

Psalms 19

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[0 : 00] Well, there are so many voices around us, aren't there? All of the time, wanting to grab our attention in different ways.

! But as we look at this psalm, Psalm 19, the psalmist hears a different set of voices that maybe we're not used to listening to. And they're very, very different from the world's voices because they speak to us about the God who created the world, who we need to know.

Sometimes we might get asked the question, how do we know that God exists? And a simple answer to that question is just to ask that person, well, have you heard these voices that David hears in this psalm?

The voices that he hears everywhere around him. Speech that is all around him, speaking to him of this God who exists and who we need to know.

I want to show you three of these voices in this passage this afternoon. The first voice that he hears, speaking to him of this God, is the voice in the skies.

[1 : 10] The voice in the skies or the voice in creation. Just look at the first sentence of the psalm. Can you hear this voice? The heavens declare the glory of God and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

If you listen to a good piece of music or you look at a beautiful piece of art in a gallery, the first question that we instinctively ask, isn't it, is how did it get here?

And who made it? Who is the artist behind the artwork? Who is the musician behind the piece of music? Great artwork speaks to us, doesn't it, of an artist, of a creator.

And David is saying here, isn't he, that as you look up at the sky, and as you look at the creation all around you, there is a voice that shouts that same question.

It is a great and massive voice that is speaking all of the time. And it asks us, well then, who made this? Who is the artist behind the artwork?

[2 : 23] And the voice of creation, it speaks, it proclaims the handiwork of a creator God who we need to know. Just notice how this voice is repeated, isn't it?

Day to day it pours out speech, and night to night it reveals knowledge about this God. God, in verse 6. And the sun, it rises from the end of the heavens, and its circuit goes round to the end of them.

It goes round and around and around. It's a bit like a record, isn't it, going round in a record player. And the movements of the stars in the sky and the planets in the night, they are like a playful child who wants to sing the same song again and again and again, isn't it?

Every time the sun rises up, it's as if God is speaking to his creation, and saying, sing it again, sing it again, sing it again. This voice in creation, it loves to repeat itself every single day.

And it declares to us of the artist behind the artwork, the great creator of this vast creation around us. It's interesting, as you're kind of watching all the footage of the moon landings a couple of weeks ago.

[3 : 37] What did they use, the word they used to speak about the heavens above us? It wasn't the word heavens, it was the word space. It was man's exploration into space, wasn't it?

And that word space, what does that mean? It is a place that is empty and void, isn't it? Space is a vacuum that is empty of personality.

Richard Dawkins calls space indiscriminate nothingness. Space. But that is not how David feels about the universe, and about the sky above him.

The heavens are not empty and void and without personality. No, he says, verse 4, they are like a great big tent. Like a great big circus marquee, full of noisy, life-energetic voices, showing off and shouting to us, of the artist behind the artwork, of the creator himself.

And so David is asking, isn't he, can you hear that voice speaking to you? A holiday company advertised a package holiday to the Rocky Mountains, and on the poster there is a photograph of a man and woman stood hand in hand, looking out at this vast mountainscape before them, and there's this beautiful sunset, and it's just breathtaking.

[5 : 02] And the tagline under the poster, it says, come to the Rocky Mountains, come and feel insignificant. And isn't it interesting, isn't it? That holiday company knows something of the deep desire that we all have to be faced with the vastness of something that is far bigger than ourselves, and to feel insignificant.

And to look at a creation and say, wow. And the voice that speaks to us, and resonates with her own minds as we look at it, says to us, doesn't it, who made this?

Who is the great and vast artist who is behind this vast creation that you see? And so David hears the voice of the skies speaking to him of the God that we need to know.

Secondly though, he listens to another voice, and it's the voice of the Scriptures. The voice of the Scriptures. Look at verse 7 onwards there, and he talks about the law of the Lord, doesn't he, or the testimony of the Lord, or the precepts of the Lord, and so on.

Occasionally we might think, isn't it, as we think about the voice of the skies speaking to us of God, it is such a massive universe, isn't it, above our heads.

[6 : 24] Let me give you another mind-stretching fact. So, you said this, didn't we, last week, a light year is a distance of about 6 trillion miles, and the closest galaxy to our own is 2.5 billion light years away from us, and the most powerful telescopes, they can see about another 44 billion light years further than that, and beyond that we just don't know what's there, if we're honest.

The universe, the skies above us are so vast, aren't they? It's almost as if the voice that speaks to us, of that creator God, is just too big for us to get our heads around, and to understand and to comprehend.

It's almost too vast for us to listen to it, but David shows us here that there is a second voice speaking to him of the God that we need to know, which is actually far more intimate.

It's less of a shout in the skies, and it's more of a whisper in the ear, isn't it? Do you see the way that he talks about the scriptures, about the Bible in verse 7 to 9?

He calls them lots of different things, but I don't know if you've spotted the kind of repeated thing.

They all have one thing in common, the descriptions he gives of the Bible.

[7 : 44] It's the word Lord. Did you hear that? They are the law of the Lord, the testimony of the Lord, the precepts of the Lord, the commandments of the Lord, the rules of the Lord.

And that is really important, because there David is saying that the voice that he hears in the scriptures is not like the voice that is up there, that is general, and that is vast, and it's so difficult to grasp.

It is a voice that is down here, and it's a voice that is familiar, a voice that belongs to the Lord, the personal God, Yahweh, the name that God has revealed to his people personally in a relationship, the voice that his people know.

And so the God who speaks in the stars now speaks in sentences, in a familiar voice for his people.

The God who has spoken through the galaxies speaks through grammar. He speaks through worlds and planets, and now he speaks intimately in words, in punctuation, in scripture.

[9 : 01] It is an intimate voice that we can grasp, that we can understand, that we can hold in our hands, can't we? That speak to us of a God who we need to know.

And what David gives then is a kind of point-by-point review of the scriptures in verse 7 to 10. And we're meant to see the sum of all those verses as a whole, but just listen to one of the things that he says about the Bible.

Verse 7, And the law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. It's the description he gives of the scriptures that speak to us of the God that we need to know.

It's the same image that he uses in Psalm 23. That famous psalm, The Lord is my shepherd. He leads me by still waters. He restores, or he revives my soul.

He is saying, that is what the scriptures do for human beings when they hear the voice of the scriptures. In a house that I used to live in, it was a bit of an old house, there were cracks that were appearing on some of the walls at the back of the house.

[10 : 13] And one crack in the bedroom at the back got so big that you could fit your hand inside it. And so they called the experts in, and they kind of looked around a little bit, and they had really bad

news, because it turned out that the foundations of the house were slipping, and the whole thing needed repointing.

It was going to be a really expensive job. But that is the image, isn't it, of restoration, of repointing the foundations of a person's life.

That is what the scriptures do to a person who is really struggling, whose life is just cracking and crumbling apart. They need restoration.

And the voice of God in the scriptures gets under the surface, it gets to the heart of the human problem. They are means of God restoring a human being, to restore your soul.

That's just one feature of them, isn't it? And overall, David wants us to have this sense in verse 10 and 11, if you look there, more to be desired. Are the scriptures than gold, even much fine gold, sweeter also than honey.

[11 : 30] The voice of the skies, and then the voice of the scriptures, is this decadent, rich, unctuous and rewarding voice, that restores us.

And he's saying, isn't he, I don't want you to just see what they're like, and for me to tell you what they're like, but I want you to want them. He wants us to desire the scriptures, to desire this voice. That word desire, in verse 11, it's the same word used when Eve saw the apple in the Garden of Eden, and saw that it was desirable for eating. It's the same word in the 10th commandment, you shall not covet your neighbour's house or wife.

Desire, it is about, isn't it, a lust, and a grabbing hold of, and an eating, and a crunching. David switches that word, and he says, that is what you should be doing with the scriptures.

Indulge yourself. Get stuck into them. Next time you're thinking, should I bother reading the Bible, David is saying, go on, be greedy. The voice of the scriptures.

[12 : 47] Can you hear them? Have you heard them speaking to you of this God that we need to know? And so they are the first two voices that David hears. The voice of the skies, and the voice of the scriptures.

And so the pattern so far, hasn't it, is that these voices have started sort of up here, and then this voice has come down here into the Bible. But as David closes the psalm, he now finishes listening to a voice that is in here, in his own heart and mind.

It is that the audience really drastically changes in verses 12 to 14, which is on the other page there. You see, what happens, the audience and the kind of performer switches around all together, isn't it?

Earlier on, it is the world and God's people who listen to the voice of the skies and scriptures, but they now leave the auditorium, and it's just one person listening, sat in the royal box.

And David is now on the stage. And it's God listening to the voice of David's own heart. And God is watching, and God is listening to the secret hidden voice in his life.

[14 : 10] To his secret faults, or hidden faults, verse 12, and his presumptuous sins, and the meditations that are deep within his heart. And this is the third voice that he hears.

The skies, the scriptures, and now he hears the voice of the servants of God. The voice of the servants of God. And the focus is, isn't it, on what God hears in David's inner life.

On the words of his mouth. Look at verse 14. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in your sight.

He prays, Lord, as my rock and my redeemer, listen in, to these words that are within me. Get your stethoscope out, and listen to my heart, and clean up the words that are there.

We've all got what's known as an inner monologue. Haven't we? It's those thoughts, and words, and that little conversation that we have within ourselves, in our own minds.

[15 : 16] And there are times, aren't there, when that inner monologue, it just kind of spills out, and we say things that we shouldn't have said. And we say, I can't believe I said that out loud. It would be terrible, wouldn't it, if this afternoon you could hear what is in my inner monologue, all the time, or I could hear what you're thinking all of the time.

It is, most of the time, a voice that should remain inside us. But out of all of the voices that David speaks about in this psalm, this inner voice is the one that he's most concerned with.

Those words in our heart and mind, that show our real attitudes, the things that we say, secretly, about other people. As one writer puts it, these are the words that are not spoken out in the cosmos by God, but in the closet by man, behind closed doors, deep in the heart.

And the question David wants to know of himself, and he asks us is, what is that voice saying? And you know, the more that we think about that voice, given all that we've heard in this passage, the more we realise, actually, we are so out of tune with the voice of the skies, and with the voice of the scriptures.

Those voices are God-praising, God-glorifying voices, aren't they, that speak to us of a God that we need to know. But when I'm honest about my own inner monologue, often there's just a great contrast there, isn't there?

[16:47] The light, and the glory, and the beauty, and the song of those voices in verses 1 to 11, it shifts, doesn't it, to the darkness, and the ugliness, and the sinfulness of the voice, in David's own heart, in verse 12 to 14.

It's a bit like going to a party, being invited to a party, and then just sitting in the corner, and then just talking to yourself. But we are like that in our hearts, we are out of sync, with the voices that are in creation.

We are not involved in the conversation, that is in the skies, and in the scriptures. And the voice going on in our own heart, is so often selfish, and presumptuous.

And David said, it is a voice, that is hard to get out of his head. It fights to get dominion over him, verse 13. Because we keep holding, our own little conversation, with ourselves, about ourselves, for ourselves.

And we're shamed, by the fact that we don't join in, the conversation, of the skies in the scriptures, of all of creation. As the servant's voice is heard by God, and as David is on the stage, he is aware, isn't he, of the discord there.

[18:14] But we think, don't we, of the servant, the Lord Jesus Christ, and of course, David's greater son, the King of Israel.

And we realise, that there is a man, who has an utterly different, inner monologue, from ours, and from David's. He is a man, who practised, what he preached.

Who preached, love your enemies, and as he's dying on a cross, he prays for those, who kill him. A man who, meant every word, that he said, and everything that he said, was entirely true.

Truly, truly, I say to you. Who was, as John tells us, the word, become flesh. Jesus Christ, is God's, very own, true voice.

The voice, that created, the creation, and the skies, in the first place. And so, in Jesus Christ, the man, we see, don't we, that what has always, been declared, in the skies, and what is declared, in the scriptures, is finally, declared, perfectly, in the servants of God.

[19:27] In the person, of Jesus Christ, humanity, and the heavens, are finally, talking, in unison. And Jesus' heart, is full, it is pouring out, speech, and his desires, are for the scriptures, more than anything, and what they teach, aren't they?

Even to the point, of death, he obeys, God's words. And so, we get a picture, in Jesus, of the fulfilment, of David's prayer, here, in this psalm, that one day, the voice of creation, would be echoed, in his heart.

That it would resound, with the sunshine, of the scriptures voice. That one day, humanity, will join in, the party. And that what heaven, has always declared, in creation, will, finally be declared, in a human heart.

In the heart, of Jesus himself. And in Jesus, we see that hope, fulfilled. We look up, to the skies, don't we, we hear, the creation, speaking to us, of the artist, behind the artwork.

And we wonder, who made, this vast creation? And then we look, down into the scriptures, and we hear, the intimate voice, of the Lord, who seeks, to restore us.

[20:50] And then, yet, we look into, our own heart, and we hear, the discord, within. Maybe this psalm, has whetted, your appetite, a little bit more, this week, to listen, to the voice, of the skies.

To listen, to the voice, of creation, to hear it, speaking to you, of a God, who is there, who has made it. And also, to desire, the scriptures, for them, to speak to you, of this God.

But we know, if we're honest, this side of Jesus' return, we'll still need, to pray this prayer, with David, won't we? That we will pray, to our rock, and our redeemer, to change us. And we look, ultimately, to Jesus, the living word, of God, in whom, at his return, people, his people, his church, his humanity, and the heavens, will finally harmonise, in praise to God.

And if you are, a Christian this afternoon, if you are, trusting in the Lord Jesus, to be your, only way, of knowing God, and of only way, of being right, with him, then, the Holy Spirit, is with you, isn't he?

And he is in you. And there is a voice, in our lives, that echoes, with creation. And it agrees, with the scriptures, in praise of this God.

[22 : 14] But we know, don't we, that that voice, is muffled. And that voice, struggles with doubt. And it struggles, to sing, to its best.

But we know, that one day, we will all, speak those God-praising, God-exalting voices, together, with the Lord Jesus Christ. And if you are, if you are not a Christian, and this afternoon, if you are still, asking that question, well how do I know, that God exists, in the first place?

Well David, wants to ask you, this afternoon, have you, listened to these voices? Have you, listened to the voice, of the skies? that proclaims, to you, that there is an artist, behind this great, artwork of creation?

Have you, come to the voice, of the scriptures, in which God, seeks to restore you, and change the foundations, of your life, to bring him to yourself?

That the words, of your mouth, and the meditation, of your heart, might be acceptable, in his sight, and would resonate, with the Lord Jesus Christ, in praise, for this God.

[23 : 25] Let's pray.