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Psalm 19

Praying with God:
Pray with your eyes open

Jonathan M. Romig
CornerstoneWestford.com

When I sat down to write this sermon, I looked out the window and the urge to write the sermon left me because it was so **beautiful** outside. The **birds** were chirping, the **sky** was blue, the **sun** was shining, and it felt like **spring** had finally arrived. I got a powerful urge to go outside and spend a few moments enjoying the sun, and the sky, and the birds before writing my sermon, and so I did, and it was great.

Are you ever at the **office** or **school** or **home** and you look out your window and all you want to do is **go outside**? You see how beautiful it is and something inside you says, “I just have to go outside and take it all in.” There’s a **biological** reason for this. Our bodies need **vitamin D** to feel good, which we get through being in the **sun**. But I think there’s a **spiritual** reason for this too.

Psalm 19 tells us that we actually **encounter** God through creation—that **nature** and this **earth speak** of God. So when our **hearts yearn** to spend time outdoors, our hearts are yearning for something more than the birds and the trees and the sky. Our hearts are yearning for the one who made all those things and **reveals** a little bit of himself through them.

Our current series is *Praying with God*. The Psalms are poetry inspired by God that we can use to shape the **way** we pray. In Psalm 19 the Psalmist David **invites** us to pray with our eyes open—open to **three things: creation, scripture, and ourselves**. As we look at each of these, let’s open our eyes to how God reveals himself to us. The first place we find God is **outside** through...

Creation (Psalm 19:1-6)

- 1 The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
- 2 Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they reveal knowledge.
- 3 They have no speech, they use no words;
no sound is heard from them.
- 4 Yet their voice goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.
In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun.
- 5 It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,
like a champion rejoicing to run his course.
- 6 It rises at one end of the heavens
and makes its circuit to the other;
nothing is deprived of its warmth. (NIV®)

David focuses on **two elements** that declare God’s glory, the **heavens** and the **sun**. Did you know that on Wednesday the **European Space Agency** released a brand new **map** of the **Milky Way Galaxy**. This map shows **1.7 billion stars** that took the **Gaia** satellite spacecraft **one million** miles away from earth **22 months** to capture. It shows how **far away** the stars are, their **brightness**, and their **colors**. From this we’re going to learn things about our universe and sky we never knew before. Scientists and Physicists got up early

All Scriptures are quoted from the New International Version (NIV®) unless otherwise noted.

Wednesday morning just so they could be there for the release of this data. One scientist used the data to find a **hyper-velocity star** that travels a “few million miles per hour.” Only about 20 had ever been discovered. David also talks about the **sun**. This picture shows the size difference between the sun and the earth. The sun is **864,400 miles wide**, or 109 times that of earth’s **diameter**, which is only **7,917.5** miles. And you know what, **David** didn’t have a **telescope** when he wrote this, but he still sensed the stars and the sun tell us something about the greatness and glory of God.

Psalm 19 invites us to pray with our eyes open to creation because creation speaks to our hearts. But God only reveals himself **partially** through creation. **Theologians** call this...

General Revelation: God reveals a general sense of himself through nature.

If you look carefully at **verse 1** of your **english translation** of the Bible you can see something taking place in the Hebrew. Notice how verse one calls god “God.” The Hebrew word for **god** here is “**el**,” which is the most **generic name** for god, and can sometimes be used for false gods. But when you skip down to **verse 7**, what do you notice? God is called by a more specific name, **LORD** in all capital letters, which is our signal that it’s the **special covenant name** of God, “**Yahweh**.” Verses **1-6** talk about creation, and in them we can get a general sense of who God is, but we can’t know God specifically yet. We can have a general revelation of God, but not a specific revelation, which is what we get in verses **7 and following**.

But that **doesn’t mean** we should **ignore** creation. Creation has something to tell us (verse 2) even if it doesn’t use words (verse 3). In one of his sermons, Pastor John Piper pointed out this is a **paradox**. David is saying creation speaks without speaking. In the New Testament, the Apostle **Paul** puts into words what creation tells us. **Romans 1:20-21**

20 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 people are without excuse.

21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. (NIV®)

Verse 20 tells us God reveals his **power** and **character** in nature, but that means we’re all **responsible** for if we don’t believe. **Verse 21** answers the question, “Is believing in a general sense of god **enough** to **save** us?” **No**. We need something **more**. This is why we need Scripture, which is what our **next section** is about. But before we go there, I want to give us one way to **apply** the first six verses.

Pray with your eyes open to nature.

When you pray, it’s okay to open your eyes and look at creation. As long as you recognize the sun is created by God and is **not god** it can open your eyes to God’s **glory**. For me personally, I’ve gotten a better sense of God’s glory lately through tree branches. I really like **tree branches** right now. I took this picture to try and capture a little bit of God’s glory. This is one single branch that is beautiful. This branch holds a unique beauty. In the winter it’s covered in snow. In spring it has little red buds, in the summer green leaves, and in the fall yellow and orange foliage. So the beauty of this branch is constantly changing, but it’s just one branch of thousands of branches on this single tree. And this tree is one tree of an **estimated 3.04 trillion trees on planet earth**, each constantly growing new branches with new beauty day after day, night after night, displaying God’s glory. You’re only going to see a handful of these trees in your lifetime. God puts them where nobody will see them and it shows his glory. Pray with your eyes open to nature.

But as great as the branches are, they don't tell us a **complete story**. A friend once told me **before** he was a **Christian** he would go for hikes and spend time outside and think, "There **must** be a God." But that's **not enough**. We need **more**. We need...

Scripture (Psalm 19:7-11)

7 The law of the LORD is perfect,
refreshing the soul.
The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy,
making wise the simple.
8 The precepts of the LORD are right,
giving joy to the heart.
The commands of the LORD are radiant,
giving light to the eyes.
9 The fear of the LORD is pure,
enduring forever.
The decrees of the LORD are firm,
and all of them are righteous.

10 They are more precious than gold,
than much pure gold;
they are sweeter than honey,
than honey from the honeycomb.
11 By them your servant is warned;
in keeping them there is great reward. (NIV®)

Notice how many times the special covenant name of God, **LORD**, (which means "Yahweh") is used. From verse 7 through 14 it's used **7 times**. What reveals God's actual name, who he actually is? The Scriptures. The Bible. Our text calls the **Hebrew Scriptures** the **law, statutes, precepts, commands, fear** and **decrees**. This is one of the best **parallelisms** in the Psalms using lots of different **synonyms** to talk about God's word and what it does. Each word helps us look at the **same thing different ways**. God's law is his commands and decrees. Statutes and precepts are the **testimony** and **instruction** given by God. **Fear**, reverence, is how we feel when we realize we are encountering the God of the universe in the words of the Scriptures.

How does God's word **affect** our lives? It **refreshes** our soul. It makes us **wise**. It gives us **joy**. It gives **light** to our eyes (it opens our eyes). It endures forever. What this tells us is that God's word is **sufficient**. God's word is sufficient to change our lives, to give us wisdom, to lift our hearts, to teach us the truth. See general revelation (nature) is good but it's not enough. That's why we **need**...

Special Revelation: The LORD reveals a saving relationship with himself through the Bible.

The Bible, the **66 books** of the Old and New Testament, have what we need to have a saving relationship with God. Verse 11 **warns** us of our sin. If we **repent** and put our faith in God the scriptures reveal we receive the **reward**, eternal life. It's not until we meet **the one** told in the story of the Bible that we can receive salvation. **Who** is the Bible speaking of? When God first made the heavens and the earth it was perfect and without sin, even the first man and woman, **Adam** and **Eve**. But they sinned against God and all of the world, including creation fell into sin and became **dangerous**. Now creation that was meant to give us joy and show us God's glory, like wildlife and tall mountains, can cause death. But God promised to send a rescuing hero, a Savior, to rescue us from sin. Despite thousands of years of rebellion, God finally sent his

Son to be that **hero** through the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus says that any who repent of their sin and believes in him will receive eternal life.

Pray with your eyes open to God's word.

When you pray, read a Psalm first, or another Bible passage. Let what you read there guide your prayer, and turn your prayer to Christ as all of Scripture does. When we read the Scripture together as a church or when we learn a new foundation verse, you can recite it as a prayer. But you should know that this is dangerous. See **creation** tells us there is a God. **Scripture** reveals who that God is, Yahweh, Jesus. But Scripture also **opens** our eyes to...

Ourselves (Psalm 19:12-14)

12 But who can discern their own errors?

Forgive my hidden faults.

13 Keep your servant also from willful sins;

may they not rule over me.

Then I will be blameless,

innocent of great transgression.

14 May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart

be pleasing in your sight,

LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer. (NIV®)

There's a third type of revelation the Scripture gives us.

Self Revelation: When we peer into our hearts we realize we need a Savior.

The Psalmist writes of two different types of sins, hidden faults and willful sins (v12-13). **Hidden faults** are those sins we commit but don't realize it. This could be a thought we think in **hate** towards someone else but don't realize it or **not** doing a good thing. A **willful sin** is when I know and am **aware** of what God wants me to do but I choose something else. I do life my way instead of God's way. What the Bible tells us is that we commit both types of sin and we need **forgiveness**, "Forgive my hidden faults." (v12) Do you realize how far you fall short of God's standards? Do you realize how much you need forgiveness for? According to this verse, you can't. We sin so much we can't keep track. This Psalm **ends** by telling us where we can find someone to **forgive** us, someone to **save** us, someone to **redeem** us.

The **last verse** says, "May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and **my Redeemer**." (v14) The LORD, Yahweh, is also the **Redeemer**. A redeemer in **ancient Israel** was a close **relative** who was responsible for you. If you were sold into **slavery** it was the redeemer's job to buy you back. Jesus is our redeemer. He **purchased** us back from slavery to **sin** and **death**. But there's only one way to save a life—a **life** for a **life**. He traded his life for ours. He died on the cross so that if you repent of your sin and put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ you will be forgiven of your sins, and receive eternal life.

Pray with your eyes open to Jesus.

Is Jesus your redeemer? Has Jesus rescued you from your sins. If you don't know Christ, you may sense there is a god out there, but that won't save you. Only Jesus can save you. It's time to take that step. It's time to repent. It's time to fall on your knees not just before the God who created the Milky Way Galaxy and the Sun and tree branches, but the one who speaks through Scriptures and whispers his own name, Jesus.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (NIV®)

All of creation, all of the Scripture, and even the sin in your heart, they all point to our need for Jesus. Do you know what **eternal life** will be like? One day you'll be able to ride through the **galaxies** and **stars** with Jesus, or just watch the **branches** and leaves **change** season after season with him, listening to the birds and watching the sun shine, or maybe you'll **study** his **word** with him, learning how it speaks his name from beginning to end. *Pray with your eyes open. Pray with your eyes open to creation, to Scripture, to Jesus.*

Pastor Jonathan Romig preached this message at Cornerstone Congregational Church.

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