

TRUTH B-P CHURCH
Adults Sunday School

PSALM 19 – KNOWING GOD

I. INTRODUCTION

Knowing God is what has been a hard thing for man to do. To know Him correctly is even more difficult. Why is this so? It is all because of sin. Our understanding is darkened by sin, and therefore we cannot know anything about God unless He is pleased to reveal Himself to us. The only way therefore to know Him is what He has chosen to reveal Himself in the Holy Scriptures. And because spiritual things are spiritually discerned, one must be born again in order to understand the Scriptures with the help of the Holy Spirit.

When we speak of God we must do so with profound respect and reverence, for we are speaking of the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth and all things that are therein. God is a Spirit (John 4:24). We cannot see Him with our physical eyes. Nevertheless, there is enough evidence for us to know the existence of God. There is no need for God to prove His existence. The things He had created are already proofs of His existence. Therefore there is no excuse for men not to know His existence, because through the creation, He had revealed Himself (Romans 1:19,20). We must therefore not try to imagine God with our limited and inadequate thinking. But we must humbly pray, ‘Lord, show Thyself to me. Reveal Thyself that I may understand Thee from Thy Holy Scripture.’” This formed two outlines to this psalm. First is to know God through Creation which is general revelation. Second is to know God through Scripture which is special revelation.

“**To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.**” This psalm is composed for temple worship and highlighted one of the grandest theme on God's revelation presented in two ways: Creation and Scripture. And David, being the human author wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, lead us to discover and know the existence and great power of God which is according to John Calvin, the highest knowledge possible that man can ever study into. May we approach this highest knowledge in a humble spirit.

II. KNOWING GOD THROUGH GENERAL REVELATION

Verse 1, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.”

The glory of God is declared not just by words but also by works. And this is visible to the eyes. This is not an imagination of the mind but what is clearly presented before the very eyes of puny men. There is design in all of God's creation that cannot be created by itself with all the intrinsic beauty and order found in them. The firmament refers to the sky and according to creation account in Genesis, it separates the water above from water below (Genesis 1:7-8).

Verse 2, “Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.”

Both day and night show evidence of God's existence in the things He made. Those things which He made specially for the day (such as sun, clouds), and for the night (moon, stars). From these created things came utterance by speech and presentation by knowledge. In other words, there is both design and purpose in which these things were created. They did not come about by chance, or happen to be found there by accident. It is God's purposeful design that all things were made.

Verse 3, “*There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.*”

In other words, no man would ever get confuse or become ignorant when they see or hear of all these creation that clearly declare the power of God the Creator of heaven and earth. Regardless of their education background or whether one is illiterate or not, the message from the creation can be easily understood. There is no language barrier. It is the same language which all can understand from the message of creation. The moment man enters into this world, he knew it straightaway without anyone teaching or showing him.

Verse 4, “*Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,*”

It means that no one is left out of the creation message. Every man that covers the surface of the earth, wherever he may be found is the classroom of creation. Day and night, he keeps on learning and discovering more of God' and His creation. There is no end to knowing the deep knowledge of God's creation.

“In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun” means that the earth is like a dwelling place for the sun. The sun rises from the east to the west since day one and has never stopped rising, not even once! Same for setting. The sun sets every single day and never fails to rise again from the east the next day. The purpose of such a vivid illustration through the declaration of God's creation through the activity of the sun movement is to show that this is God's intentional design. Nothing happens by chance. God is the One who program the sun on a daily basis and this is what man can see every day without fail.

Verse 5, “*Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.*”

And continuing with the illustration of the sun, it was described as a bridegroom who came out of his matrimony home. He has spent the night with his newly wed wife and was utterly satisfied with her. And therefore the next day, he came out of his home with renewed strength and vigor to face the brand new day as a strong man set to run a race.

Verse 6, “*His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.*”

The circuit refers to the revolution or the encircling of the earth by the sun day in and day out. It never stops. From one end to the other, and the cycle repeats again. The heat of the sun is testimony to the reality of God's creation that covers the surface and every corners of the earth without fail.

III. KNOWING GOD THROUGH SPECIAL REVELATION

A reasonable and humble person, seeing the marvelous works of creation around him and beyond, is compelled to submit to this great Designer and exclaim, “O Lord my God, How Great Thou Art!” By knowing God through creation does not bring us salvation. Next to creation, God reveals Himself by His precious Word. In God's written Word, He has recorded in this Book all that men needs to know about Him, about man, about sin, about heaven, about judgment, and many more. Without this special revelation, no man can be saved and be restored in his relationship with God.

We begin with this new section of God's special revelation: The Word of God.

Verse 7, “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.”

The law refers to God's teachings and instructions written in the Bible. This law is perfect. It means that God's Word has no mistakes, or errors of any kind, and was accurate to the last letter. That includes names, places, dates and numbers. There is absolutely no mistake at all. For how can God make any mistake, especially when He intends to preserve His Word for us? The Bible is His Word which is the only revelation we have to know God personally. As God is perfect, His Word must be perfect as well. And it is so perfect that it can convert a soul from condemnation to redemption in Jesus Christ. There is power in God's Word.

The testimony refers to the witness of the Bible. There are many witnesses including the prophets, priests, apostles, disciples of Christ and many men and women for Christ. However, the greatest witness is God Himself. He testifies to His own power, control, sovereignty, mercy, love, grace, peace, judgment, and many more that they are all true to His nature and attributes. His testimony is sure. Surety means established. It is literally 'Amen.' God's testimony will always be sure, firm and true. There is no doubt at all.

It makes wise the simple. It humbles them because the highest wisdom of man is far lower than the “foolishness” of God (see 1 Corinthians 1:25). The simple here does not mean good for nothing. It means here that God's Word makes the wise realized that they are not really that wise in themselves. Instead right now, he stands between trusting in self that will only make him more foolish or he could have start all over again as a blank piece of paper with God to fill up with wisdom which God is pleased to bless him. That's what it means here.

Verse 8, “The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.”

The statutes refer to appointments which God required His children to keep and obey. Some of these appointments include the keeping of the sacraments, holy feasts and even the Levitical system of sacrifices. And they are right because they were designed to “atone” for man's sins against God. And once the atonement is made, the people are made right with God, and they can enjoy their relationship with God again. That's why it rejoices the heart. When a child of God learns that his heavenly Father is no more angry with him for his sin, he comes freely before Him to commune and fellowship with Him.

The commandment is all that God required man to obey and follow. There is no option to do otherwise. The failure to do so would warrant punishment. And the commandment of the Lord is said to be pure. What does it mean? It is pure in a sense that there is no filth or stain found in God's commandment. There is no shortcoming or inaccuracy in the result of the commandment that follows. It is absolutely pure. The purity of Scripture impacts believers. As it is pure, it seeks to make them pure as well. This is not automatic purifier. As it is said here, “enlightening the eyes” is what will do to make one pure again. The ability to see and then led to a transformation to become pure according to God's Word. This is what it means. Does the Scripture has such impact on you?

Verse 9, “The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.”

King Solomon says that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (see Proverbs 1:7). Without knowledge and wisdom, there is no fear of God. It is appropriate to conclude that there is no way to possess and develop the fear of the LORD without the Word of God.

The word clean here has to do with spiritual and moral purity. Spiritual cleanliness is very precious. If you have never commit a particular sin before, it shows that you have endured it for Jesus' sake. There is in a sense that commitment toward God that he will not want to defile himself by sinning against God. Even if everyone is doing the same evil, a child of God who is determine to be clean, will learn to keep himself in spiritual and moral purity.

There are many judgments in the Bible. They are called judgments because it is more than instructions given for obedience and compliant. They are instructions that come with the consequences of a just punishment upon the law breakers. Judgments were given not to make the life of sinful men miserable and painful. In fact, judgments of God are declared to be true and righteous. They are true because it promotes the truth. God is truth and therefore His judgments are true as well.

Same for righteousness. God's judgments promote righteousness in its fullness. There is no such thing as situation ethics because it conveniently covers God's righteousness by man's righteousness. What really counts is God's righteousness and not man's righteousness. God's righteous judgments stand, not man's righteousness.

Verse 10, “More to be desired *are they* than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.”

What is the place of Scripture in our heart? Is it the most important and the thing indispensable in our life? The psalmist has placed the greatest emphasis on the importance of God's Word, more desirable than anything on earth, even surpass that which is most expensive such as pure gold. Nothing on earth can exceed the value of pure gold. Yet for a child of God, his desire must not be anything that is measured by dollar and cent on this earth but the Word of God which is priceless.

In terms of value, nothing can replace God's Word. In terms of sweetness, God's Word is the sweetest, even sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. In other words, sweetness means most tasty to the satisfying of the tastebud. It is not the quantity but the quality that is stressed here. When God's Word is compared to the sweetness surpassing even the sweetest honey, this means that God's Word can satisfy us fully and completely.

Verse 11, “Moreover by them is thy servant warned: *and in keeping of them there is great reward.*”

According to this verse, the Word of God does two things for every child of God. First, it warns them. The warning comes because there is danger. God's Word is like an alarm bell. It sounds when it detects danger. We are living in a dangerous world. If we are not careful, we can easily be seduced by the world in all its philosophies and carnality that seek to draw us away from the one living and true God. We do well when we take heed of the warning.

The second thing will only come when we faithfully kept God's Word. And that is the blessing for keeping God's Word. We are not told exactly what reward will it be. What was revealed to us is that it will be a great reward. And we can trust in God for what He has promised us. We will not be disappointed. We just need to do that which is right in His sight. The rest will come as God promised.

Verse 12, “Who can understand *his errors?* cleanse thou me from secret *faults.*”

There are so many aspects to one's sin. It is more than just the act itself that is visible to eyes around. How about the intent and desire that lead to the actual commital of sin? How about the provocation

and temptation that has been accommodated and tolerated? There could also be an element of envy or greed involved. Indeed who can understand his errors? Only God and His perfect judgment will arrest every transgression and not leave any stone unturned.

The way out is not to flee from judgment but to surrender to God's cleansing power of His Word. That includes those sins that were done in secret. It is secret because it was not known to others. Just because it was not known does not mean we did not commit sin. The psalmist has become so sensitive to sin that he is asking God to wash away every sin that is found in him including those that did not manifest outside but inside his heart and mind.

Verse 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.”

All those sins which have been confessed must be repented of and not continue in them. The only way to succeed is to seek God's help. The psalmist sought the Lord's help to keep him back from presumptuous sins. “Keep back” means to spare and preserve. Indeed we need God's preservation all the time from sins. Presumptuous means boastful. It is possible that pride is what the psalmist have been struggling with. When life has been smoothsailing and especially rewarding, the sin of pride may creep in to cause trouble spiritually. It is interesting that the psalmist is fully aware of such a possibility of pride that he might fall into. As such, he requested for special help. He does not want to be dominated by pride. He knew what pride will bring him. And he is doing all he can to prevent it. And the best prevention is God's help.

Note that it is not for selfish reason why the psalmist sought this divine help to keep him humble. He wanted to be upright before God and the world. This is what God would be pleased to see in him. And he also wanted to be innocent from the great transgression. He does not enjoy a single bit in his sin. He wanted to live a life that sin is no longer part of it. And it requires constant keeping sin away. This can be very trying. For sure, the kind of sin that will come will attack our weaknesses. It will not attack our strong areas. The devil is not stupid. He knew how to attack at the right time, at the right place to the right people. Many have been destroyed by sin and through the subtle attacks of the evil one. Do we need to add to the list of victims? God forbid! Let us remain alert all the time and seek God's help to carry us through all the way to the end.

Verse 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.”

Finally the psalmist sought God for help in regards to his spoken words to be found acceptable before Him. He is not taking for granted that he can do it on his own. He wanted God's help and wants to make sure that his words will not become a stumbling block and grieve the Holy Spirit within him. Even the meditation in the heart is not to be taken for granted. The psalmist wanted to make sure that everything inside him will be cleansed and pure before God. And he looked upon God as his strength and redeemer. He is not relying on his own strength but God's strength. God as his redeemer is not just giving him salvation but also deliverances from his enemies and problems.

IV. CONCLUSION

Psalm 19 is more than showing to us how God can be known by general revelation and special revelation. It is to humble us to bow down to this sovereign and powerful God, and giving Him all our devotion and trust upon Him and Him alone. For He alone is worthy to be praised and served. Will you?