude singing in this psalm that we're looking at, Psalm 19. And it's on page 223, it's from the Scottish Psalter, Psalm 19, on page 223, and we're going to sing from verse 11 to the end of the psalm.
Moreover, they thy servant warn how he is life should frame, a great reward provided is for them that keep the same, who can his errors understand, O cleanse thou me within, from secret faults I servant keep, from all presumptuous sin.
To the end of the psalm, four verses, moreover they thy servant warn. Lord, my what I speakz by who puns my should fasterify, hook up with me, ■■■■ Cadillus, I will h vasem, bend in, mois■■■, Sustainable, Xigna, every it was same the that is ever understand oh let's be with the eyes and