

# A Great Reward in Scripture

Psalm 19:7-14

## Intro

One of the most unusual experiences in the history of Russian theater happened several decades ago during a matinee showing of *Christ in a Tuxedo*. *Christ in a Tuxedo* is one of the most sacrilegious plays ever written. One of the icons of Russian theater, an actor named Alexander Rostovzev, had been cast in the part of Jesus. In this specific scene, the script called for Alexander to read 2 verses from the Sermon on the Mount in the gospel of Matthew, then strip off his clothing and cry out, *Give me my tuxedo and top hat*. Up until this part of the scene on this unusual day, everything had gone along at a normal pace.

Then it came time for Alexander to read from the Bible and quote his lines. But as the actor began to read from the Holy Scriptures something very unusual happened. *Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted*. Alexander began to tremble as he read the words. And instead of dropping the Bible and crying out for his tuxedo and top hat as the script dictated, the actor continued reading. *Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled*. Now the other actors were becoming visibly nervous.

Some coughed trying to get Alexander's attention. Others cleared their throats or whispered under their breath. But Alexander was not to be deterred. It was as if he were in another world – a world where there was only him and the Bible that he was holding in his hand. *Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God*. Alexander continued reading the entirety of the Beatitudes before he reverently closed the Bible. Then he made a statement that he had remembered from his youth in the Russian Orthodox Church – “*Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.*”

Needless to say, the whole rhythm of the play was thrown off. But the actors and actresses made it through that matinee somehow. But for the rest of his life, Alexander Rostovzev would claim that it was at this moment, while he was playing the part of Jesus reading from the Sermon on the Mount in this sacrilegious play that he placed his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour and was born again into the family of God.

Now this is not how salvation is supposed to happen. This is certainly not the methodology that is taught in Evangelism classes in churches and Bible colleges. But such is the power of God's word. As a two edged sword, God's word has the power to cut to the heart and soul of a person in a moment's notice. And it certainly did in the life of Russian actor Alexander Rostovzev. (Source: J.K. Johnston, *Why Christians Sin*, Discovery House, 1992, p. 121.)

I want to talk with you today about experiencing the power of God's Word. It is a great reward for those who read it and meditate on it.

## Psalm 19

Psalm 19 has been a favorite of mine for many years. This Psalm along with Psalm 119 is one of two Psalms dedicated in venerating the Word of God.

Christians are often accused of worshipping the Bible. This is not true. We worship the God who inspired it. He alone deserves our worship. But at the same time the Bible makes this declaration concerning the Word of God.

In Isaiah 55:10-11 the Lord says, “*As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.*”

The Bible truly is a wonderful and remarkable book that has survived through many, many centuries. It is the inspired word of God.

God’s word speaks to life’s greatest areas of need. It speaks with more authority and with greater insight than can the social scientist or the behavioral psychologist, the thought provoking philosopher or the world’s religious systems. For it speaks with the voice of God, with power and authority.

The Puritan writer Thomas Watson had one statement that I think is fitting for us. He said this, quote: “*The devil and his agents have been blowing at Scripture light but could never blow it out, a clear sign that it was lighted by heaven.*”

Charles Spurgeon once said, “*Defend it! I would as soon try to defend a lion. God’s word doesn’t need defending. Just preach it. Let it out of its cage and it will defend itself.*”

### **Background to Psalm 19**

David wrote this Psalm but we’re not sure when. We know for a fact that David spent time under the night sky when he was shepherd boy and when he was running away from King Saul who threatened his life. I could imagine David lying on his back in the wilderness looking at the stars.

There are 3 parts to this Psalm. At the beginning, verses 1-6, David meditates on creation and God’s amazing craftsmanship. We learn about God’s power and our finiteness. In verses 7-11 he meditates on God’s word and how God reveals himself through Scripture. In verses 12-14 David speaks of his own sinfulness and how God is gracious in forgiving us and saving us.

### **Verse 7 (a) “The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul.”**

When we hear the word “*law*” we often think of something that keeps us from having fun. But here we see the opposite. Law (Heb. *Torah*) is the comprehensive term for God’s revealed will. It basically means biblical or divine teaching. It is God instructing humanity. It has in view divine instruction relative to creed, that is what we believe, relative to character, that is what we are, and relative to conduct, that is what we do. It is a complete explanation of God’s instruction for our life.

His law is “*perfect*”, without err. It is the best counsel and guidance for our lives. That means that God’s word will not lead us astray or amiss because it is perfect. It is the highest standard of moral and spiritual law because it comes from God, the Creator. The word “*perfect*” as one Old Testament scholar writes is to say that it means “*it is all sided so as to cover completely all aspects of a thing.*” It is a word of comprehensiveness. It is to say then that the Scripture covers everything. It lacks nothing. It is a comprehensive source of teaching from God which therefore embodies all that is necessary to the spiritual life of God’s people.

“*Reviving the soul*” or in some translations “*converting*” literally means “*to bring back.*” God’s word helps the sinner to return back to God. The word then is so comprehensive as to have the ability to totally transform the real you, the whole person. It is sufficient then for conversion, for transformation, for restoration, and for spiritual birth.

The Word of God then has the power of total transformation. It is so comprehensive that it can mold a soul, a living person, into precisely what God desires that person to be. And that begins at conversion. In 1 Peter 1:23 we read, “*For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.*” In other words, the new birth or revival of the soul is accomplished through God’s Word.

**Verse 7 (b) “The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple.”**

“*Statues*” has the idea of divine principles, or divine guidelines. The Scripture is full of guidelines for living from God. Notice what David says about God’s statutes that they are “*trustworthy*” or “*sure*.” The Scripture is the more sure word in contrast to the unsure reasonings and opinions of people about God and morality.

And what is its benefit? Notice again, its benefit is “*making wise the simple*.” The root of the Hebrew word for “*simple*” is the idea of an open door. A simple person is a person who's undiscerning. They don't know when to shut the door or close out. Everything comes in. They're inexperienced and naive. But they can be made wise. And what is the source of that? The Word of God. Scripture takes the naive, inexperienced, and uninformed and brings to that individual wisdom.

I like the word “*wise*,” it is a rich Hebrew word. It basically means to be skilled in the art of godly living, to be skilled in the matters of practical living. It is to master the art of daily living, and it is accomplished by the knowledge and application of God’s word.

God is always the source of wisdom. It is that wisdom which is, as the book of James called it, from above. Wisdom is the ability to make right choices about right things at the right moments in life. Here then is a marvelous promise. The Word of God can take a naive, inexperienced, uninformed person and bring them to such wisdom that they can live out a godly life according to the will of God.

**Verse 8 (a) “The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart.”**

“*Precepts*” means an instruction intended as a rule of action and conduct. Now notice that the precepts of the Lord are “*right*.” That is to say they show the true path. They give you right guidance. We're not left without a chart and a compass. We're not left without principles for life. We have a true word to follow. And the result of that is that we walk a right path which rejoices the heart. I believe true joy comes from following the Word of God, from applying its principles, from walking in its precepts and pathway.

Where does a believer go to find joy? It is the Word that rejoices the heart.

**Verse 8 (b) “The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes.”**

Now “*commands*” is another way to look at Scripture. Yes, Scripture is precepts, it's instruction, it's statutes, but it is also divine decrees. Here we find the emphasis on authority, the authority of Scripture. The Bible is not full of suggestions. It is commandments, binding authoritative commands. This is what God requires and for those who respond, there is blessing and for those who do not, there is consequence.

The Word of God which comes to us as a command from God, David says, is “*radiant*.” That is to say it's lucid. It's not mystifying and it's not confusing. It enlightens the darkness. When there is darkness in the world and you can't understand what's going on and you don't know why

things are happening the way they are, the Word of God makes things clear, in contrast to the muddled musings of this world.

What a wonderful truth. The Word of God is all the revelation we need. It is clear. It is easy to understand for those who have the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 2:14).

**Verse 9 (a) “The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever”**

David uses the term “*fear*” as a synonym for Scripture. Why does he do that? Because the Scriptures intend to convey fear or the awesomeness of God to bring about a reverential awe, and to draw us to worship. The Scripture intends to produce fear or awe and to bring us to worship God.

And this Scripture which instructs us in the worship of God, David says, is “*pure*.” This is a marvelous thought. The word means the absence of impurity, the absence of filthiness, or the absence of imperfection. That is without evil, without corruption, and without error. The Word of God is clean. There's not a taint of evil in it. You can go to it and know that what it says is absolutely pure and that it endures forever.

**Verse 9 (b) “The ordinances of the Lord are sure and altogether righteous.”**

The word “*ordinances*” means divine verdicts. So we have divine instruction, the law of the Lord; divine precepts, the statutes of the Lord; and divine principles. We have divine decrees in the commandments. We have divine worship in the fear of the Lord. And now we have divine verdicts from the bench of the judge of all the earth. The Bible is God's judicial determination for the life of humanity.

David says that God's Word is “*sure*.” The Word of the Lord is true. It's always sure. Therefore it's always dependable, always relevant, and always applicable in contrast to the lies of this world.

David says that the “*ordinances of the Lord*” are “*altogether righteous*.” That is it is totally right. And the idea of that phrase is to talk of its comprehensiveness. It is all together righteous. There are no errors in it? Yes. But more than that, it is a complete comprehensive sufficient source of truth.

**Verse 10 “They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb.”**

The Word of God is the greatest possession. To have the Word of God is more valuable than all the precious metal. Oh, if only our society could realize that. The Word is the greatest possession. It is supremely valuable for it leads to the path of joy, it revives the soul, and it makes wise the simple and all those things we've seen. It is the source of the greatest possession.

Secondly, the greatest pleasure. In verse 10 David says, “*Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb*.” Nothing is as sweet, nothing is as enriching, and nothing is as personally meaningful. What do you seek for? Where do you find your pleasure? I can honestly say to you there's no pleasure in life like the pleasure and the joy of time spent in the Word of God. Scripture is the greatest possession and the source of the greatest pleasure.

**Verse 11 “By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.”**

It's a source of protection in the face of temptation and sin and ignorance, we need the Word. It protects us. We hide it in our heart that we might not sin.

It's the source of the greatest profit for in keeping of its truths there is great reward. In fact, the word “*reward*” here in Hebrew is literally “the end.” And what David is saying is in keeping of the Word of God there is a great end, an eternal reward. Instead of living for what we can amass here and now like the preoccupation of health, wealth and prosperity, and immediate success, we need to know the blessedness of living for the eternal reward.

### **Rewards of Scripture**

- It revives the soul
- It makes wise the simple
- It gives joy to the heart
- It gives light to the eyes
- It makes us pure
- It makes us righteous

### **Conclusion**

An old African said in a tribe one time, speaking to the great missionary Robert Moffat, he held up a Bible and said to that missionary, “*This is the fountain where I drink and this is the oil that makes my lamp burn.*” May it be for us also.

In your heart in this moment, can you make before the Lord a renewed covenant to commit yourself to His Word? To read it, meditate on it and apply it to your life?