

The Sermon of the Skies
Psalm 19:1-6
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I invite you to turn tonight with me to the Old Testament. We're going to be doing that on Sunday nights and starting this week we're going to look for two weeks at Psalm 19 and then Lord willing we will be looking at the book of Daniel together; beginning a verse-by-verse study of Daniel's prophecy. But tonight, Psalm 19.

Astronomers have identified about 88 different constellations. Forty of those were already known in ancient times, before the discovery the telescope. We don't know exactly when or how those original constellations were identified and named, but they were passed on to us from the Sumerians and the Greeks. Fast forward to the mid nineteenth century and something happened that sort of began to skew Christians' perspective a bit about the stars. In the mid nineteenth century an English woman named Francis Rolleston came up with a theory and later wrote a book. And in that book she argued that the constellations are vestiges of a primal gospel that God gave man before He gave us His written revelation.

That was in the mid nineteenth century. A little bit after that, in 1882, American pastor Joseph A. Seiss embellished this theory in a book entitled *The Gospel in the Stars*. I told you about this once before but I want to punctuate it here tonight and you'll see why in a moment. Ten years after that, in 1893, English theologian E. W. Bullinger wrote *The Witness in the Stars*. And then if you fast forward into the twentieth century, in 1989 D. James Kennedy, then pastor of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church, further popularized this idea in his book *The Real Meaning of the Zodiac*. These books all argue that God has woven the gospel into His creation, specifically into the stars. Now this idea, while well intentioned, is absolutely contrary to the Scripture. Because the Scripture tells us that God has revealed the gospel only through special revelation: through the Scripture. That's why Paul says in Romans 10:14, "...how shall they hear without [what?] a preacher?" Someone has to go and tell them the gospel. The gospel comes only through special revelation. However, that said, God has revealed so much about Himself through general revelation. These are the truths that God has revealed generally, or universally, to all people; even to those who do not have a copy of the Scripture.

In fact you remember when we were studying Romans 1, Paul uses this idea of general revelation to indict all mankind, especially the pagans. They can never say they didn't know anything about God because they never had the Scripture. God has chosen to make Himself known. That's what we call revelation. And if He hadn't we would know nothing about Him. God's self-disclosure, His revelation, takes two forms. There's what's called general revelation and special revelation. Special revelation refers primarily – exclusively in our day; in the past there were some exceptions – primarily to God's revelation in the Scripture. By general revelation we mean the revelation outside of the Scripture, and we mean that its message is universal and the content of its message is more general.

What I want us to look at tonight in Psalm 19 focuses on general revelation. This is where David goes. Psalm 19:1-6. Oxford English professor CS Lewis describes Psalm 19 as “the greatest poem in the Psalter and one of the greatest lyrics in the world.” It's hard to argue with that or to disagree with it. But let's look at it together.

You'll notice it begins with a title. It says “For the choir director. A Psalm of David.” Now the titles are ancient, we know that. Even in the time of the Septuagint, 100 to 200 years before Christ, those who were translating the Scripture into Greek didn't understand what some of those things meant because the words were so ancient even at that time. These titles at least reflect the earliest understanding of who the author was, what the setting was, what the intent was. And they are possibly original and inspired. We do know that Jesus quotes one of them authoritatively, contributing its author. So let's look at this title. First of all “For the choir director.” That simply means that it was written for the one responsible to lead the music in the temple worship. Or, in David's day, the tabernacle worship. It also says “A Psalm of David.” A Psalm. The Hebrew word simply refers to a song that is to be sung with the accompaniment of stringed instruments. And it's specifically said to be a Psalm of David. David wrote 74 of the Psalms, most of them in what are called the first two books. There are five books of Psalms, five separations, five sections, and most of his are in the first two books. And this is one of them.

Now the theme of this Psalm let's define this way: God reveals His glory in His works and in His Word. You'll see in a moment as we read it, perhaps David wrote this at the first break of sunrise when he saw the sun on the eastern horizon. Then shortly thereafter he turned to God's Word and in that moment as he saw the sun rise and he was looking at the Scripture, he saw the points of similarity and that gives us the two halves of this Psalm. In fact one commentator, Perone, writes this: “The Psalm breathes all the life and freshness, all the gladness and glory of the morning. The devout singer looks out first on the works of God's fingers and sees all creation bearing its constant though silent testimony to its Maker. And then he turns himself with a feeling of deep satisfaction to that yet clearer and better witness concerning God to be found in the inspired Scriptures. Thus he begins the day. Thus he prepares himself for the duties that await him.” There's no better way to begin an understanding of a particular day, to begin the duties of that day, to begin to shepherd your own soul, than to turn to a Psalm that reminds you that God has revealed Himself in the heavens and in His Word.

Let me give you an outline of this Psalm. It's really two clear parts. The first part is the glory of God revealed in His creation, and the second part is the glory of God revealed in His Word. Verses 1-6: His creation. Verses 7-14: His Word. That's what we're looking at together and it breaks very neatly. And that's why we're looking at half of it tonight and, Lord willing, half of it next week.

Let's read the first six verses.

For the choir director. A Psalm of David.

¹ The heavens are telling of the glory of God;

And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.

² Day to day pours forth speech,
And night to night reveals knowledge.
³ There is no speech, nor are there words;
Their voice is not heard.
⁴ Their line has gone out through all the earth,
And their utterances to the end of the world.
In them He has placed a tent for the sun,
⁵ Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber;
It rejoices as a strong man to run his course.
⁶ Its rising is from one end of the heavens,
And its circuit to the other end of them;
And there is nothing hidden from its heat.

Kidner describes those words as the “broad sweep of God's wordless revelation in the universe.” Essentially if we had to reduce those six verses to a simple prosaic statement it would be this: every day and night the sky above us declares the glory of God. Every day and night the sky above us declares the glory of God. There is in fact a sermon in the skies. Psalm 19:1-6 reveals for us five qualities, or five characteristics, of this message written in the heavens. Let's look at those characteristics together.

First of all the sermon of the skies is explicit. We see this in verse 1. The creation testifies clearly, powerfully, explicitly – by its very existence – to God's glory. We understand this. All men in fact understand this. But David here, instead of taking the creation as a whole, has one very specific part of the creation in mind. Notice verse 1. “The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.” I love this verse. In fact it was in this verse that I first encountered Hebrew. The very first day in my Hebrew class in seminary the professor had us memorize this verse in Hebrew and I still remember it. But I won't put you through that. I did have the chance to use that to initiate a conversation to share the gospel with a young woman I was on a plane with who was traveling to do some work in Italy related to her college career. And she said my Hebrew was okay. She was Jewish and so we had a great discussion.

But this verse is powerful. Because in the ancient near east and in the religions that were there the heavens and the earth actually emerged from a titanic struggle of the gods and the goddesses. And before we roll our eyes at that let us remember that in modern times people explain away things that are in the heavens as the product of random chance. Or they live under their power in some misguided study of astrology instead of astronomy. The Bible, beginning in Genesis 1, will have absolutely none of it. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” There is only one true God and He made the entire creation by His Word alone. Genesis 1 echoes with that constant refrain: *...and God said...and it was so*. It's from that foundation that David had and understood that he writes in verse 1 “The heavens are telling of the glory of God.”

Now first of all look at that word *heavens*. Scripture uses the word *heaven* to refer to three distinct realities. It can use it to refer to what we call the atmosphere with which this world is

surrounded. It can use it as it does for example in Genesis 1:14 to refer to the stellar heavens. And in Hebrews 9:24 it refers to the place of God's throne. Here in verse 1 it probably refers to the visible sky. During the day that includes the earth's atmosphere, and obviously the sun. And at night it includes the stellar heavens consisting of space along with, of course, the moon and all the stars. David says here that the earth's atmosphere, the sun, stellar space, the moon, and the stars are all telling – notice what he says – the glory of God.

Now first of all notice the word *God*. It's interesting that David structures this poem to reflect the revelation of God in creation versus the revelation of God in His Word. Because in the first six verses the word *God* appears only one time, here in verse 1. And it's the general Hebrew word for God; a word that points to God's power and a word that is used often in the creation narrative. In verses 7-14 as he begins talking about God's Word, he uses God's personal name, YHWH, the name by which He revealed Himself to Israel in the Scripture, and it appears 7 times. So you see that just the amazing intricacy of not just the mind of David but the mind of the Spirit as He creates for us this picture.

Here we are told that the heavens – what we see during the daytime and what we see in the sky above at night – the heavens are constantly telling us – it's a participle in Hebrew and it has the idea of just again and again, constantly, without stopping – it is telling us what is weighty or impressive about God. That's the glory of God. The word *glory* is *kavod*. It's a word which simply means “that which is heavy.” And in the Hebrew thinking, if something is heavy it's valuable. It's like the chaff is light and blows away and it's worthless. And the grain of wheat falls to the ground; it's heavy and it has substance. It matters, it's impressive, it's weighty. And that's the idea here. The heavens are constantly telling of what is weighty and impressive about God, the Creator. They are preaching His unique majesty. Kirkpatrick writes, “All creation is a revelation of God, but the heavens and their vastness, splendor, order, and mystery are the most impressive reflection of His greatness and majesty.”

Our family at one point had the opportunity to travel to Yosemite and to spend some time there. And we had a cabin out in the woods where there was nothing. There were no lights, very few lights. We could turn off the only lights that existed. And we all went out on the deck under the stars and we turned out all of the lights and we lay down our sleeping bags and looked up at the heavens. And to see an unfiltered sky is impressive. And it's impressive toward God, the One who made it, the One who governs it. The human eye can see in a night sky, on our half of the globe obviously, can see about 5,000 stars in the night sky. If you could see all of the stars all the way around this globe at one time it would be close to 10,000. But we can see about 5,000 with the human eye in the sky above us. With the creation of the telescope we can now of course see exponentially more. And I think, if Christ delays His coming, in the years to come we will discover that there is so much more. I think it's just like when we keep drilling down. You know first there was the molecule, and then there was the atom. And how we're looking farther and farther, and we just discover more and more and more of the greatness of God.

Now the first line in verse 1 declares that “The heavens are telling the glory of God.” The second line tells us how: by declaring that He is the One who made them. Look at the second half, “and

their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.” That word *expanse* is certainly a better translation than I grew up with. Many of us grew up (some of you who are older anyway, grew up) using the King James. And the King James uses the word *firmament*. What in the world is a *firmament*? Have you ever wondered that? What’s a firmament? This Hebrew word that used to be translated *firmament*, is here translated *expanse*, speaks of something *spread out*. In its verb form it is used to refer to hammering out thin plates of metal; beating them thin to use to overlay wood. In Genesis 1:6-7, God created this thing, the firmament, the expanse, early in His creation. It describes a vast, thin protective layer that covers the entire earth. Between the waters below and the waters above Genesis 1 tells us God created the expanse, probably best understood as earth’s breathable atmosphere. The Hebrew word describes this expanse as if it were a great arched dome or a transparent vault over the earth. Which of course from the vantage point of earth is exactly what it appears to be, both during the day and at night: a big vault, a transparent dome, which is what the Hebrew word points to. And David says in verse 1 that this expanse, or this dome, or this vault over the earth is constantly declaring itself to be the work of God’s hand, or His fingers. Now you understand this is what theologians call an anthropomorphism. *Anthropos*, meaning man; *morph* meaning form. It’s attributing human form to God. God is a spirit; He doesn’t have hands; He doesn’t have fingers. But if you want to say that God is intimately involved in something, just like you would say about us, how do you describe that? You say it’s the work of God’s fingers.

So yes, God spoke and all of these things *were*, including this dome that we live under. But He was so intimately involved in it that it’s as if He used His hands or His fingers. Do you understand? Do you understand that our world, and the bankrupt philosophy of naturalism, has robbed us of one of the primary lessons about the glory of God? That’s what David is saying. Whenever you look up; when you walk out of this building tonight and you look up, even with the lights on around here, and you see whatever you see in the skies – what you see in the heavens is constantly declaring the truth about the glory of God. The weightiness of God. Truths that rightly make Him seem to be what He is, and that is incredibly impressive: weighty, awesome, characterized by immense wisdom and power and majesty. I think it was Richard Dawkins who talked about this planet as a pale blue dot hurling through space. And the point was to talk about how small and insignificant we are. That’s just like a fallen human being to miss the whole point of the lesson. This pale blue dot hurling through space is not here to show us how small we are. It’s here to show us how great and majestic and grand God is. And the message? It’s explicit. You can’t look up and have half a brain and not see it.

A second characteristic of the sermon the skies is that it is constant. Verse 2. The message of the heavens is like an endless song. Verse 2 says “Day to day pours forth speech.” Day after day the heavens pour forth speech about God, about His glory, about His greatness. The Hebrew word for *pours forth* literally is *gushes out* or *bubbles over*. It’s a really picturesque word. What David is saying is that the information in the heavens about the glory of God is like an inexhaustible, excited, irrepressible, bubbling spring. There is such infinite variety in the ways that, for example, the days display their Creator’s mind. You understand this. Think about all you have seen. Think about the variety of the sun, and the cast of its angles, and the shadows, and the way God paints with the sun across this planet. Think about the incredible variety of the clouds you have seen.

The colors and the richness and the frightening nature of some of them, and the light and cheery atmosphere of others. Think about the amazing storms that you have witnessed. I still remember in our family's first year here in Texas one of those supercell storms was created and came sweeping across the metroplex. That was the night that I stood with my arm around my neighbor and watched house burn down after a lightning bolt struck it. Awesome. Awesome. Think about the amazing number of colors and tones that you have seen painted on thousands of sunrises and hundreds of sunsets. Day to day bubbles over with speech about God as we look up in the heavens, as we observe what He's created.

And verse 2 says "...and night to night reveals knowledge." You see the sermon of the skies doesn't end with the daylight hours. It continues night after night as well. Every night – notice what he says, I love the way puts it – reveals more and more knowledge. David knew this very personally. Remember David's profession before he became a king was what? A shepherd. Think about how many nights young David spent out on the fields in Bethlehem, ironically, looking up at the stars in heaven above. Think about all that he witnessed. Gazing at the night sky with its moon, with the blackness of space, with the stars and the constellations and galaxies. "Night to night reveals knowledge." That's an interesting thing when you think about it. Because if we didn't have night, if there were no night skies, and we didn't have telescopes (which of course was true for much of human history), what we would have concluded if all we had was day was that the universe was empty except for our little bubble and the sun. But at night we realize there is so much more to the greatness of God's creation. As you see the moon and so many of the stars, just think for a moment about the moon.

The moon truly is remarkable. It's a quarter of the size of the earth. If you placed it on the U.S. it would extend from San Francisco to Cleveland. The same side of the moon continuously faces the earth. The surface temperature of the moon varies hugely. In sunlight it's as hot as 215°F. In darkness it's as cold as -243°F. The moon travels at 2,300 miles an hour. It travels almost 1.5 million miles a month. I wish I could buy a car that would go so far and last so long. It completes a full orbit around the earth in 27 days, 7 hours and 43 minutes. That's predictability. It has virtually no atmosphere. On its surface, even if you're facing the sun, the sky appears black. And of course our tides are produced by the moon's gravitational pull. The earth bulges toward and away from the moon, affecting the water level of the ocean. As a result there are high tides in alignment with the moon on both sides of the earth and as the earth rotates these bulges move across the surface of the earth. And that's why there are two high tides and two low tides every day.

Then they're the stars. I love that in a near eastern culture where the stars were considered to be divine, Moses just says, "And He made the stars also." That's all it says. That's all it says in Genesis. "He made the stars also." Like, eh, okay. Think about this: the earth revolves around a star, our sun, hurling through space at the speed of – yes, you are right now running – 66,000 miles an hour. The earth completes its rotation around the sun in 365 days, 6 hours, 9 minutes, 9.54 seconds. That's predictability. Our solar system of course is on the outskirts of the Milky Way galaxy and it's constantly orbiting the center of our galaxy. Astronomers calculate that it will take our solar system about 226 million years to complete an orbit of the Milky Way's

galactic center. Not going to happen. Our entire galaxy is also hurling through space. The Milky Way galaxy may contain, they tell us, 100 billion stars – just our galaxy. And studies of distant space with both optical and radio telescopes indicate that there may be 100 billion galaxies in the observable universe. Some have estimated that the number of stars is 10 billion trillion. Start writing out that number later tonight. You see what David is saying. Night to night just reveals more knowledge. The sermon of the skies is constant, day after day, night after night. It just keeps on preaching about the glory of God.

Thirdly, it's silent. Verse 3 says, "There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard." Now that is a fascinating verse. In fact let me read it to you as one linguist has interpreted these words. "Nonexistence of a word, nonexistence of words; without one who hears is their voice." You see here's the point. If you look at verse 1 and you pick up those verbs *telling* and *declaring*, and then if you look at verse 2 and you pick up the *pouring forth speech* and *revealing knowledge*, all of those happen with no speech, no words, and no voice. In other words they are inaudible. They are silent, and yet an intelligent witness. Delitzsch in his commentary says it this way: "They are silent, speechless, witnesses uttering no sound yet speaking aloud; only inwardly audible, yet intelligible everywhere." They don't use words; they don't have a voice; you don't hear it with your ear. Just look and it tells and it preaches and it bubbles forth. Silent.

A fourth characteristic of the sermon skies is it is universal. Notice verse 4: "Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their utterances to the end of the world." The word *line* is the word for *measuring line*. And a measuring line is used to mark out the limits of one's possession. So the measuring line of the heavens has gone out through all the earth. In other words the heavens' sermon has taken over the entire world. These witnesses have no boundaries. There is no place under God's heaven where their message isn't heard. "And their utterances to the end of the world." You know we use that expression *the end of the world*. Kind of hard to reach the end of the world on a globe, right? But that's a figure of speech. We use it. It means the farthest outpost, as far as you can go wherever you go on this planet. The earth's extreme boundaries: the sermon of the skies is there. David's point is that the sky's testimony of God is absolutely universal everywhere you go on this planet, whether it's Dallas or Fiji. The heavens encompass the earth and everywhere they preach the same sermon. Universal.

The fifth characteristic that he reveals here in the sermon of the skies is an illustration. It's illustrated, the sermon of the skies, it's illustrated by the sun. Notice he abruptly changes at the end of verse 4: "In them He has placed a tent for the sun..." Now here David turns from the general works of God in the heavens we've been talking about to one specific example of those works. He chooses the sun as his chief illustration and he personifies it. He probably chooses it because it's the obvious one, right? It is the element of the heavens that has the most constant and powerful effect on our lives.

Consider our sun for a moment. You understand it's 93 million miles away. It takes the sun's light 8.5 minutes to reach the earth. So the light of the sun that you see at any moment actually left the sun 8.5 minutes before. The sun is huge. It's so large that if the sun were the size of a

bowling ball (just to give you some perspective), if the sun were the size of a bowling ball, the size of the earth would be that of a poppy seed. But our sun is the star we know, it's the one closest to earth and yet I think you understand it's fairly average. It's a medium star. Its diameter, the diameter of our sun – now think about this for a moment – the diameter of our sun is 864,000 miles; the diameter. If you could start on the surface of one side and go straight through to the other side; 864,000 miles. And that's pretty average. The largest stars they estimate may have a diameter of about 1 billion miles. That's 1,000 times bigger than our sun. No wonder he chooses the sun.

I want you to notice the contrast here in Psalm 19 with all of the pagan creation myths. You see the nations around Israel, many of them worshipped the sun as a god. Hammurabi's code was from his god, the sun god. Here, the sun's no deity. It is completely under God's control. It is perfectly obedient to the course He gives it. But it is personified. And so it's described as if God has assigned this sun a place to stay and a course to run. And it actually bears witness to the glory of the one true and living God. Notice what David says in verse 4, "in them – that is in the heavens – [God] has placed a tent for the sun..." Now you might be tempted to think that's the sky. You see the sun, it's in the sky, that's the tent. No, that's probably not what he means here because in the next verse the sun is pictured as coming out of its tent every morning. So the tent here in verse 4 is probably what's below the horizon on each side. In other words where the sun arises from every morning and where it goes every night. It's a sort of picture of the fact that the sun disappears during the night; that's its tent. God in the heavens has placed a tent for the sun. In poetic language this tent is where the sun spends its nights.

Now he goes on in the changing metaphors that move forward from here to highlight the progress of the sun. In verse 4 it stays in its tent at night. In verse 5 it leaves its tent in the morning. Later in verse 5 it runs its course across the heavens. And in verse 6 it finishes its trip through the whole circuit of the heavens. And wherever it runs its course, from its tent at night to its course through the day, it displays the glory of God. It puts His majesty and power and greatness and wisdom out there to see.

Let's look at it. First of all he begins in verse 5 with a picturesque description of the sun. In fact he uses two metaphors. Two metaphors that vividly illustrate how the sun emerges in its glory on the eastern horizon every morning. Let me just say to some of you that this actually happens every morning. If you get up early enough, it's not already up. It's actually below the horizon and you can watch it come slowly up over the horizon. That's what he's describing here. Two metaphors: the first one is a bridegroom. Verse 5 says "...which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber..." The word *chamber* is a canopy. That's the idea behind this Hebrew word. It's a *canopy* or a *tent*. It could describe the canopy under which the wedding ceremony is held. In fact this Hebrew word *chuppah* is used to describe that canopy even to this day where the wedding ceremony itself is held. It could describe the canopy from which the groom leaves his house to go to his bride's house to bring her back to his own home. Or it could describe the tent in which the marriage itself is consummated.

Regardless of which of those it is, the image here is very clear. The sun breaks on the horizon at sunrise every morning clothed in splendor, strength and happiness like a new groom; radiant, brilliant, glowing. Again Delitzsch writes “the morning light has in it a freshness and cheerfulness as if it were a renewed youth. Therefore the morning sun is compared to a bridegroom, the desire of whose heart is satisfied, who stands as it were at the beginning of a new life, and whose youthful countenance the joy of the wedding day still shines.” That's the sun every morning. Every morning.

But he's not done. There's another metaphor here. It's the metaphor of not just a bridegroom but of a warrior. Verse 5 says, “. . .it rejoices as a strong man to run his course.” The word is used of a mighty man; a mighty man of valor, a champion, a hero. Like a warrior, like a mighty champion, the sun emerges from the eastern horizon and it marches tirelessly, powerfully, irresistibly across the sky. There's no sense of fatigue. Instead there's just the sense of power and strength. That's the picture of the sun. Ever thought about God in His creation? You're supposed to; that's David's point.

Notice its lengthy path, the sun. Verse 6 says, “Its rising is from one end of the heavens, and its circuit to the other end of them. . .” You don't have to know Hebrew to get the picture here. These expressions marked the extent of the sun's circuit from horizon to horizon. In other words, by the time it's done, the entire earth. And then he finishes with its pervasive influence. You see the sun makes its presence felt in both its light and its heat. We who live here in North Texas know this all too well. Verse 6 says, “. . .and there is nothing hidden from its heat.” You see the arc of the sun passes over all human activity and as it passes from one end of heaven to the other its heat penetrates everywhere, and its light reveals everything that man does. And here, folks, is the first hint that we get of where the Psalm is actually going. Because it reminds us that just like the sun, this planet lies under the penetrating and watchful eye of God Himself. But I think it goes beyond that. I think it also points forward to the second half of this Psalm and to the pervasive and penetrating influence of the Word of God in the life of the believer, where it brings insight to one's sin, insight of God. It brings the heat of a relationship with Him. It brings growth. This is the sermon of the skies.

Now what are the lessons for us from this sermon? Let me give you several. First of all I think we need to understand what this general revelation we've talked about in creation actually accomplishes. Turn to Romans 1. Let me just remind you. Verse 18 says, “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. . .” And notice what he says here. He's talking about all men and he says they suppress, they hold down, the truth in unrighteousness. They know the truth but they suppress it; they deny it. Men are willfully ignorant of God's person. We silence the truth that we know about God that's revealed the creation because we love our sin.

How can Paul say that someone without the Scripture is still suppressing the truth? It's because – verse 19 – God has revealed Himself: “. . .because that which is known about God is evident within them. . .” You say, well how? Because God made it evident to them. In other words every person understands that God exists. When did this happen? Verse 20 says, “For since the

creation of the world...” This revelation of Himself in creation has happened since the beginning. And what is it that God has revealed about Himself? Verse 20 goes on to say, “...His invisible attributes, His eternal power and [His] divine nature have been clearly seen, (how?) being understood through what has been made...” You look at what's made, you look at the creation, you look at the stars, you look at the moon, you look at the sun, you look at the heavens, and you understand certain things about the Creator. And what results from God's revelation in creation that we've just seen in the first six verses of Psalm 19? Look at the end of verse 20, “...so that they are without excuse.” You see, not a single person who's ever existed on this planet will be able to stand before God some day and say ‘God, I didn't know you were.’ Because He's made it evident to them.

Now, let me consider the issue, secondly: what general revelation does not accomplish. General revelation is wonderful, we've just seen that. But general revelation cannot lead to salvation. According to Romans 1 it can only lead to condemnation. “They are without excuse.” But this is why it's so urgent for us to tell people about Christ. It's why we send missionaries, because Paul says in Romans 10:14, “How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? (And) How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?” Somebody has to tell them the truth that isn't in the stars: the gospel that isn't written in the stars.

So, what is the value of general revelation then? What is it the creation tells us about God? Every person who has ever lived – from the tribal warrior in the most isolated jungle to the most educated citizens of the world's greatest cities – every person know certain things about the one true God. What does he know? Well, by looking at creation he knows there is a God who created it all. This is from Romans 1. He knows that God is eternal because all of this was here before he came; it'll be here when he's gone. He knows that God is all powerful. We just talked about some of the illustrations of that. And he knows that God is a personal being like himself. Paul argues that in Acts 17. He understands those things.

And then from conscience – we're still talking about general revelation here; we're moving from creation itself but to conscience – conscience tells us something else. In Romans 1:32 it says that pagans, listen to this, “...know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do [them], but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.” These are people without the Bible. How do they know it? Well, chapter 2 says God has written the substance the work of His law on their consciences. And so, by conscience even a pagan somewhere in an unreached area is aware that he's a sinner and he's aware that God is righteous and just and that a future judgment is coming. There is a sense – in Romans 2:15 it says “...they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternatively accusing or else defending them.” Conscience, Charles Hodge says, is the faint echo of the coming judgment of God. They know.

And then there's providence, where God does them good. Acts 14:17, you remember Paul says to the unbelievers there, the pagans, listen God didn't leave Himself without a witness. He did good to you and He sent you rain and fruitful seasons and food – “...satisfying your hearts with food

and gladness.” What was God telling all of us about Himself in that way? That He is amazingly good and generous to all, even to His enemies. So from the light of general revelation every man knows these things.

So what should our response be as believers to general revelation, specifically in creation? Let me give you 3 very quickly. Number 1: worship and praise the one true God who has made Himself known, who has chosen to reveal Himself. Think about this. He didn't have to, except that it is part of His nature to. There was no moral compulsion; it's simply a reflection of who He is. Worship and praise Him that He has made Himself known.

Secondly, praise God for what He has graciously revealed about Himself to all men on this planet everywhere through general revelation. Now do you realize that general revelation, when we are celebrating that, we are also celebrating Christ? It's not clear without special revelation that's true, but it is true. Remember John 1:3, speaking of the Word, “All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.” Look at Colossians 1:16. Speaking of Christ, “For by Him all things were created.” Listen when you look up in the heavens tonight, when you see the sun rise on the eastern horizon tomorrow – and it's a challenge to all of you – when you see the sun rise on the eastern horizon tomorrow, when you watch it march its path overhead, remember this: “For by [Christ] all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things have been created through Him and for Him.” They exist to exalt His glory.

Thirdly, thank God for what He has made known in His special revelation. That He has told us how we can know and be reconciled to God our Creator who is so powerfully revealed in His creation. That's the sermon in the Scripture and, Lord willing, we'll examine it next time together.

Let's pray. Father, forgive us. Forgive us for allowing our culture, our naturalistic, humanistic, Satan-loving culture to rob us of the powerful sermons that your creation preaches every day and every night. Father, help us to think differently. Help us to look often and be reminded of this amazing passage given to us by David, the shepherd. A man after your own heart. Help us to be men and women after your own heart, and to see your glory in these things.

Father, I pray for those who may be here tonight who haven't responded to any of Your revelation. They haven't responded to Your general revelation; they haven't worshipped You; they haven't thanked You; they haven't seen Your goodness; they haven't responded to the work of Your law written on their hearts. And they haven't responded to the special revelation, Your Word. And they haven't responded to Your last Word, Your Son. Father, may they do so tonight before their head hits the pillow. May they surrender their rebellious will to Yours. And may they find mercy and grace. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.