

PSALM 19 –1 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. **2** Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. **3** They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. **4** Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun. **5** It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, like a champion rejoicing to run his course. **6** It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is deprived of its warmth. **7** The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. **8** The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. **9** The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The decrees of the LORD are firm, and all of them are righteous. **10** They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb. **11** By them your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward. **12** But who can discern their own errors? Forgive my hidden faults. **13** Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then I will be blameless, innocent of great transgression. **14** May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

LUKE 4:14-21 - 14 Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. **15** He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. **16** He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, **17** and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: **18** “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, **19** to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”^[a] **20** Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. **21** He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

PSALM 19 IS A BEAUTIFUL POEM OF PRAISE DESCRIBING THE WONDER AND MAJESTY OF GOD AS THE CREATOR OF THE HEAVENS AND EARTH AND EVERYTHING AND ONE IN THEM.

IT IS ALSO PROCLAIMS THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF GOD’S LAW AS FOUND IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

THE PERFECT LAW OF THE LORD FINDS ITS BEGINNING IN THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

AND IT IS IN THE FIRST COMMANDMENT WE FIND WHAT COULD BE CALLED THE BRIEF MISSION STATEMENT GIVEN BY GOD.

“I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD WHO BROUGHT YOU OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT, OUT THE HOUSE OF SLAVERY, YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS BESIDES ME.”

BUT WHAT THIS STATEMENT LACKS IN DETAILS IT MAKES UP IN THE PROFOUND IMPLICATION OF WHAT THAT MEANS FOR THE JEWISH PEOPLE, AND INDEED FOR ALL PEOPLES.

ALL ELSE THAT FOLLOWS IN THE BIBLE RELATES IN SOMEWAY TO WHO THE LORD OUR GOD IS, AND WHAT GOD CALLS HIS PEOPLE TO BE AND DO.

CHRISTIANS OFTEN EXPAND THE MESSAGE OF PSALM 19 TO INCLUDE ALL OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

WE INTERPRET THE PSALM TO MEAN ALL OF GOD’S WRITTEN WORD AND NOT ONLY THE LAW.

BUT EITHER WAY ONE LOOKS AT THE STATEMENT MADE IN THE PSALM-WHETHER AS A CALL TO OBEY THE LAW OR ALL OF GOD’S WORD, THERE IS A BLESSING IN IT FOR US.

GOD’S LAW AND GOD’S WORD BRING REVIVAL AND RESTORATION TO THE SOUL-- MEANING LIFE ITSELF.

THEY ALSO MAKE US WISE, INSTILL JOY IN OUR INNER BEING, PROVIDE ENLIGHTENMENT AND TRANSFORMATION.

WHAT IS WRITTEN IN PSALM 19 IS A GLORIOUS DESCRIPTION OF THE LIFE OF THOSE WHO OBEY THE LORD THEIR GOD AND WORSHIP GOD ALONE.

AND YET, IN THE CLOSING VERSES OF THE PASSAGE WE FIND A RECOGNITION OF THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF DOING THIS PERFECTLY, ALL OF THE TIME- IN THOUGHT, WORD, AND ACTION.

THE PSALM CLOSES WITH A CONFESSION OF SIN AND A PRAYER FOUND IN VERSES 12-14:

“BUT WHO CAN DETECT THEIR INNER ERRORS? CLEAR ME FROM HIDDEN FAULTS. KEEP YOUR SERVANT ALSO FROM THE INSOLENT; DO NOT LET THEM HAVE DOMINION OVER ME.

THEN I SHALL BE BLAMELESS, AND INNOCENT OF GREAT TRANSGRESSION.

LET THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH AND THE MEDITATION OF MY HEART BE ACCEPTABLE TO YOU, O LORD....”

ONE MEDITATION ON PSALM 19 DESCRIBES THE MEANING OF THESE VERSES IN THIS WAY:

“DAVID MOVES FROM THE POWER OF GOD’S WORD TO THE PROBLEMS THAT OVERWHELM HIS LIFE.”

HIS SPECIFIC CONCERN IS HIS OWN SINS WHICH HE DOES NOT PERCEIVE BUT ARE PRESENT WITHIN HIM. HIS DESIRE IS TO LOVE AND WORSHIP GOD ALONE, BUT HIS SINFULNESS GETS IN THE WAY.

THIS RECOGNITION OF HUMAN SINFULNESS EVEN FOR THOSE WHO DESIRE TO WORSHIP AND OBEY GOD ALONE BRINGS US TO OUR SAVIOR, JESUS.

JESUS IS GOD’S WORD MADE FLESH, AND IN HIS HUMAN SOJOURN HE EMBODIED THE PERFECT FULFILLMENT OF THE PURPOSE OF GOD’S LAW.

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE PROVIDES US WITH THE MOST DETAIL ABOUT JESUS ATTENDING WORSHIP AND SPEAKING IN HIS HOMETOWN OF NAZARETH.

HE RETURNS THERE SHORTLY AFTER HE BEGAN HIS PUBLIC MISSION. AND DURING WORSHIP JESUS READ FROM THE PROPHET ISAIAH 61.

THE WORDS OF ISAIAH ARE AS FOLLOWS: “THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD GOD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE THE LORD HAS ANOINTED ME; HE HAS SENT ME TO BRING GOOD NEWS TO THE OPPRESSED TO BIND UP THE BROKENHEARTED,

TO PROCLAIM LIBERTY TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RELEASE OF THE PRISONERS,

TO PROCLAIM THE YEAR OF THE LORD’S FAVOR, AND THE DAY OF VENGEANCE OF OUR GOD; TO COMFORT ALL WHO MOURN.”

NOTICE, LUKE MAKES A FEW CHANGES TO THE ORIGINAL TEXT SAYING THE GOOD NEWS IS DELIVERED TO THE POOR, WHILE ISAIAH SAID TO THE OPPRESSED.

LUKE ALSO ADDS THE RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, BUT IN SOME TRANSLATIONS, LEAVES OUT BINDING THE BROKEN HEARTED, AND COMFORTING THOSE WHO MOURN.

LUKE ALSO LEAVES OUT ISAIAH’S MENTION OF THE DAY OF GOD’S VENGEANCE.

EITHER READING HOWEVER WAS TRANSFORMED BY JESUS INTO THE MISSION STATEMENT FOR HIS MINISTRY WHEN HE SAID IN THE SYNAGOGUE:

“TODAY, THE SCRIPTURE HAS BEEN FULFILLED IN YOUR HEARING.”

IT WAS DURING THAT WORSHIP SERVICE IN THE PLACE WHERE JESUS GREW UP THAT HE SET FORTH THE PURPOSE OF HIS MINISTRY AND LIFE.

THE REST OF THE GOSPEL OF LUKE DESCRIBES HOW JESUS FULFILLED HIS MISSION TO BE GOD'S AGENT OF JUSTICE, MERCY, JUDGEMENT, HEALING, AND SALVATION.

IN FACT, WE NEED ONLY LOOK AT ALL OF THE GOSPELS TO FIND EXAMPLES OF JESUS PREACHING GOOD NEWS, HEALING THE BLIND, AND FREEING PEOPLE FROM BONDAGE TO OTHER ILLNESS OR DISABILITIES, OR EVIL SPIRITS.

OF COURSE, AT THE HEART OF HIS MISSION WAS HIS ACT OF SALVATION ON THE CROSS, WHICH NOT ONLY RESTORES OUR LIVES THROUGH THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN, BUT BRINGS US ALL INTO GOD'S FAMILY.

THERE IS HOWEVER, A FULFILLMENT OF WHAT JESUS PROMISED ON A DEEPER LEVEL.

FOR EXAMPLE, THE RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND CAN ALSO BE UNDERSTOOD IN A SPIRITUAL SENSE.

JESUS, FREES US FROM SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS, HE ENLIGHTENS THE EYES OF OUR MIND MUCH LIKE WHAT IS DESCRIBED IN PSALM 19:8.

FURTHERMORE, THOSE WHO ARE ENSLAVED TO SIN ARE FREED BY THE FORGIVENESS OUR SAVIOR DIED TO SECURE.

THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE CHRIST PROVIDES OFFERS COMFORT TO US WHEN WE MOURN.

HIS PRESENCE WITH US ALWAYS- CAN DO THE SAME THING. AND THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT CHRISTIANS ARE GIVEN HEALING FOR BROKEN HEARTS.

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL AND POWERFUL PROMISE WE ARE GIVEN IN JESUS AND HIS MISSION STATEMENT.

AND YET, THE REALITY IS, MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, WE DO NOT RECEIVE THE INSTANTANEOUS HEALING OF OUR HEARTS, MINDS, AND BODIES THAT WE WOULD LIKE.

HERE IN IS OUR STRUGGLE WITH FAITH AND THE PROBLEM WE MAY SOMETIMES HAVE WITH JESUS' PROMISES.

THERE ARE TWO STORIES THAT MAY HELP US TO BETTER UNDERSTAND AND ACCEPT THE REALITY THAT MOST PROBLEMS IN LIFE ARE NOT RESOLVED WITH A QUICK FIX.

THIS INCLUDES SPIRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT AND HEALING AS WELL.

THE FIRST STORY IS FOUND IN THE EXPERIENCE OF DOROTHY, THE TIN MAN, THE SCARECROW, AND THE LION IN THE "WIZARD OF OZ".

DOROTHY SOUGHT A WAY HOME, THE TIN MAN DESIRED A HEART, THE SCARECROW WANTED A BRAIN, AND THE LION NEEDED COURAGE.

THEREFORE, THEY SET OUT ON A JOURNEY TO THE CITY OF OZ SEEKING THE WIZARD WHOM THEY WERE TOLD HAD THE POWER TO HELP THEM.

WHAT THEY DISCOVERED WHEN THEY REACHED OZ WAS THAT THE WIZARD HAD NO EXTRAORDINARY POWERS.

BUT WHAT HE DID DO WAS HELP THE THREE NATIVE RESIDENTS OF OZ SEE THAT IT WAS THROUGH THEIR JOURNEY: THE TIN MAN GREW A HEART, THE SCARECROW DEVELOPED A BRAIN AND THE LION FOUND HIS COURAGE.

THEN DOROTHY, WHO HAD TO TRAVEL TO OZ TO REALIZE THERE IS NO PLACE LIKE HOME, WAS TAKEN BACK TO KANSAS BY THE WIZARD.

THE CHRISTIAN JOURNEY IS NOT UNLIKE THOSE EXPERIENCES.

ON OUR JOURNEY WITH JESUS, WE ARE ENABLED TO FIND THE HEALING, RESTORATION, AND FREEDOM WE ARE PROMISED, AS WE ARE PROVIDED BY HIM, EVEN WHILE STILL ON EARTH, WITH A PLACE AT HOME WITH GOD.

BEING ENABLED BY JESUS IS MORE SIGNIFICANT THAN WE MAY THINK-ONCE WE WERE DISABLED BY SIN, WHICH PREVENTED US FROM FINDING FORGIVENESS AND PEACE WITH GOD.

JESUS ENABLES US TO FIND THAT PEACE AND FORGIVENESS, AND HE ALSO GIVES US STRENGTH AND HOPE FOR OUR JOURNEY.

THIS, OF COURSE, TAKES TIME, AND THAT IS OFTEN THE ROOT OF OUR PROBLEM WITH THE LORD.

EVEN CHRISTIANS WHO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT GOD'S WAYS ARE NOT LIKE OUR WAYS, AND CONFESS A BELIEF THAT ALL THINGS WORK FOR OUR GOOD, WOULD LIKE A MIRACLE.

WE WOULD PREFER THAT JESUS IMMEDIATELY PICK US UP WHEN WE FALL, SET US ON OUR FEET AND CLEAR THE PATH AHEAD OF US, SO WE CAN GO MERRILY ON OUR WAY.

BUT MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, HEALING TO REALLY WORK TAKES TIME-OUR WOUNDS NEED TO FIRST BE BOUND IN ORDER TO HEAL PROPERLY.

AND GIVING US A QUICK HAND UP AND SENDING US ON OUR WAY CAN SOMETIMES SET US UP FOR A WORSE FAILURE.

THIS BRINGS US TO THE SECOND STORY, FOUND IN PHILLIP KELLER'S BOOK- "A SHEPHERD LOOKS AT THE 23RD PSALM."

IN THE BOOK HE DESCRIBES WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A SHEEP ENDS UP ON ITS BACK.

IT CANNOT RIGHT ITSELF, AND IF IT IS NOT FOUND QUICKLY IT LOSES MOST OF THE CIRCULATION IN ITS LEGS.

IF A SHEPHERD IMMEDIATELY FLIPS THE SHEEP OVER ON ITS FEET THE ANIMAL WILL COLLAPSE.

FIRST THE SHEPHERD HAS TO CALM THE SHEEP BY SPEAKING TO IT, THEN LAY IT ON ITS SIDE, AND MASSAGE THE LEGS TO GET THE BLOOD MOVING.

NEXT, THE SHEEP IS LIFTED UP AND PUT ON ITS FEET WITH THE SHEPHERD HOLDING ONTO IT TO HELP IT KEEP ITS BALANCE.

FINALLY, WHEN THE SHEPHERD SENSES THE SHEEP IS READY, IT IS RELEASED TO GO ON ITS WAY.

THIS IS NOT UNLIKE HOW GOD WORKS TO REVIVE OUR LIVES AND RESTORE OUR SOULS.

THE LORD KNOWS AS MUCH AS WE MIGHT LIKE A INSTANT RESOLUTION SOMETIMES WHAT WE REALLY NEED TO IS FOR THINGS TO PROGRESS AT A SLOWER PACE.

THE PROMISE THE SAVIOR OFFERS IS THAT WHENEVER AND WHYEVER WE ARE CAST DOWN-BY OUR SINFULNESS OR SOMEONE ELSE'S, OR THROUGH INJURY OR ILLNESS OF THE BODY, MIND, OR SPIRIT- HE WILL RESTORE US.

HERE IS HOW ANOTHER PREACHER PUT IT: "WHEN YOU'RE ON YOUR BACK AND FLAILING AROUND AND THE GRIEF, GUILT, OR GRUDGES ARE OVERWHELMING YOU...THE LORD IS YOUR SHEPHERD...JESUS WANTS TO RESTORE YOUR SOUL...."

OUR CHALLENGE IS TO LET HIM DO SO, EVEN WHEN IT TAKES MORE TIME THAN WE WOULD LIKE AND IT INCLUDES A WILLINGNESS ON OUR PART TO WORK WITH THE LORD.

LET US PRAY:

HEAVENLY FATHER, THANK YOU THAT JESUS LIVED HIS LIFE IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AS THE PERFECT EXAMPLE OF HOW WE SHOULD LIVE.

WE UNDERSTAND THAT THIS JOURNEY OF LIVING AND SHARING THE GOSPEL IS NOT AN EASY ONE. WE CARRY MANY THINGS IN OUR HEARTS THAT ARE HIDDEN AND BROKEN, AND WE LIFT THEM UP TO YOU.

WE BRING ALL OF OURSELVES TO YOU, THOSE THINGS WE PARTAKE IN JOY, THOSE THINGS WE MOURN OVER, AND WE PUT THEM IN YOUR HANDS..

RECEIVE US WE PRAY, AND EMPOWER US TO CONTINUE OUR JOURNEY THROUGH LIFE WITH A RENEWED FAITH. TRUSTING YOUR SPIRIT TO REVIVE OUR SOULS AND GUIDE US. IN JESUS' NAME WE PRAY. AMEN

SERMON SUMMARY: PSALM 19 & LUKE 4:14-21

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