

SEEKING WISDOM Sunday School- October 10, 2010

Unifying Topic: GOD'S LAW SUSTAINS

Lesson Text

I. The Value Of God's Law (Psalm 19:7-10)

II. The Blessing Of God's Law (Psalm 19:11-14)

The Main Thought: The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. (Psalm 19:11-14 KJV)

Unifying Principle: People search for evidence of meaning in the universe. What evidence can satisfy their search? Psalm 19 affirms that God's perfect Law protects and sustains creation.

Lesson Aim: To help students understand how God's Law, His Word, blesses our lives.

Life aim: To teach students to make God's Law, His Word, a priority in their lives, learning to enjoy its awesome ability to bring creative, positive change that will enable them to live lives that are acceptable to God.

19:7 The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

19:8 The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

19:9 The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous together.

19:10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea. Than much find gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

19:11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward..

19:12 Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults.

19:13 Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

19:14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.

HISTORY:

¹The 19th Psalm is a great text to turn to for help when it comes to answering challenges because it's verses clearly state that not only IS there a God-this Psalm also says that He has revealed Himself to us in three ways.

1. The first proof that David gives is this :(1) In verses 1-6 he states that God has revealed Himself---in His WORLD.
2. Then David also says that God has revealed Himself through what He has WRITTEN...
3. But in the last verse of this psalm David alludes to one other way that God has since revealed Himself to us through the coming REDEEMER...God's WORD made flesh.

You see, God revealed Himself and His great Love for us all most clearly through His Son, Who, unlike any other man, lived a perfect, sinless life. And then gave that life freely for you and me by taking our sins on Himself as He hung on the Cross of Calvary. In that way he removed the sin barrier that exists between us and God and made it possible for us to know our holy God personally.

19:1 "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth his handiwork." There are 127 references in the Bible to the word "*heavens*". The heavens are plural because there are various spheres represented.

1. ²The first heaven is the firmament. This heaven is the closest to the Earth.

Genesis 1:8 "*And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.*" The Bible also, refers this heaven as the sky.

2. The second heaven is the space where the sun, moon and stars are located.

Deuteronomy 4:19 "*And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the Lord thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven. The plural form of "heavens" quite often is in reference to the stars beyond this solar system: the myriad of galaxies in the universe.*

¹ <http://www.redlandbaptist.org/sermons/sermon20020901.php>

² <http://www.learnthebible.org/three-heavens.html> (St. James, Richard)

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

3. The third heaven is the location of God's throne: situated to the utter most north from the earth. According to the Apostle Paul he was caught up to the third heaven.

2 Corinthians 12:2 *"I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth; such an one caught up to the third heaven."*

The location of this heaven *"in the sides of the north"* is shown in Scripture in Isaiah 14:13 in the rebellion of Satan. *"For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:"*

The **"glory of God"** is the sum of all of God's perfections, shining brilliance that brings admiration and praise. It is His greatness of power which demands our fear and honor. It is His beauty by which He is adorned. It is His strength and honor; His excellence and grace. God's glory is wrapped up in all those qualities that demand our praise (*David Regan*). The perfect timing of planetary movements declares His precision. And yet, the multifaceted declaration of the heavens only begins to show the great glory of God. **"The firmament sheweth his handiwork"**—the most readily visible evidence of God's presence in the universe. Therefore with the voice of the heavens:

- The glory of God (Psalm 19:1) shows His power
- The handiwork of God (Psalm 19:1) shows His intelligence

Four observations: 19:2-4

1. ³*First*, from **verse 2**, "Day unto day pours forth speech, and night unto night declares knowledge." The observation here very simply is that knowledge comes through nature, day and night. At night the night sky speaks. In the day the day sky speaks. Or to be precise, speech pours forth. Nature does not whisper, it shouts and it shouts continually (*not as we would shout*). If you've ever seen a Cinerama, you would be impressed with the curved screen that gives such a life-like impression. And now you can walk into the Omni-theatre at the St. Paul Science Museum and hear all of the oooh's and ahhh's as people recline and see themselves enveloped in a domed screen, and then an hour later walk outside into a dome and a three dimensional drama ten million times bigger, more unpredictable and suspenseful, and hear not a single exclamation. Why?

2. The *second* observation of David's I want us to see is in **verse 3**, *"There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard."* In other words, the knowledge which pours forth from days and nights is visual not verbal. David loved the verbal revelation of God, so he is not belittling that. But he also delights in the visual revelation of God. The testimony of the heavens is silent, yet can be *"heard"* by men of any nation and understood in any language.

3. The *third* observation I want us to see is in **verse 4**, *"Yet their voice (or line) goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world."* In other words, the voiceless knowledge poured forth by days and nights is available to everyone on the globe who is not physically blind. This is not a private or secret knowledge. The moon you see tonight is the same moon that shines down on Shanghai and Moscow and London. And not only that, it is the same moon that Shakespeare looked at when he wrote some of his sonnets. Nature is a trans-geographical and trans-temporal language. The result of this is that all men can be held accountable for acknowledging the truth of what nature communicates. What does nature communicate?

4. That leads to observation *number 4* which is found back in **verse 1**: *"The heavens are telling the glory of God and the firmament declares His handiwork."* The voiceless, visual, universally available knowledge is that behind it all is a glorious God as Maker of the world. The world is His handiwork and He is glorious. From this we learn three things. *First*, nature should lead us to believe in God and His glory as Creator and therefore every man who can perceive nature is accountable to honor God and thank Him. Romans 1:19-20 says, *"What can be known about God is plain to man because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world His invisible nature, namely His eternal power and deity, have been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse..."*

The last part of **verse 4**, the psalmist now zeroes in on one particular body of the heavens—the sun. In fact, the

³ <http://www.soundofgrace.com/piper80/091480e.htm>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

heavens are described as a tabernacle for the sun. It is there that the sun encamps and marches as a mighty monarch across the skies, arising every morning as *a bridegroom coming out of his chamber*, indicating that the sun burst forth every day from the night chamber in the strength of youth (v5). As the sun blazes across the sky, it finds no boundary from which its heat can be hidden, which is the vital force whence the whole Earth receives life and energy, incidentally given here in the bible first of all (V6).

LESSON:

Psalm 19:7-10 The Value Of God's Law

THE VIRTUE OF GOD'S WORD (7-9)

1. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul
2. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple
3. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart
4. The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes
5. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever
6. The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous forever

19:7 The witness to the glory of God now turns to the testimony of the Law of the Lord. "*The law of the Lord is perfect*," by which he means not merely the Law of Moses but the doctrine of God, the whole body of scriptural truth. Perfect in that it lacks nothing in order to its completeness; nothing in order that it might be what it should be. It is complete as a revelation of divine truth; it is complete as a rule of conduct.

⁴ "*Converting the soul*"— The particular illustration of the perfection of the law is seen in the fact that it "*converts the soul*;" that is, that it turns it from the ways of sin to holiness. The great means, of the conversion of sinners is the Word of God. When the law drives and the gospel draws, the action is different but the end is one, for by God's Spirit the soul is made to yield, and cries, "*Turn me, and I shall be turned*."

The glory of the works of God - the heavens, the firmament, the sun, as described in the previous verses - is that, they convey the knowledge of God around the world, and that the world is filled with light and life under the welcoming warmth of the sun.

The glory of the law, or the revealed truth of God is, that it bears directly on the soul of man, turning him from the error of his ways, and leading him to pursue a life of holiness. When the "*law*" of God is applied to the heart, or when the truth of God is made to bear on that heart, the legitimate effect is seen, in turning the sinner from the error of his ways. This effect of truth is seen everywhere, where it is brought into contact with the heart of man.

"*The testimony of the Lord is sure*"—God bears His testimony against sin, and on behalf of righteousness; He testifies of our fall and of our restoration; this testimony is plain, decided, and infallible, and is to be accepted as sure. God's witness in His Word is so sure that we may draw solid comfort from it both for time and eternity, and so sure that no attacks made upon it, however fierce or subtle, can ever weaken its force. What a blessing that in a world of uncertainties we have something sure to rest upon!

"*Making wise the simple*"— The word rendered simple means simplicity, then, simple in the sense of being open to persuasion, easily seduced: Humble, candid, teachable minds receive the word, and are made wise unto salvation. Things hidden from the wise and prudent are revealed unto babes. The persuadable grow wise, but the cavaliers (*raising trivial objections*) continue to be fools. As a law or plan, the Word of God converts, and then as a testimony it instructs.

19:8 "*The statutes of the Lord are right*"—The Word here rendered statutes properly means mandates, precepts - rules given to anyone to guide him. His precepts and decrees are founded in righteousness, and are such as are right or fitted to the right reason of man; As a physician gives the right medicine, and a counselor the right advice, so does the Book of God. The word "*statue*" is related to the verb "*to command*" or "*order*." The Word is therefore also perceived as divine orders.

"*Rejoicing the heart*"—Making the heart glad by the fact that they are equitable and just - and glad as the result of obedience. David especially noted that true freedom comes from obeying God; the law of God is not oppressive or restrictive. Some of the Jewish religious leaders later interpreted the law legalistically, but David knew the law

⁴ <http://bible.cc/psalms/19-7.htm>

could be liberating. "*He who was converted was next made wise and is now made happy*"; and that truth which makes the heart right then gives joy to the right heart.

"*The commandment of the Lord is pure*"—not adulterated by any person. It also purifies us; free from all stain; from all imperfection; from any corrupt tendency. It is the sincere milk of the Word.

"*Enlightening the eyes*"—making the eyes light up; giving us light and knowledge. The reference here is undoubtedly to the mind or soul as being enlightened by the truth of God.

⁵Look at the sun and it puts out your eyes, look at the more than sunlight of Revelation and it enlightens them; the purity of snow causes snow blindness to the Alpine traveler, but the purity of God's truth has the contrary effect, and cures the natural blindness of the soul.

Now observe the gradation or degree of that enlightening: the convert becomes a disciple and next a rejoicing soul, he now obtains a discerning eye, and as a spiritual man discerneth all things, though he himself is discerned of no man.

19:9 "*The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever*"— "*Fear*", in this context refers to a reverential awe of God. This is clean in itself, and cleanses out the love of sin, sanctifying the heart in which it reigns. To respect and reverence the Lord God brings cleanliness of soul and thus everlasting life. Filthiness brings decay, but cleanliness brings incorruptibility, steadfastly enduring forever.

19:9b "*The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous together*"—taken separately or corporately, God's judgments are manifestly pure and righteous. The word here rendered "*judgments*" refers also to the revealed truth of God, with the idea that, that has been judged or determined by him to be right and to be best. The judgments of the Lord are unquestionable and need no excuse to justify them. All that He has decided is right and proper and altogether righteous. All that God determines, whether in giving or in executing His laws; all in His requirements, and all in the administration of His government - is always and wholly righteous. It is precisely what it should be, and is therefore, worthy of universal confidence.

THE VALUE OF GOD'S WORD (10)

1. More desirable than much fine gold
2. Sweeter than honey and the honeycomb

19:10 "*More to be desired are they than fine gold, yea, than much fine gold*"—Gold is an article of principal value among men; and the object here is to show that to a pious mind the revealed truth of God is esteemed to be the most valuable of all things - a treasure above all which men can accumulate, and all which men can prize. God's law or judgments are more valuable than gold. The psalmist here and in the following verses describes his estimate of the worth of revealed truth as he perceived it.

"*Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb*"—The psalmist uses figures here that appeal to human cravings for possessions and sense experiences. Honey is the sweetest of all substances, and regarded as an article of luxury, or as most grateful to the taste. The honey which is pressed from the combs or dropped from the combs and is therefore, the most pure honey. The idea is that the truth of God, as revealed, is more grateful to the heart, or affords more pleasure to the soul, than that which is esteemed as the highest luxury to the palate. The meaning is, that it is loved; it is pleasant; it is agreeable; it is not regarded merely as necessary, and admitted to the soul because it is needful, as medicine is, but it is received into the soul because it is delighted in, or is more agreeable and pleasant than the most luscious article of food is to the taste. God's Word is a far greater good to man and therefore, far more to be desired than any amount of gold or honey.

Psalm 19:11-14 The Blessing Of God's Law

2. There is great reward (11)

19:11 "*Moreover by them is thy servant warned*"—The essential idea here is, to throw light on a subject, so as to show it clearly; that is, to make the duty plain, and the consequences plain. God's word warns the wicked not to go on in his wicked way, and warns the righteous not to turn from his good way. All David's instructions as a

⁵ <http://www.biblebb.com/files/SPURGEON/TOD/chstp19.htm>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

prophet, and all his rules of government as a king; and the whole of that wisdom, prudence, and knowledge, with which he conducted in both offices, were from the Lord by His word: and it may be applied to any servant of the Lord. David showed no hostility toward God, and he tried hard to change whenever he could see that he was wrong.

⁶Firstly, Scripture can act as a warning to us. We tend to be impatient with those who try to warn us. But think, for example, of the flashing light and the ringing bell at a railway level crossing that warn of an approaching train. Each year unfortunately there are tragic accidents when people ignore the warning or become impatient and try to cross ahead of the train. We neglect such warnings at our peril. The warnings in Scripture are similarly designed for our own good, to protect us from harm and from doing what is foolish.

"In keeping of them there is great reward"—There is reward in heeding the warning of God's Word. Although the wicked may seem to prosper on every hand, we must be assured that keeping the commandments of God's Word will prove to our ultimate benefit.

Secondly, obedience to the teaching of Scripture brings its own rewards. This of course is not to suggest that we should obey God's Word simply for what we can get out of it. Nor is it suggesting that the rewards are necessarily material or monetary. But living in accordance with God's Word does bring its own satisfaction even when it involves suffering and sacrifice on our part.

The reward is that:

- There is peace and pleasure in obedience.
- There is benefit to your soul.
- There is increase in divine knowledge.
- There is reward in heaven.

Now comes the request:

A PRAYER FOR PURIFICATION (12)

1. The difficulty of understanding (knowing) one's errors
2. Plea for cleansing from secret faults (sins of which one is not aware)

B. A PRAYER FOR PREVENTION (13)

1. Plea to be kept from the domination of presumptuous sins (sins of which one is aware)
2. Then one shall be blameless and innocent of great transgression

C. A PRAYER FOR PERFECTION (14)

1. That the words of his mouth and the meditation of his heart be acceptable in His sight
2. Addressed to the Lord, the source of his strength and his redemption

19:12 *"Who can understand his errors?"*—It refers here to wanderings, or departures from the law of God, and the question seems to have been asked in view of the purity, the strictness, and the extent of the law of God- asserting jurisdiction over the thoughts, the words, and the whole life - who can recall the number of times that he has departed from such a law? There is no one who can discern all of his sins. God's Word is like a piercing ray of light: it conveys truth but it also shows up everything in our lives which is not clean.

"Cleanse thou me from secret fault"— that which is hidden, covered, concealed. The reference is to those errors and faults which had been hidden from the eye of him who had committed them, as well as from the eye of the world. The sense is, that the law of God is so spiritual, and so pure, and so extended in its claims, that the author of the Psalm felt that he must embrace many things which had been hidden even from his own view - errors and faults lying deep in the soul, and which had never been developed or expressed. Again and again, as we read God's Word, we become aware of our own shortcomings and failures. We all have *"hidden faults"*, *"secret faults"* - failings that we drift into without being aware of it; sins committed unknowingly or in ignorance of God's laws. David's first prayer is a prayer for Pardon/Purification; the second prayer is a prayer for Power/Prevention. Pardon for sins committed, and power not to commit sins.

19:13 *"Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins"*—"Presumptuous sins" - failings that arise from our stubborn conviction that we know best and we can lead our own lives without reference to God; willful sins, ones we do, knowing that they are in sin before we commit them. It's also known as deliberate wrongs - committed in

⁶ <http://daily.presbycan.ca/devotions/1997/97-10-20.html>
<http://www.pitwm.net//pitwm-sundayschool.html>

defiant rebellion against God. Not only does the Psalmist pray for cleansing from sins unknowingly to him, but he prays forgiveness for both, and realizes that even his dreadful sins of murder and adultery were covered by God's mercy. David prays: *'keep me back from deliberate wrongs.'*

"Let them not have dominion over me"—Let them not reign over me; let them not get the mastery or control over me. Let me not become the slave of sin.

"Then shall I be upright"—blameless—The believer knows he can never be sinless in this life, but he must strive to be blameless. It means that he would be truly a servant of God; or, that he would have this evidence that he was a friend of God; that he was kept from the indulgence of secret faults, and from open transgressions.

"Then I shall be innocent"—This does not mean that he would be absolutely innocent, or free from all sin; but it means here, as it is explained in the following phrase, that he would be innocent of the *"great transgression"* (an entire casting off of allegiance to God), or would be free from that.

"From the great transgression"

This is an outline history of the suicide of a Christian:

- First, secret sin, unsuspected, because the conscience is torpid (stagnant, lazy);
- then open sin, known to be such, but done nevertheless;
- then dominant sin, with an enfeebled (weak) will and power of resistance;
- then the abandonment of all presence or profession of religion.

The ladder goes down into the pit, but not to the bottom of the pit. And the man that is going down has a descending impulse after he has reached the bottom step and he falls--Where? The first step down is tampering with conscience. It is neither safe nor wise to do anything, howsoever small, against that voice. All the rest will come afterward, unless God restrains.

However, through it all David prayed he would be saved from the great guilt which would ensue if he should give unchecked indulgence to secret faults, and if he should be allowed to commit the open sins which were the result of pride and over-weening, self-confidence.

19:14 After praying for Pardon for sins; for Power to keep him; he now prays to Please God/perfection. David's response should be our response. When he takes in the beauty of creation and understands the message of the special revelation, he is humbled and wants to:

- *"Let the words of my mouth"* they echo special revelation
- *"and the meditation of my heart"* - that focuses on the natural revelation
- *"be acceptable in Thy sight My rock"* (something relating to natural revelation)
- *"and my redeemer"* (something we can only have through special revelation)

⁷Words of the mouth are mockery if the heart does not meditate; the shell is nothing without the kernel; but both together are useless, unless accepted; and even if accepted by man, it is all vanity if not acceptable in the sight of God. We must in prayer view Jehovah as our strength, enabling, and our Redeemer, saving, or we shall not pray aright. Some please themselves. Some please men. Some seek to please God. Such was David.

- The prayer shows his humility.
- The prayer shows his affection.
- The prayer shows a consciousness of duty.
- The prayer shows a disregard to self-interest.

The contribution of this Psalm is that God has revealed Himself to mankind—God's revelation through nature and God's revelation through the Law. The wisdom God gives speaks of what should be man's response to the revelation of God. Our near kinsman's name, our *"Goel"* or *"Redeemer"*, makes a blessed ending to the Psalm. It began with the heavens, but it ends with Him whose glory fills heaven and earth—in David's prayer. David could not bear it, that a word or a thought of his should miss acceptance with

⁷ <http://www.searchgodsword.org/com/tod/view.cgi?book=ps&chapter=019&verse=014>
<http://www.pitwm.net//pitwm-sundayschool.html>

God. It did not satisfy him that his actions were well witnessed unto men on earth, unless his very thoughts were witnessed to by the Lord in heaven. This is truly seeking God's wisdom!

SUMMARY:

The Revelation: David used precise words to describe God's instructions for humanity: "*the law*", "*the testimony*", "*the statutes*", and "*the commandment*". Then the verse changes the parallel structure of the previous two verses. First, he comes with the human response to God—"fear of the Lord" which refers to reverential awe of God. Second, "*judgments*", as in "verdicts", which lead us to the ways the law of God can help us; can give us the wisdom that we will need to seek. Thus its':

- Perfect, **converting** the soul
- Sure, making **wise** the simple
- Right, **rejoicing** the heart
- Pure, **enlightening** the eyes
- Clean, **enduring** forever
- **True and righteous** altogether (in total)

they are more to be desired than gold, and that they are sweeter than honey and the honeycomb; that people are warned by them, and that in keeping them there is great reward.

The Response:

- ⁸God's Word revives our souls, gives joy to our hearts, and makes us wise. (Psalm 19:7-8) The so-called "*wisdom*" of the world will fail us, but God's wisdom in His Holy Word will never fail us. This is true, because God's Word is "*trustworthy*" and "*right*."
- God's Word and His commands give "*light*" or understanding to our hearts. God's Word gives us a true perspective on life. (Psalm 19:7b-8a)
- God's Holy Word can do this for us, because "*the ordinances of the Lord are sure and altogether righteous*." (Psalm 19:8b)

- God's Holy Word is a true treasure to His children. God's Word is "*more precious than gold, than much pure gold*." (Psalm 19:9b)
- God's Holy Word is also a source of sweetness and joy in the lives of believers. It is "*sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb*." (Psalm 19:10a)
- Most importantly, God's Holy Word promotes the fear and awe of the Lord in the hearts of His children. (Psalm 19:10b)
- God's Word also warns us about sin's consequences and assures us of the blessings of walking in obedience to the Lord. (Psalm 19:9a)

The Reason for God's Word is because the Word warns him of evil (11a) and because obeying the Word brings great reward (11b).

- God's Word further makes us aware of our sins, causing us to flee to the Lord God for forgiveness for our sins, and discourages us from willful and deliberate sins. (Psalm 19:11)

The Request is to acquit me of my hidden faults (12) and keep me from presumptuous sins (13).

- God's revelation of Himself in creation and most of all in His Holy Word promotes in us a desire to live holy and blameless lives for Him. (Psalm 19:12-13)

The Result:

- Our desire must be that of the psalmist, David, in Psalm 19:14. The psalmist said to God in prayer, "*May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in Your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer*."

APPLICATION:

You cannot find your way alone. God reveals Himself through nature and His Word. May you be sustained in that alone! –making God's Word a priority in your life, knowing that it is perfect in every way to give all the wisdom you need!

⁸ <http://sharaug.christianblogsites.com/blog/post/2009/07/21/psalm-19>
<http://www.pitwm.net//pitwm-sundayschool.html>