

Are You Listening

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SPEAKERS

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Since 2001, we've started the New Years of church always the same way. first Sunday of the new year we look at a memory verse. But it might be helpful to know that what's my desire my prayer, as you think back and the different verses we've learned, and even if you cannot recall every single verse that we've gone over, hopefully there's phrases you will be drawn to your attention during times of need. But there's two criteria that I'm often looking for one would be through prayer, finding a verse that that meets all of us at some point where we are right now spiritually, but also a verse that over the course of the next 52 weeks We will find ourselves growing into as well. So both relevant right now to us, but also verse that we're going to find when hopefully we look back and say, you know what I kind of knew that verse. But But now I really know that verse. And that's led me to Psalm 19, verses seven, and eight. And it's something very interesting about the book of Psalms for those that are familiar know, the title itself refers to like a song or a hymn, although, as you'll see with some 19, it's both a hymn and a prayer included in it. But but there's an attractive element to the book of Psalms. And if you haven't found this out already, all you need to do is look through church history. And and here's some of the praises that individuals have said about the book of Psalms. JOHN Calvin was not shy at all to speak of what he thought of the Book of Psalms. He said that the book of Psalms is an anatomy of all parts of the soul. In other words, if you if you want to look at what what life is, like, just read the book of Psalms. But then he went on to say not only is it an anatomy of all parts of the soul, but he would say that within the book of Psalms you find every possible human emotion held up to us as like a mirror. So we can all relate to the different

emotions and wrestling the book of some presents. But then the 20th century of Walter Brueggemann Old Testament scholar, who he commented that the book of Psalms is all about the realities of life. But then he said this, that in the Psalms, you find kind of these three dimensions woven through different songs, you have disorientation, orientation, and reorientation. In other words, they cover times in life where you feel very disoriented. What you would expect is not what's happening. Or some of us know, suddenly something changes everything in your life. And then as you read through the songs you find they bring us back to reorientation. Where's God in the midst of this? I like to do this morning to help us kind of better consider what we find in not just our memory verse, but in this song, is to consider that Psalm 19 is all about how God is continually speaking. So the question that is relevant for you, and for me, is not does God speak? But are we listening? And in order to answer the question, are we listening? We need to consider what are the two ways that this song holds up for us in terms of how God speaks, continually, and so look with me at verse one. You'll notice that this song falls really into two halves. The first half verses one through six, is all going to present to us that God speaks through his creation. That God speaks through his creation. And there's a phrase that we often give this in theological studies, and that is the general revelation of God. Here Here is how God speaks in a very broad, general, indiscriminate way to every single person on earth. So you notice how verse one begins, it says, The Heavens Declare the Glory of God, the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Now you're gonna find something very interesting in the first six verses. There's just one title that's used of God. To emphasize him as being the Creator. You have the simplest Hebrew title for God. It's rendered in English as God and Hebrew. It's just two letters L. Yeah. That that he is the Mighty One. What's very interesting is the psalmist. Here, sort of leads us to believe that yes, here's this general revelation of God, but it's not complete. It tells you some very important things about God, about him as the creator. But there's another component that will see that the rest of the song relates to in verses seven through 14. That is critical if you're going to have a complete knowledge of God. But let's look at how does God speak through his creation. But you notice in verse two, it goes on and says day after day, they pour forth speech night after night. They display knowledge there is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. their voice goes out into all the earth, their words To the end of the world, there is that phrase in verse to the creation pours forth speech. Think of it as an interrupted conversation where God is shouting out proof of his existence. And in other words, physical creation provides us with the information and knowledge of God's eternal power and divine nature. None of us got up this morning and think I did a really good job making the snow or the sun's coming up. I'm really glad I made that happen today. No, we are humbled, but we look around us. And notice the way that the Psalm is David puts us think of his early years as a shepherd. Certainly spending time outdoors both during the day and at night. And he speaks of all of these things are on interrupted God speaking and saying, I exist. I am overall this I created it all. I called everything into being. And verses three through six, he

puts it in a very poetic way. It's a speech in a language that everyone can understand. In other words, it's available to everyone. Unlike spoken languages that might be unique to a certain region, a dialect that's known only in one region, not outside another. That is not true of how God speaks through his creation. And he uses the illustration of the sun and puts it in a very simple form of you know, the sun comes up on one side and almost as if like a, you notice that uses the analogy of a of a bride groom or bride chamber, almost as if how a a woman who is married comes out of the bedroom wakes up in the morning And that's the sun comes up, and then it goes down. And if you think about this, the repetitiveness of God's laws of nature, their consistency is what allows science to exist. Science is all about studying what is observable and repeatable. That would not be possible. If you had a God who was not a God of order, and design, sort of very simple illustration. The somis reminds us here's how God speaks. And what does he tell us about himself in this? Well, I mentioned that it's a language that is known to all and that all should be able to hear this. But Scripture tells us there's a major problem, that this language that is so clear, and so articulate throughout the world by God because of sin is completely misunderstood and misinterpreted by all. So it both goes out to all, but because of sin, it is misunderstood by all. And I'll show you how this works. If you turn with me to Romans chapter one. You have Paul presenting this in the very beginning of his letter to talk about the good news of salvation. He first wants to clarify that there's some some terrible news. And the terrible news is that all stand without excuse for not worshiping God as they should. In other words, dovetailing with some 19 God has spoken, does speak continually through creation. But humanity, wrapped in sin completely ignores and suppresses that message. So looking at Romans one and verses 18 through 20 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is playing to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities, his eternal power, and divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. Looking at Psalm 19, and Romans 118 through 20, as bookends, you see the reality this deafening testimony of God's existence is suppressed by the sinfulness of man. And the word suppressed is an interesting term because you cannot suppress something that you don't have. So in other words, God gives man The evidence that He exists, but yet he pushes that down. He refuses to acknowledge that. Listen to some of the very well, outspoken atheists today, who simply will look at creation and and cannot deny that there is design and creation, but then would follow that and say, but there cannot be a designer, like looking at the evidence, but you're saying you can't say there's a designer, even though all the evidence is pointing to that. And so we see that God speaks through his creation. But the reality is, in this some David's use just one title in the first six verses Why? Because as clear and as accurate as the evidence and pouring forth continually from general revelation of God's existence. It doesn't Give us a complete understanding of

God. And others creation tells us God exists. He's all powerful, but it doesn't tell us really anything about his love. doesn't tell us anything about how to have a relationship with Him. And so now you see the second part of this turns and says, the only way to know God is by God's grace, because God speaks to us through His Word. And this is what we might call special revelation. In other words, how does one get to know this God? Only through God's grace and how God speaks to us through His Word. So let's go back to Psalm 19. And now focus on verses seven through 14. And as you probably already figured out with many of the songs, you're reading them, and you'll notice that Line sound very similar. There's a technique in Hebrew poetry, synonymous parallelism. What that simply means is you have two lines. And often the second line says something very similar to the first line, but only slightly differently. And that is to aid in memorization, retention, and to give specific emphasis. And that's exactly what you see. Now, as we turn to look and say, How does God speak to us now through His Word? How is this a greater, more complete revelation than just what is possible in creation, that we misinterpret and suppress? So let's begin with simply his written word. So you notice in verses seven, eight and nine, the written word of God is described. Now at this point in time, it would be a reference to the law of Moses. That part of the Old Testament that has been completed And collected. But it's not wrong for us to assume that this holds true now for the entire completed Word of God, that what is said here in microcosm, applies to all 66 books that we have before us today. But you'll notice as David speaks of the written word of God and how God speaks through that word, he uses six synonymous words. And those words you can pick out and there's two in each verse. So let's begin with verse seven. He says, the law of the Lord is perfect. The word law there refers to teaching or doctrine. So the law of the Lord is perfect, it's complete. Now, creation speaks the truth about God. But it only gives us a portion of God's character. It is the written word that more fully And completely reveals God to us through Jesus Christ. So the first term he uses the law of the Lord. But then you notice the second line in verse seven goes on and says, the statutes of the Lord are trustworthy statutes and other word for the law but means more testimonies can include the word warnings. So now we have this aspect when we think of the fullness of Scripture, it testifies to something and also serves to warn us and it is trustworthy. Or it is getting harder and harder today. To trust people. Kids are being brought up to understand stranger danger. people on the internet are watching now for fishing and other things like that, that we need to be careful. Who do you trust? What sites do you trust? When you can't describe the Word of God is trustworthy. It's firm. It's reliable. But notice in verse eight, a second pair of synonymous terms, in verse eight we find the precepts of the Lord are right. The word precepts you can think of sometimes something written line upon line. Even in some settings, it can be a grammatical term for the size of the letters. In other words, there's precepts are written for us, we can look at them. But the precepts of Lord are right, they provide oversight to us. And by precept referring to oversight, the assumption is we are putting ourselves underneath them. And that's why they give us

oversight, that they are right. Once again, they're true, they're accurate, they are straight. But then there's a second line that follows that Not only the precepts right, but the commands of the Lord are radiant. same meaning as law but maybe a little emphasis more on instructions. And as Tony prayed for us this morning, we're thankful that in the scriptures we have instructions, how to live the Christian life. What what is right and what is wrong. Then in verse nine, this would be a term describing the Word of God when he says the fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever, that the word of the God when properly received digested, should produce a humility, and a reverence in us. The prophet Isaiah says that God looks at those who are marked by humility and tremble at his word. was the last time you read scripture and tremble at God's word. When it just grabbed you that this is God speaking to you. And that can be in a very comforting way where you're just grabbed by the fact that God is giving you this promise to help you through a certain situation. It can also be the opposite where you are gripped in deep reverence and fear that you have not been listening to God's Word in this particular area of your life. And then he speaks as well in verse nine, the ordinances of the Lord our crew. The ordinance of the Lord, as you see in verse nine are true. They are sure they're all together righteous, they conform they match the character of God. So there's no inconsistency, no lack of clarity between what God says and who God is. And the word ordinances means decrees can refer to what is just to hear lots of people today crying out about injustices, or how do you measure injustice. You really can't measure injustice without a God who is wholly without his word which is wholly and true. And so we see the six synonymous words, describe for us the written word of God. But since we have the completed scripture, in the Old and New Testament, we can easily conclude that what is said of the written word here, is also true of the living word. In other words, we have not just in the written word, but in Jesus Christ, the fullest revelation of who God is. And so without low You cannot really know God. There are three major religions in the world Christianity, Islam and Judaism are the three largest religions in the world. But without Jesus Christ, you cannot know God. And this Psalm is reminding us of that. Think again of John one one, which many of you can probably recite in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God, that title word that Jesus Christ is the logoff that he is the communication, the revelation of God, to us, in the flesh. As we move from creation tells us there's a creator, but it does not tell us of the creator's love for us, does not tell us of the full nature of this god that is found in the written word. And in the living word, Jesus Christ. So the Word of God does make God known to us, and it should transform us. So if you go back through verses seven through nine that we just looked at, we had different synonymous terms for the Word of God. Now what you find are six different phrases describing the results of that word. So look at verse seven, since the law of the Lord is perfect, what does it do? It revives the soul. It provides renewal, refreshment. They should tell us that if as a Christian you are establishing a daily habit of reading the scriptures, and you miss that a couple days, God does not love you any less than because you are his in

Christ. But you should feel the difference in your life. You should feel Lack of closeness and fellowship with God, because you're not hearing from it. You're not listening. Two of us here has never gone to the scriptures and walked away feeling as if we've been revived. The God has spoken to us he's given us some promise. And it's exactly what we needed to encourage us. So are the results of transforming results is reviving the soul. But then in verse seven, it goes on it makes the wise Simple. Simple here means those who potentially are naive or immature or can be immature in the faith. How do you grow in the faith? Not just pray about it. read the scriptures. Put them into your life more and more. This explains why we have different ministries as a church where we study God's word not merely You're trying to fill up your schedule, but so that we can study the Scriptures and grow in wisdom and understanding of God. Go down to verse eight precepts of Lord are right, what's the result of that it gives joy to the heart. The term joy here is not like a superficial sort of sense of while your circumstances will get better if you read this, but it speaks of your whole disposition. Being able to be in a state of resting and security and God. There's a Dartmouth student or graduate student that's moved out of the area, not a Christian. I've talked to them a number of different times. Very smart person. But I asked them a simple question. And they still told me they're trying to give me an answer. What I asked them was what is happiness and this stumped them. They said, I'm really working on that question still. So that's great. Can't wait to hear from you. And I can tell they're really wrestling. They don't know how to describe this. And they even asked me what could you tell me? What do you think it is? Is it just something internal? Is it a state? Think of the difference is saying in the scriptures. It gives joy to our heart. You can be in the worst possible circumstances, as a believer, and yet you should still be able to say, it is well with my soul. That is not difficult. Not that you're really wrestling with a lot of things. But it's well with my soul. But let's go on notice in verse nine. The fear of the Lord and the ordinances The Lord will continue to produce in US humility and reverence. They are pure, and they have a purifying or finding effect in our lives. You may have caught the fact that as I mentioned the first six verses, one title for God, I, simple as title, creator, verses seven through 14, six times the title, Lord Yahweh, the covenant name of God. In other words is the Psalm is David trying to say to us, the only way to know God is through his work. By God's grace, acknowledging by faith, what Jesus Christ has done. Now you can have knowledge, growing knowledge of God, but it doesn't happen in a vacuum. happens through Time In the Word. Verse 10, our attitude changes towards the word. Notice it says here the Word is more precious than gold, sweeter than honey honey from the comb. This may be a reference not to just honey that comes out of a comb, but even a honey syrup that was known to be digested and kind of seen as a delicacy. You know, in other words, the phrase here that he uses more precious than gold, actually is using the book of Genesis to describe the Garden of Eden. A place where you don't just find refreshment, but but there is tremendous value in the scriptures. Sort of God speaks through his creation, and he speaks to us through His Word. And then in verses 11 through 14, you have

in this him now suddenly sort of a prayer, a prayer of the servant who reminds us that God's servants Love His Word. If we know he speaks through creation, and he speaks more fully through His Word, that we should have a love for his word. So you see in verses 11 through 13, that God's word is to be valued for it's both preventative properties and its profitable properties, preventable and profitable. And so you see in verse 11, by them, is your servant warned? Doesn't the scripture purposely give us instructions to keep us from falling into sin? We don't have to experience saying something to be able to know if that's right or wrong. And there are many people who function that way today. They would see well, they can't say something's right or wrong unless they've personally done it. really thankful God has said I want to prevent you from going through on just pain and difficulty, because it said, I'm going to give you warnings, here to tell you things you should avoid at all costs in your life. But as well, God's word is profitable because he says in keeping them, there is great reward. Many of you have lived long enough to be able to see the blessings and the benefits of being faithful to God's word. Not that you've demonstrated perfect obedience, but you're able to look back and see the difference between a life that is not grounded in the Scriptures, and a life. That is. Notice in verse 12, he says, Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults, keep your servant also from willful sins, May they not rule over me Then will I be blameless, innocent, of great transgression. to discern his errors is a phrase that's used in Leviticus, and refers to unintentional things. In other words, God's word exposes when we've sin, and sometimes we have sinned without intending to. Maybe you've said something to someone and you thought you were joking. And you found out later they were very offended by that, or hurt by what you said. You didn't intend to do that. But does God's word often reveal that to us, so that we can restore that and renew it. But notice, he also speaks here, keep your servant from willful sense. Now this may strike us as odd. Wait a minute, you love God's Word? You know, he speaks through God's word. You've just said all these wonderful things about God's word and now you're afraid and concern that you still might want to send does not fit all of us. We can sit here today and be like, Yes, I got it. God's Word tells me what's true, keeps me from sin. But you also need to humble yourself and realize this is an impossible task, apart from the grace of God. As Paul was saying, Romans seven he struggles because he wants to do what's right. And yet he knows how often choose the exact opposite of that. And you may find that with certain attitudes you have, you know, this is wrong, you're going to try to work on that, and then you you willfully do it again. So scripture is intended to help reveal and expose that so that we can be renewed by grace. But you get to the verse 14, and as I said, really 11 through 14 or more of a prayer on the part of God's servant and in verse 14 This reflection, that God's servant should desire, that their speech and their thought, reflect the teachings of Scripture. Because that's what the Psalm is here. Praise the Lord. May the, you know May the meditation of my heart be the words of my mouth, everything I think, everything I say, may it reflect what your word has taught me what I know from your word. In other words, this is the goal of having a memory verse, not just to be able to

say we can repeat a verse of scripture, but that this verse would stay with us that as God's servants we would find ourselves praying every day, God take your word, maybe something I read, consistently, maybe something I think about, repeatedly and by your grace, man. Apply it, and may even pray your word. As I come before you in prayer. It's not only a great way to start a new year, it's really how we should start every day in Christ Jesus. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you that your word is everything that Psalm 119 has told us. And so as we continue in worship, as we come to the Lord's Supper, we are asking that your word would do exactly what you said that it would revive and refresh our souls, that it would expose hidden errors and sins that we have committed, Lord, that the joy of the Lord would be restored in our lives. We ask these things in Jesus name. Amen.