

19: ¹The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. ²Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.

³There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. ⁴Their 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, ⁵ which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy. ⁶Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat.

⁷The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; ⁸the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; ⁹the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether. ¹⁰More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. ¹¹Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

¹²Who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from hidden faults. ¹³Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me! Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression.

¹⁴Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

In the first sermon of these five part series on the Psalms, we began with Psalm 1, by going to the garden to see the Tree planted by the River. It was reminiscent of both the Garden of Eden and of the last chapter in the last book of the Bible, where that Tree is planted by the waters. Each person was invited to come forward and to receive a tangible reminder of that leaf made for healing. (If you did not receive one of those leaves, there are still a few on the tree. Come after worship.) We made commitments to BEGIN A HABIT of 15 minutes alone with Jesus each day.

Last week, we lifted up our eyes to the hills in Psalm 121 (and 125) to be reminded of **how reliable God is** – *how we are not to confuse momentary feelings with the FACT of God's reliability*; how we can walk by faith, not sight, by *remembering into the future* – remembering the fact of how reliable God has been in the past, when we face difficulties in the future.

Today's Psalm 19 – of which **C.S. Lewis once said: “I take this to be the greatest poem in the Psalter and one of the greatest lyrics in the world – begins with looking UP. More than lifting our eyes unto the hills in Psalm 121 (last week) we are called to look up into the heavens. We look as far up as the heavens and as close as the buttercup between our feet – all of creation calls out the Glory of God.**

The first part of Psalm 19 can be stated quite simply: THE WORLD WITNESSES TO GOD. The apostle Paul expressed a similar thought in Romans 1:20: **God's eternal power and character cannot be seen. But from the**

beginning of creation, God has shown what these are like by all he has made. That's why those people don't have any excuse.

The psalmist knows that God is always inviting us to LOOK UP, to LOOK DOWN, and to LOOK ALL AROUND – and in so doing we cannot escape the awareness of God's Glory.

One of the really delightful scenes in the best selling book *The Shack* is where Mac and Jesus go outside about dusk and lie down on their backs on the ground. The sun goes down and the stars come out. Jesus recommends that they close their eyes for a moment to allow it to all come into clear focus. When they open their eyes, the sky is dark and the sky has exploded into a canopy of stars.

The wonders of human made contraptions in the sanctuary today make a poor reminder of what God gives us every night.

As Mac is given a case of near vertigo by the splendor of the night sky, Jesus (who was with God in the making of all of this) says that he still gets a kick out of seeing the splendor of creation like this.

As Paul says, we are without excuse, for there is so much we can learn about God's power and Gods character by looking at nature around us.

However, we often fail to learn very much from NATURE because it tends to be camouflaged in ORDINARINESS. We realize so much more when we pay attention to the ORDINARY. Try it for 15 minutes at any point in the day: stop, take inventory of God at work in any 15 minutes.

One time while walking underground from one subway stop to the entrance on a different subway line in **Mexico City**, we were blessed by the artwork that had been commissioned for this journey. They were photographs enlarged and framed,

hanging on the subway walls. At one end of the journey, you were treated to pictures ranging from the human being outward, with varying telescopic powers. At 1:1 we saw what we saw before us now. At the end of the journey you felt like you were seeing the whole universe – billions of stars! It made you feel so small and insignificant. On the journey back, the pictures on your side of the track again began with the 1:1 image of the human, but this time the journey in pictures took you through greater magnifications of microscopic vision. You went down through the human finger tip into the submolecular structure of the DNA structure of each human being. It made you feel so intricately and lovingly made; you felt so very special.

You and I -- we tend to think that we are all so very verbal, but actually the time in our lives when we learned the most was INFANCY, which is also a time in which WE KNEW NO WORDS to describe what we were learning. Like the magnification pictures in the Mexico City subway, so very much to us about God's power and glory – and about US – is revealed by a VOICE that speaks without words.

All creation declares the glory of God.

And according to the Shorter Westminster Catechism, line 1: the of the purpose of humans is to declare the glory of God.

What does that mean, for us humans?

Nature shows us that every part of creation glorifies God BY BEING WHAT GOD CREATED THEM TO BE.

A tree best proclaims the Glory of God by being the best tree it can be.

So, too, rocks, stars, and beetles.

So, too, us.

The old teacher, Rabbi Zoysa, once said: when I die and stand before the judgment seat, God will not ask me why I was not like Abraham, Moses, or Jesus. The standard by which I will be judged: ***Was I the best Zoysa that The Lord G-d created me to be?***

Psalm 19 directs us to LOOK UP to see the largeness of all creation whose purpose is to glorify God. Psalm 19 **also** directs us to LOOK UP to remind us of **the perspective from which God sees life, and invites us to see life, as well. From a heavenly view, a bird's eye view, a God's eye view.**

Our outlook on life can be oh-so-wrong, oh-so-skewed, when we don't have the right perspective. In the **old Arthurian legend, Merlin** turns into a bird and takes the infant Arthur on a skybound journey. Arthur looks down at all upon which he would walk during his life. At the end of the journey, Merlin keeps asking Arthur what he saw. To each answer, Merlin says no, no, no. Finally, near the end of his life, Arthur remembers what he had failed to notice during his childhood view from the sky. He calls out to Merlin's memory – his teacher long since dead – ***Now I realize. It's not what I saw, but what I didn't see. There were no boundary lines!*** And in his mind's ear, he hears the approval of his former teacher. The boundary lines of kingdoms and conquests to which he had given so much of his life were non-existent – except within the limited vision of human minds.

Can you imagine what people DANCING would look like if you were not able TO HEAR THE MUSIC?

LOOK UP Look up and see life from a heavenly view, a bird's eye view, a God's eye view.

Author, preacher, and Bible translator Eugene Peterson wrote about a time A few years ago when he was in his backyard with his lawn mower tipped on its side. He was trying to get the blade off so that he could sharpen it. He had his biggest wrench attached to the nut, but couldn't budge it. He got a four-foot length of pipe and slipped it over the wrench handle to give him leverage, and was leaning on that – still unsuccessfully. Next he took a large rock and was banging on the pipe. By this time, he realized that he was beginning to get emotionally involved with the lawn mower. Then his neighbor walked over and said that he had a lawn mower like mine once and that, if he remembered correctly, the threads on the bolt went the opposite way. Peterson said that he reversed his exertions and, sure enough, the nut turned easily. He concluded that he was glad to have been wrong; he would never have gotten the job done, no matter how hard he tried, doing it his way.

Did you ever have a time in your life, when you were glad to learn that you had been wrong?

How we SEE things is perhaps the most important part of our FAITH.

What we believe means very little if it doesn't change how we see.

How does your RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS impact what you see on a daily basis?

If you only see things from the perspective of God's laws (the second part of this psalm – linked to the first part, of LOOKING UP) being about judgment, instead of

about **recipe for good living**, it certainly changes how you see the God whom you are meant to glorify.

My experience this week when I begin to look for gift each person was bringing me instead of looking for something I did not like. I not only found it with each person, but that kind of vision reminded me that each person is lovable as they are - not just when they say & do what I wanted.

How we SEE things is perhaps the most important part of our FAITH. Our daily RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS changes our vision, to see as God sees from UP, UP AND AWAY. And that changes everything.

How you say ...praise, save, thanks, life, & peace will depend on how you see life. AND how your children know what means home.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. AMEN.