

The God Who Communicates

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[0 : 00] We'll read together from Psalm 19, and one of our elders, Hamish, is going to come and read for us. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims His handiwork.

Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words whose voice is not heard. Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

In them He has set a tent for the sun, which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and like a strong man runs its course with joy. Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat.

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.

[1 : 21] 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.

In keeping them, there is great reward. Who can discern his errors? 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.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight. O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

Amen. Let's pray. Our Father in heaven, we thank you that you have communicated with us.

[2 : 23] You have declared your glory in creation. You have spoken to us in many ways, but ultimately, Lord, we thank you that you have given us your word.

And we pray that right now you would open up our eyes to behold wonderful things from your law. I pray, Father, that we would not just find maybe some interesting facts or, or, Lord, please don't help let us get bored with what's being said from your word.

But, Father, that you would help us to see your glory as you have revealed yourself specifically in your word. And, Father, we thank you for Jesus Christ, who is the word.

And the word became flesh. And so we pray that you would be lifted up today. So let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight.

O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. We pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen. Today we are starting our summer psalm series.

[3 : 30] And I'm excited that I get to actually preach from one of my favorite psalms, Psalm 19. And we've been singing about how God has declared his glory in creation.

And ultimately, what we're going to talk about today is that God has communicated to us. God, the creator and sustainer of the universe, has chosen to speak in a way that we can understand who he is.

Most of you probably know that at one point, Scotland was known as the land of the book. Now, I wasn't able to find exactly when that started or who coined that phrase. But by the 19th century, it was pretty much well known that Scotland was known as the land of the book because of her love for the Bible.

The Reformation was a turning point in that. And John Knox and others wanted ordinary people to be able to study the scriptures for themselves. And so they created one of the most literate nations on the face of the planet.

All that so that people could read the Bible for themselves. Why were the reformers so convinced that everyone should read the Bible for themselves, that they made they did their best to make education available for all so people could learn to read the Bible?

[4 : 45] Or in the same way, why is it that some people were willing to die in order for the Bible to be translated into their native language?

Was it simply they were just overzealous or fanatical? Maybe they were, as some have said, just wanting more power or trying to control the people?

Why would someone like William Tyndale give his life? He lost his life saying things like this. I defy the Pope and all his laws.

If God spare my life, ere many years, I will cause a boy that driveth the plow, that he shall know more of the scripture than thou dost. Why?

Why would people be so committed to get the scriptures into our hands so that we could read them? It's because God has spoken. God has communicated himself through creation, as we're going to look at very shortly.

[5 : 43] He's communicated through the scriptures and ultimately through Jesus Christ. The heart of what I want us to actually talk about today is verses 10 and 11, where David here says that your word and all these descriptors are more to be desired than gold, even the much fine gold, sweeter than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.

In keeping your word, there is great reward. Do we value God's word in that way? Do we understand how incredible it is that God has communicated himself to us?

So today we're looking at the God who communicates. The creator of this and sustainer of the universe who needed nothing from us has decided to reveal himself to us.

Now, some of you may be thinking, great, yeah, another sermon making me feel guilty for not reading my Bible enough or not rejoicing in creation as I should and all these things.

Hopefully that's not what you'll get out of today. But instead that we will say we have tasted and seen that the Lord is good. And I want more of that. So we start out in chapter 19 verses 1 through 6, where what we refer to as general revelation, that God has revealed himself in a general way through creation.

[7 : 11] It says the heavens are telling of the glory of God and the sky proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech and night to night reveals knowledge.

Creation is revealing God. God has communicated to us through his world. That is one thing that we need to understand. It's one way he's communicated to us. So when we go up to the highlands or down to the Lake District or even just walking out our front doors and seeing the stars at night or seeing the sunrise or the beauty of the grass or even a spider web that's glistening in the light, all of these things are declaring the glory of God.

God is telling us that there is a God. And when we pay attention, we'll feel a sense of awe.

Recently, we were driving down to Cornwall and I would just be like, Kelly, Kelly, look at this view. It's just like I'm in awe of what's going on. And if we're thoughtful, we instinctively know that there is something going on that is way much bigger than us. That God, there is a God and he is doing something.

And if we just admit that, we will see that life is just more than our little worlds that we tend to live in, our little bubbles. But what exactly is God communicating through his creation?

[8 : 34] Paul actually addresses this in Romans chapter 1 verses 19 and 20 when he says, For what can be known about God is plain to them because God has shown it to them.

For his invisible attributes, namely his eternal power and his divine nature, have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world in the things that have been made.

For they are without excuse. In other words, God has given us a knowledge about him that is enough so that we're without excuse. We can't say, well, we didn't know there was a God. He didn't reveal himself to me.

And scripture tells us that God is telling us about himself in creation in a way that we know he exists and that he is powerful and divine. But we, as his creation, will twist that.

We will suppress it, deny his existence. We actually try to make ourselves as God. But look at verses 3 and 4. It says, There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard.

[9 : 38] Their voice has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. So in one sense, it's saying like, like we have heard, in another sense, we haven't heard.

Like what's he talking about there? Like this general revelation doesn't reveal everything or doesn't reveal enough. It's like I heard someone say recently that it's kind of like when you hear music through a wall.

Where it's like I hear something's going on, but I can't quite make out what it is. It's kind of like in just a minute, you'll hear some bagpipes, and you might not understand what in the world they're playing.

Now, I will admit when I hear thunderstruck, I'm like, okay, I know what's being played there. But a lot of times we'll start hearing this muffled sound, and it's like it's enough to know it's there, but it's not quite communicating precisely.

Maybe that's a bad illustration, but I believe that's a little bit of how creation is communicating to us. It's unclear. It's unspecific. Therefore, God has communicated to us through his word.

[10:44] There goes the bagpipes right now. Right on cue. God has communicated to us through his world, but he has also communicated to us through his word.

Isaac Watts, the great English minister who wrote *Joy to the World*, and *When I Surveyed the Wonders Cross*, he says this, In other words, we're able to understand who God is because he's communicated himself through his word.

Now, the next five verses are incredibly profound. There's like six nouns, six descriptors, six verbs. And someone has said it's kind of like facets of a diamond.

I mean, we see these intricacies in these words. Don't want us to get lost in the beauty of the diamond by trying to parse out the definitions of each of these words.

However, we are going to talk about that. I mean, we've got this beautiful description of God's word, but often when I'm going to go through some of these things, for some of us, it may sound like Charlie Brown's teacher.

[12:02] They're like, wah, wah, wah, wah, wah. It's like, okay, keep moving, go to something else. We can just even get bored when we hear these incredible things from Scripture, because right now we still have these bodies of sin.

We still want to twist and suppress. Even when we don't want to, we still do it. When God is telling us these amazing things about his word. Some commentators have pointed out how in verse 1, David uses the word *EI* or *Elohim* for God, which is kind of this general name or title for God.

But when we get down to verse 7, David switches to the Hebrew *Yahweh*, the specific covenant name of God, translated in our Bibles as *Lord*, usually with all caps.

Verse 1 through 6, creation has given us a general sense of who God is that everyone can see. But verses 7 through 11, God specifically reveals himself, revealing his covenant love.

It's like one pastor said, he said, when you look at creation, you don't think God is a God of love. If you're just looking at creation, you might see the power and terror of a natural disaster, or you might see the violence in the predator-prey relationship, or you might see the majesty in the mountains and the stars and sunsets.

[13:24] But how do we know God's love? I mean, you don't get attacked by midges and be like, oh, God loves me deeply, right? So how do we know these things? It's because God has revealed that to us, that he is a God of love in his scriptures.

He speaks to us through the scriptures. Peter addresses this briefly in 2 Peter 1, where he says, no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

So these words of who God is were written down, divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit so that we can know him. And one of the things I want you to hear as we start saying words like law and precepts and rules and things like that, I want you to understand that when David is writing this, he is excited. He is gushing with excitement as he is talking about God revealing himself in creation and now in his word. Look at what he says. The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul.

That word law means instruction. It's teaching man all that he needs to know to flourish. It's like the manual sent by the manufacturer.

[14:45] The scriptures create a standard that must be obeyed in order for us to flourish. God has said, here is how you should live. It says the law of the Lord is perfect.

That word perfect means complete, comprehensive. It covers all aspects of a thing. It's everything we need to know for life and godliness, as Peter says in 2 Peter 1.

God has communicated himself through his word in a complete way where we can know him and know what he desires from us.

And it says the law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. This word can also be translated as restoring the soul. It's the same words that are used in Psalm 23.

He restores my soul. This word restore means to turn back, to get back to the state it should be. One translation says converting the soul.

[15 : 42] It means a change that happens. And he says in this soul, it's that Hebrew word nephesh that means the inner person. Who you really are, the self, the mind, the heart, your person, who you are.

It's saying God's word transforms us totally in the inner person. And when you hear this word that he restores my soul, we hear the intimacy of it in Psalm 23.

We don't necessarily hear it as well here when it says the law of the Lord is perfect, restoring or reviving the soul. But what we hear when it says that God is giving us what will transform and restore our souls, he's inviting us into a relationship with him.

It's only that relationship where this language makes sense, like we see in Psalm 23, that he restores, revives the soul. It's not just some cold written law.

It is God revealing himself to us. The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. Hopefully you're not hearing wah, wah, wah, wah, wah.

[16 : 51] Right? Anyway, the testimony of the Lord, he says, is sure. Making wise the simple. This word testimony, it means what God has testified to be his will.

It's a witness to who God is and what he desires for us, what he wills. The scriptures are an expression of God's own heart, his nature, his attributes.

And it says the testimony of the Lord is sure. It's reliable. It can be trusted. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

Now this word simple is a word that literally means open-minded. And what it means by that is someone who's not able to close their mind off to what is good and what is bad.

And what David is saying here is that the word of God, the testimony of God, of the Lord, helps us to discern what is right. Help us, helps us to discern the words of life versus what is wrong.

[17 : 52] What will lead us astray? What will lead us away from him? We don't just need to be completely open-minded. We need discernment, not naively open-minded, but discerning through his scriptures.

And the scriptures give us that discernment and wisdom for life. I mean, you can just, we could go to so many different Proverbs or so many different places in scripture where we get wisdom.

But one of my favorite Proverbs is Proverbs 38 and 9 where he says, Give me neither poverty nor riches. Feed me with the food that is needful for me, lest I be full and deny you and say, who is the Lord?

Or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God. He's saying like, we instinctively want to pursue riches, but that can be bad for us.

He says, if you give me all this wealth, I might deny you and say, who is God? But I also don't want to be poor because it'll look like you're unfaithful.

[18 : 52] And I might steal and profane your name in that. That's wisdom to know that we don't need to pursue riches, that we don't need to think that more is always better.

And that is the wisdom that Scripture makes plain to the simple-minded. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. He then says, The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.

Precepts are what God has appointed to be done. It refers to doctrine and absolute truths, principles for life. And he says, The precepts of the Lord are right.

This is not right versus wrong here. This is, it leads us on the right path. It's the way that we are to navigate the world. David is saying, You've revealed that to us.

You've shown us how to live. The right path. And when we follow your word, it leads us on the right path. And it says, when we do that, rejoicing the heart.

[19 : 54] True joy comes from following God in the paths of righteousness. True joy is what we're talking about here. Just like Jesus said in Luke chapter 11, verse 28, Happy, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it.

Jesus is telling us the way to a flourishing life is by obeying God's word, hearing his word, and keeping it. So the scriptures are wise principles and truths for living that perfectly fit our need and our condition.

God's word is for our good. And again, David is excited about this. I hesitate to walk through all this because I don't want this to sound boring.

David is gushing over here. The word of God, God has spoken to us and has communicated to us. And that is anything but boring. The commandment of the Lord, he says, is pure, enlightening the eyes.

Commandment here, divine decrees, they're binding. There's this idea and commandments of judgment versus reward. In other words, when you obey God, there is reward.

[21 : 07] When you don't follow him, there is judgment. In other words, God's word sits as an authority over us, able to tell us what we should and should not do. And he says, that commandment is pure.

It's clear. It's free from corruption. And it enlightens the eyes. In other words, it helps us to see the way things really are. It helps us to understand what is true.

What is reality? David says in Psalm 119, 105, your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. It shows me the way that I should go.

David loves God's word. He says here, the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever. Fear is this idea of awe and reverence in scripture. One of the things that we can take away from this is that he's saying it reveals how to worship God as we should.

It's free from corruption. It's clean. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever. In other words, God's word and the way he says to approach him in fear, in awe, in reverence, in other words, in worship, this is something that never gets stale.

[22 : 17] It never gets old. They're permanent. It never becomes irrelevant. It's relevant for every generation. Unlike the apps of our phones that always need updating, this is God's word that does not need an update.

It does not need improvement. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever. Scriptures are permanently relevant, written down for all time, for every place.

They show us how to worship God in spirit and truth. How can we approach this God that satisfies our souls? And then lastly, the rules of the Lord are true and righteous all together.

Rules. These are divine, what the divine judge has ruled as right. Now this is the word that's right versus wrong. His verdicts, his word, it's never guilty of injustice or unfairness, but his word is always righteous all together.

It's true relative. In the age of relativity, it stands firm. All of these things that says we can rely on it. Comprehensive righteousness, the way that is right.

[23 : 28] This is the word of the Lord. Now, he's not saying the love of the Lord is this. The mercy of the Lord is this.

The grace of the Lord. The hope in the Lord. He's using words like law, testimony, precepts, commandments, fear, rules, all these things that we're like, that sounds awful.

Don't bind me with those things. And David is saying, you don't understand. This is the way we get life with God. He's telling us in creation that he's there and we should pursue him.

Listen, he's actually revealed himself specifically in his word. David's really pumped about this. Like, the language is one of satisfaction and joy in God's word.

God has spoken through his word. He has communicated with us who he is. He's communicated to us who we are and how to live and step with him.

[24 : 32] It's not just how to live a better life or how to live your best life, but how do we get God? Through God's word, we get him. That's why David is so excited.

I'm currently reading a book called Heart Aflame for God and it's about spiritual formation from the Reformation. Like, how did the Reformers view spiritual formation?

And they use words like aflame. And it was all how the word of God sets our hearts on fire. Passion. Aflame for God. It's just like what we've been hearing in the last four weeks from the sermons on the road to Emmaus where they said, did not our hearts burn within us while he opened up the scriptures?

Do our hearts burn within us when the scriptures are opened up to us? Our hearts should be set aflame for God pursuing him through his word.

[25 : 38] And going back to verse 10 and 11 that we mentioned at the beginning, he says, more desirable than gold, than much fine gold. We've all probably had dreams of maybe winning the lottery or having that rich uncle that leaves us a bunch of money.

I'm going to go a little full American here. Yesterday was 4th of July. I'm going to, you know, just go for it. But there was a show growing up called, well, I think it was on when my parents were growing up, but it was called the Beverly Hillbillies if any of you have ever heard that show.

And it's about how this guy finds oil on his property and they moved to Beverly Hills, Beverly Hillbillies, right? But they found this oil and now they're rich.

And so, we used to have this game with my grandmother who had some land. It's like, what if we found oil on your property? What would be the first thing we would buy? I know you might not understand this in Scotland, but we were like a swimming pool, you know, because Alabama's really hot.

But, we used to dream how much better our lives would be if we were able to be rich. We dream like that.

[26 : 45] Apparently, they dreamed like that back then as well. That's not a new human condition thing. That is something that has always been. And he's saying, the Word of God, because it reveals who God is, is much better than all of that.

He's speaking to our deepest desires of what we think will make us happy. We have the words of life that lead us to Him and in His presence there's fullness of joy.

So, it's more to be desired than gold, than much fine gold. And then he says, and sweeter also than honey in the drippings of the honeycomb. I get this. Like, I'm the guy that always has room for dessert, right?

It's like, hey, do you want to get some ice cream? Ah, no, I'm not hungry. That has nothing to do with it. There's, I think it was Isaac that was telling me there's a second compartment for dessert, right? There's always room for pudding.

Apparently, that's not a new thing either. Like, they desired sweetness. Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. We're talking like genuine cravings here.

[27 : 48] I don't know if you're like me, but after I eat a meal, sometimes like, I just need to end with something sweet. It's something I crave. Our bodies will crave. Sugar is super addictive, you know.

But when we talk about sweets, a lot of times we even joke about how it's good for the soul. Kind of the stereotypical breakup thing is like, oh, we broke up. I'm going to eat a pint of ice cream.

You know what I'm talking about? It's like, we understand that there's something, a craving deep within us and a lot of times it turns to sugar, to the sweet things. But David is speaking to our cravings and saying the word of God, it fulfills that deepest desire and it should be our craving. It's sweeter than the sweetest thing you can think of. King David could have anything that he wanted and he says, this is what I crave. It's the word of God.

One preacher said, the scriptures are greater than honey and money. It's what we crave and what we seek and it's greater than all of those things. So what?

[28 : 53] What's the big deal? Our God is a God who communicates to us. He reveals himself so that we can know the one that our souls are craving.

And the primary way that we communicate with him is through his word. We know who God is through his word. We know how to pray because of God's word.

We understand how to navigate this life because of God's word. And he speaks to us today through his word. We are seeing and it's telling us of his glory through his word.

All these things that we've just talked about. But all of history culminated at the moment that God communicated himself through his sign.

John 1.1 in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God. The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

[29 : 58] I love John 1.18 as it goes through that passage and he says, no one has ever seen God. God, the only son who is at the father's side, he has made him known.

That word there in the Greek says that Jesus exegetes God. What does that mean? It means he explains him to us.

The ultimate revelation of who God is is found in Jesus Christ. God so wanted to communicate himself to us that he came himself.

He came in the flesh. Jesus is the word and he shows us what God is like, what God desires, how to live, how to find life. And Jesus says in John 15 that the way we abide in Jesus is through God's word, through obeying his commands, letting the word dwell in us.

Do you see how much love God has for us that he would go to these lengths to reveal himself to us? And he didn't have to. He wanted to go to these lengths so much that he sent, he came himself. [31 : 11] He sent his son, Jesus. Jesus lived the life that we couldn't live, died the death that we deserve to die so that we could know this God fully and one day be with him forever.

Do we understand the treasure that we have in front of us? That we actually now carry in our pockets? Do we get numb to the fact that we have the word of the living God revealing himself to us?

We have it and it's greater than any treasure that we own. Do we spend time mining this treasure so that we can grow in our relationship with God?

I was reminded of a video that I saw about 10 years ago and it's this tribe in Indonesia that was holding this massive celebration as a math plane comes in and is delivering to them the full New Testament for the first time.

They're crying, they're celebrating this moment that we've been waiting on. We have God's word to us. And every time I watch that or hear that video, it just reminds me of how little I can treasure the word of God.

[32 : 26] That it, how often I can read it and it not impact my day. Peter says in 2 Peter, I've quoted that a couple of times already, in 2 Peter 1, maybe you go read that this week, it's a good passage.

Peter says, we saw his majesty, we even heard the voice of God, yet, he says in verse 21, sorry, not in verse 21, I forget which verse it is, I wrote the wrong verse down, but he says that we have, even though we've seen and heard, we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed.

And he's talking about the scriptures. We have this word of how God has revealed himself to us so that David says in Psalm 119, oh how I love your law, it is my meditation all the day.

He says, my soul keeps your testimonies, I love them exceedingly. He even says, it was good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes.

Do we love God's word like this? Do we seek to keep God's word with our whole hearts? Can my friends and my family say that Ryan, dad, loves God's word?

[33 : 43] Would that be the testimony because it's such a part of our lives? May we treasure this word knowing that it is the greatest treasure that we have?

May we meditate on it day and night as it tells us to? And maybe a good exercise this week would be to go read Psalm 119, 176 verses, break it up, it's actually broken up into 22 sections, and just see what the word says about itself and the benefits of it.

It can change our lives. Let's pray. God, we do thank you that you are the God that communicates, that you have revealed yourself in your world so that we see your beauty, your glory in creation.

We marvel at some of the things we see. We hear about the number of the stars in the galaxy, the universe, like we can't even comprehend your greatness, your divine power, your divine nature, yet you have given us your word so that we can know you, so that we will seek you and find you.

You sent Jesus. The word became flesh so that we could have that relationship with you that will fulfill our every desire. Help us to treasure your word.

[35 : 05] Help us to seek you. Help us to hold fast to what your word says because we know, as the disciple said, you have the words of life. Where else are we going to go?

Help us to value your word in that way. We pray all these things in Jesus' name. Amen.