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How Does God Speak to Us

*Psalm 19:1-14***Pastor David Pranga, Brewster Baptist Church**

Good morning! My name is Pastor David Pranga. I am the Executive Pastor here at Brewster Baptist Church. I am so glad that you have come to join us today. Whether you are watching online, or here in the beautiful sanctuary, thank you for making the choice to be with us.

I would like to start off with a special thanks to Pastor Doug, the Leadership Council, and the congregation for recognizing my 10 years of service at BBC. For those who may have missed it, last month Pastor Doug shared some really nice remarks about my service here at BBC, and there was a video, featuring my daughter who is currently in Japan, who shared a really heartfelt message for Christy and me. Pastor Doug presented Christy and me with three pies, and a weekend get-away to one of our favorite spots. Christy and I just wanted to say, "Thank you very much!"

After each of the services people congratulated us. I was expecting people to ask me about where my favorite place to go was. Instead, everyone asked me, "What were the flavors of pies?"

Let me tell you, there was a chocolate cream pie that was thick and delicious! There was a Dutch apple pie, that was one of the best that I ever tasted. The topping on that apple pie was unbelievable. There was a cherry pie, which was gone before I could even have a piece. When you have a big family, you make your pie choices wisely.

Over the past few weeks we have been in a sermon series called "*Some End of Summer Songs*," looking at some of the Psalms. Since it is technically still summer until September 21, we going to continue the series for one more week this week with one of my favorite Psalms.....*Psalm 19*. While there is a lot to unpack in this Psalm, I will be focusing on "**How God speaks to us**" and "How God Reveals Himself To Us." Let us begin in *Psalm 19:1-4*.

**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.
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 I read these verses about the night sky, it reminds me of growing up in northern Wisconsin. My parents lived six miles away from town. We lived on a country road. It was completely dark at night. I remember, as a kid, looking up at the sky at night. The sky seemed so huge and vast at night. I loved going outside and looking at the moon and the stars. Sometime my parents would be out there looking at the constellations in the sky, and helping me find the Big Dipper and Little Dipper. On a really dark night, when you are away from all the light pollution, the moon and stars look stunning.

How many of you have heard of the Jane Webb Telescope?

The Jane Webb Telescope was launched on December 25, 2021 at a cost of 10 billion dollars. It is the largest, most powerful, and most complex telescope ever launched into space. This telescope takes pictures of stars and planets, and so much more, across the galaxy.

I did a little research on stars this week, and I thought I would share a bit of what I found with you. At any given time, the human eye can see 2,000 to 2,500 stars. There are 88 constellations that are officially recognized. The star we are most familiar with is the sun, but did you know that every star you see is bigger and brighter than our sun. The Milky Way galaxy has over 200 billion stars and the largest galaxy has over 100 trillion stars in it. It is estimated that 275 million stars are born every day.

When you study God's creation, you cannot help but see God's mighty power. Science continues to deepen our appreciation for God's intelligent design. The more we learn about how the universe is structured, its order, and how it works, the more fully we grasp the power and complexity of God.

How Does God Speak to Us:

1. God Reveals Himself to us in Creation.

The author of this Psalm is David. Before he became King of Israel, David was first a shepherd. I can imagine that he spent many days and nights outdoors looking at the sky. What did he see? He saw the immense array of stars, the moon, and the sun. David had no knowledge of modern scientific data, and he could not just Google it, yet David was overwhelmed by God's creation.

Psalm 19:1 "The Heavens declare the Glory of God and the skies proclaim the work of his hands."

God's glory in his perfection is revealed. All the stars, sun, clouds, and the moon are his handiwork. Just as an artist's painting is their handiwork, so much more is God's handiwork: the heavens, the sky, and the universe.

How often does creation proclaim and declare the work of God?

Psalm 19:2 Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge.

They do it constantly! Day after day, and night after night; for 365 days a year, creation is declaring the glory of God! The God of the universe is real. Nature is pointing to God. Nature is declaring the glory of God.

Let me ask you a question: *If you had a choice of a) listening to a preacher like me or another pastor speak for 30 minutes about God, or b) being in nature observing God's creation and then mediating on what you saw...which one would you prefer?*

If we are honest here, many of us would pick observing God's creation and mediating on what we see.

How does creation speak and declare God's glory?

Psalm 19:3-4 **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.**

Creation does it nonverbally. Creation uses no words. There is no sound. Yet, their (creation's) voices and words go out to the ends of the world....proclaiming there is a God of the universe!

I love going to Skaket Beach for sunset. People gather for the final moments of the sun setting on the horizon. As it sets, everyone is amazed at the color of the sun. Then, when you can no longer see the sun, everyone claps in appreciation. What we know (that they might not even realize) is that everyone is clapping in appreciation and awe of God's handiwork.

Creation is a "wordless" book that everyone can read, because it needs no translation. You can just watch and marvel at God's creation. God does this without any verbal words. God wants us to enjoy His beauty and to meditate on the God who created it all.

Let's move on to verse *Psalm 19:7-9*

***The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul.
The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.
The precepts of the LORD are right, 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.***

2. God Reveals Himself to us in the Bible.

In verses 7-9, David writes about the importance of the law, statutes, precepts, commands, and decrees, and how we are to show reverence towards God. You may be asking yourself, "Why would David write on rules and commands and focus on such things?"

I believe David is trying to show us the character of God. God's Word is perfect, flawless, and complete.

Rules sometimes get a 'bad rap' in our society, especially if you are a kid, and your parent says you can't do something, or that you need to follow this or that rule. We see rules as there to be restricting the fun we could be having.

What David understands is that God has these laws, statutes, commands, and decrees for our good! God knows what is best for us. Why? God created us. He is the One who designed us! And God loves us. He is looking out for our best interests.

If we go back to the verses we've just heard, what do we learn about God?

<u>God's revelation</u>	<u>Who God Is</u>	<u>The Results (What does it do?)</u>
Law	Perfect	Refreshes the soul!
Statutes	Trustworthy	Makes us wise!
Precepts	Right	Gives us joy!
Commands	Radiant	Enlightens our perception!
Fear (Reverence)	Pure	Endures forever!
Decrees	Firm (True)	Completely right!

God's laws and commands reveal His character and who He is. We learn God is perfect, trustworthy, right, radiant, pure, firm, and true. God says if you keep His laws it will refresh our soul, make us wise, give us joy, enlighten our perception, allow us to endure forever, and be doing our life completely right.

God reveals himself through the Bible to help us understand who He is and how we are to live our lives. That is the reason why God us gave the Bible: for our benefit, to help us in our daily walk of faith, and to show our need for Him.

Let me ask you a question. *If you had a choice between pure gold bars or God's word (Bible) which one, would you choose?*

For some of us, we may say to ourselves, "Yes, I like the Bible. It has a lot of good wisdom. It is practical. But... think about what I could do with all that money!"

David was first a shepherd boy who later became a King over a land. He had more money, more power, and more materialistic things than most people will ever have.

David said if he had a choice between pure gold or the word of God, there would be no choice at all.

Psalm 19:10 They (God's Word) are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they (God's Word) are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb.

David does not want pure gold bars. David chooses God's Word. David would choose the Scriptures of God every single time. In his eyes, God's Word is so much more valuable. David would rather be obedient to God.

David thinks differently than many of us. He is certainly thinking differently than much of our society, and it can make you wonder, "Why?"

Here is an illustration that another pastor has shared:

“Imagine you are a train. You can go where cars cannot go. You can go where bicycles cannot go. You can go where people cannot go. You can go all over the country. You can see mountains, rivers, and oceans. It is unbelievable all you that can see and all the places you can go in our country.

One day you say to yourself, there is more in the world to see than what I can see by staying on these tracks. I want to get the train off these tracks.

Then one day, you get the train off those tracks. That is a trainwreck. It is a disaster. You cannot go anymore. It is a disaster for you, and for all kinds of people in your life. When you find yourself in a disaster, you say to yourself, “*I wish that I was back on those tracks.*”

Why does David say this about the God’s law and God’s commands? David knew what it was like to go off-track.

Let us think back to King David’s life. David goes from watching sheep, to becoming a warrior, to becoming a successful king. He has been king for a while now. At one season of his life, all the kings are off to war. They were in battle. But David stayed home. One day he went up to his rooftop. He looked around and saw a beautiful woman, Bathsheba. He decided he wants that woman. He sleeps with her, and she becomes pregnant. Unfortunately, she just so happens to be the wife of one of his best generals, Uriah. David calls Uriah back from the battle to have him sleep with his wife. Uriah was honorable man. He would not do it; not while the other soldiers were at war. David, to cover up what he did, then had Uriah killed.

David was a liar, a murderer, and a man who committed adultery. That is the man who wrote *Psalms 19*. His life, at times, was a trainwreck. His life was a disaster. David is saying to himself, “I want to get back on the train track. I wish that I had never gotten off those tracks. I want to get back on those tracks.”

David understood what it meant to go off-track. David knew it was not worth it. We need to remember that God laid the track. His ways are higher than our ways, His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. He knows what is best for us. That is why David says he would pick God’s word and be obedient.

These laws, commands, and rules often function as guardrails. They are there for our benefit, and to keep our life on track with God. They are there to give us peace in our lives.

3. God Reveals Himself through our Human Heart and our Actions.

To recap: How does God speak to us? 1) God reveals himself by creation. 2) God reveals himself through the Bible.

Which leads us to point 3: God Reveals Himself through our **Human Heart and our Actions.**

Let's turn to verse 14, where everything fits together.

***Psalm 19:14* May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.**

God wants us to take what we have learned about Creation, and what we learn from the Bible, and let it soak into our heart and soul. May God's spirit, then, go out in actions. May people see Jesus in me.

David is saying, "May the words from my *mouth* be pleasing to you Lord. May the *mediation* of my heart be pleasing to you, Lord. May my *life* be pleasing to you, God." What David cared most about is that his life is pleasing to the Lord.

David could see God at work in creation and through His word, the Bible. David recognized that what really matters most is a life that pleases and glorifies God.

When people look at your life, what do people see? Are you reflecting Jesus in your life? Are the words that come out of your mouth pleasing to God? Are you mediating upon the Lord? Does your life reflect who you are?

Verse 14 reminds us that our words, and meditations of our heart, should be pleasing to God.

How did you get here today? I am not talking about a car or truck. Rather, I am asking about how did you get to the point of deciding to become a follower of Christ.

For most of us, it was not by looking up at the sky. It may not have been by listening to the Bible. I am betting that you had someone, or many people, who influenced your life.

I have shared this story before with you, but it has been a while. So, for those that are new, and may not have heard it, I am sharing this again.

I grew up in a Christian home. My parents encouraged my belief in Jesus. I went off to college. I was a freshman and I wanted to experience life. I wanted to explore the "other side of the track." I wanted to fit in with my roommates and with the guys on the floor. I was making some unwise choices. I was off track.

I knew that Jesus was important to me, yet I did not know very much about God. My sister recommended that I get involved in InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, so I went on a Thursday night. That week, they advertised needing players to start a co-ed softball team. I joined the team. We were awful.

After a couple of weeks, the best player (and coach) asked me to join his small group. I said yes before I even thought about it. I remember thinking to myself as I walked to my dorm, "Am I turning into my mom, by going to a Bible study?"

I went to the Bible study and discovered that these college guys really did care about their faith and they studied the Bible. These guys were living *Psalm 19:14*. I was not. One week, there was a senior guy who invited me to come to his apartment for breakfast.

This senior, Michael, was a committed Christian. He demonstrated to me verse 14. He mediated on God's word. He tried to live a life pleasing to God. Michael took the time to share about his walk with Jesus. He would share with me what he was learning from the Bible. He shared with me when he messed up.

Michael was the type of guy that would let me ask questions about my faith. He did not judge me. He did not always have the answers. I knew that he prayed for me. He cared about my walk with God.

For two years, we met together for breakfast weekly. He poured his Christian life into me during those breakfasts. God revealed himself to me through Michael's heart and soul. Michael was a guy who was constantly meditating on Jesus. It was his actions that spoke to me, as well. Michael disciplined me, and helped me to grow in faith.

This week, I received a call from him. I have not talked with him in year. All he wanted to know was: how my life was going with Jesus. Michael is not a pastor. He is a carpenter in Florida. Michael demonstrated verse 14.

Verse 14 says it for me.

***Psalm 19:14* May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.**

When we live a life pleasing to God, God will use us to reach others. God will reveal Himself to people in our lives like our family, co-workers, and neighbors. I really believe people will see Jesus, and learn about who He is, through us, as we live a life pleasing to God.

In summary, **how does God speak to us?** 1) God reveals himself through creation, 2) God reveals himself through Bible, and 3) God reveals himself through the human heart and our actions to other people. Amen.

Remember this verse 14 today:

May our words be pleasing you, God. May the mediation of our hearts be pleasing to you, Lord. That should be our prayer.

Questions for Discussion & Reflection:

1. What is your favorite season of the year? What are the attributes of that season? What does this season tell you about God, who made that season?

2. What aspects of creation are mentioned in verses 1-6? What is David attempting to point out here?
3. How is God's character revealed to you through nature? Is the truth about God in nature obvious to everyone? Why might some people have difficulty seeing or hearing it?
4. What six names does David give the Jewish law in verses 7-10? What eight words describe the law? What phrases describe its effect on our lives?
5. What is more important than wealth or luxuries according to the scriptures? Why don't we feel like this is important in our lives today?
6. What is David's chief concern in verses 11-13? Why is this so important to David and God?
7. What are two aspects of the prayer in verse 14? Why is this so important?
8. How can you use Psalm 19 to reveal God's glory to people in your community and to your loved ones? Why is this so important?