

God Revealed, Heart Changed

Psalm 19:12-14 – page 456 in the pew Bibles

For the past two Sundays, we've been looking at Psalm 19 and how God reveals Himself to man, and then our response to that revelation.

Two Sundays ago, we looked at verse 1-6 and how God has revealed Himself to all men in a general and limited way in the heavens and in nature, yet this revelation of Himself is enough to leave all men without excuse. And we saw how this revelation calls all people everywhere to bow their knee in worship to the God who created all things.

Last Sunday, we looked at how God revealed Himself in a covenantal way through His Word, which means that He revealed His person, His will, His ways, and His plan of redemption, and calls people to a covenant relationship with Him.

Today, we come to the end of this wonderful Psalm as we look together at verses 12-14. In these verses, we see a snapshot of the heart of a man who has been changed because of God's revelation.

Please follow along with me as I read Psalm 19, verses 12-14:

[Read passage]

I guess you could say I'm somewhat of an armchair psychologist. I've only had two psychology classes in college, so I'm certainly not in any way, shape or form competent in the area. Nonetheless, God seems to have given me a knack for seeing some things and getting to the root of some people's issues. Although, I must admit, being a theologian, my diagnosis most of the time, if not always, ends up identifying the root issue as sin, and the remedy being the gospel.

As we look today at these final verses of Psalm 19, I want to put David, the writer of this Psalm, in the psychologist's chair, as it were, and examine the heart of someone whose life has been affected by the revelation of God. That's what we see in these last three verses. God gives us the opportunity to look into the heart of someone who has had God revealed to him in a covenantal way, and had his heart forever changed by it. As we do, I want to note three observations that we find as we look into the heart of this one whom God Himself called a man after His own heart.

Point #1 this morning:

1. When God is revealed, we see ourselves in His true light.

You might say to me, "don't you mean we see ourselves in *our* true light?" No, I chose these words specifically because when God is revealed to us in truth, when our eyes are opened to who He is, the very first thing you see is yourself in the perfect and pure light of His glory. And may I say, what you see is not pretty.

Hold your place in Psalm 19 and turn over to Isaiah chapter 6 and I'll show you what I'm talking about.

Isaiah 6, starting in verse 1:

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ² Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one called to another and said:

*“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory!”*

⁴ And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke.

Now stop right there for a minute. Isaiah was being called as a prophet here. Someone who would take what was originally revealed to him and proclaim it to others. He was a spokesman for God. He proclaimed the very words of God Himself. And the words which God gave to him would eventually become the words of Scripture. Part of what we call “The Word of God.” This is one example of how Scripture reveals God in a special and covenantal way.

Here in Isaiah 6, Isaiah receives a vision of God in all His holiness. He is brought into the very throne room of God in his vision and He sees God seated on His throne, high and lifted up, and all the angels around His throne proclaiming “holy, holy holy.”

Notice carefully Isaiah's first response in the very next verse:

⁵ And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!”

When God revealed Himself to Isaiah, the first thing Isaiah saw was his own sin and vileness against the perfect holiness and purity of God.

And over here we have David, who had stood in awe of the majesty and grandeur of the heavens which pointed Godward, causing him to say in another place, “what is man that you are mindful of him?”

And then we know that God revealed Himself to David in a special, covenantal way as he wrote about the perfect and precious Word of God because the Apostle Peter tells us in 2 Peter 1:21 that those who wrote Scripture were uniquely carried along by the Holy Spirit. So we know that God revealed himself to David, maybe not in a vision like He did to Isaiah, but nevertheless in no less of a way than Isaiah.

And we see David's response here in verses 12 and 13. Notice the focus of this section:

12 Who can discern his errors?

Declare me innocent from hidden faults.

13 Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins;

let them not have dominion over me!

Then I shall be blameless,

and innocent of great transgression.

It's just like Isaiah: "Woe is me, for I am ruined! I am lost! I am unclean!" Like Isaiah, when God revealed Himself to David, it changed him. Something happened in his heart.

The Bible is clear that before conversion, we don't even care about our sin. We were quite happy with it. Ephesians 2:1-3 states this explicitly:

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

And John 3, verses 19-20 says, "And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed."

Before we are changed by Jesus Christ, we had no desire for our sin to be exposed. We loved our sin. We loved darkness rather than the light.

And even as a believer, when we don't seek God in His Word each and every day, we let our flesh be the dominant factor in our life.

But as we look inside David's heart here in Psalm 19, we see a man who sees himself in light of the Lord's truth. And what does he see? He sees his own sin and unworthiness – "Who can discern his error? Lord, I have hidden faults, I just know it! Lord, keep me from presumptuous sins! Don't let them have dominion over me!" – and he cries out to God for His mercy.

When the Holy Spirit reveals God to us in His Word, we immediately see ourselves and our sin in light of His truth. And I'm not just talking reading about him to get head knowledge. That's not how it works. This is an act of the Holy Spirit illuminating His Word to our hearts, revealing Christ to us, and that illumination is what has the power to change us.

You see, there's something about seeing Jesus that transforms us into His image. We see in 1 John 3:2, "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is."

On that final day, when Christ returns, and we see Him face to face, our sanctification will be instantly complete because seeing Christ face to face changes us instantly. It says “we will be like him, because we shall see him as he is.”

In the meantime, however, by looking into the Word of God, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13:12, “¹²For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.”

Paul goes on to say in 2 Corinthians 3:18, “¹⁸And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”

As we see Christ in His Word, we are changed little by little into His likeness. As this happens, as we see Him and His glory, we see our sinful state, all our ugliness and yuckiness, and we cry out like David,

*¹² Who can discern his errors?
Declare me innocent from hidden faults.
¹³ Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins;
let them not have dominion over me!
Then I shall be blameless,
and innocent of great transgression.*

But see, God doesn't just reveal our sin just to make us feel ugly and yucky. He shows us our sin for two reasons: first, so that He can change our heart to begin to desire things that please Him, and second, to draw us back into the safety and salvation of His word and His ways.

These two things make up points two and three from today's passage. Let's take them in turn:

2. When God is revealed, our heart's desire is to please Him.

Look at the first part of verse 14:

*¹⁴ Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in your sight,*

Continuing our look into David's transformed heart, we see that his desires have changed. Instead of desiring sin, his greatest desire is to please God.

This is the fruit of the one whose heart has been changed by God through His precious Word.

In Hebrews 11:5, the writer tells us, “⁵By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God.”

I read this and I think, Wow! This guy's life story is engraved in Scripture, and what does it say about him? That he pleased God. I want that kind of testimony! Tell me how to get that kind of a testimony!

Well, when we look back at Genesis 5:24, it says, “⁴ Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.”

It says Enoch walked with God. Notice it says *with* God. He walked with God.

In order to please God, you have to walk with God. That is, living our lives according to His ways in covenant relationship with Him.

And how would we know how to walk with God unless God revealed it in His precious Word?

And the Bible has much to reveal to us about what pleases God.

- We please God by having faith in Him, as Hebrews 11:6 says, “⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.”
- We please God by fearing God and hoping in His mercy. As Psalm 147:11 says, “But the LORD takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love.”
- We please God by studying and following Christ's example, for in John 8:29, Jesus said that He always did those things that please God the Father.
- We please Him by obeying and doing His will, for as it says in Colossians 1:10, “so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;”

And it's right that we should seek to please God. 2 Corinthians 5:9 tells us, “So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.”

But it's right here that I want to stop and give you a very solemn warning.

It was 1997 and I had just taken my first position in church ministry in this small church in Holly Hill, Florida, which is just outside of Daytona Beach. Jamie and I had been married for about 2 and a half years at the time, and we had Joseph, our firstborn, who was about 1. Joseph was still nursing from Jamie, we had been head strong, didn't listen to wise council from family and friends, and consequently, we hadn't started him on solid foods yet and Jamie was basically physically spent. What we didn't realize was how the constant physical depletion she was experiencing also weakened her mentally and spiritually.

About that same time, I got a hold of a book by Charles Finney. Finney wrote a lot about living your life to please God. Little did I know about Finney's theology, though, that he believed that it was through striving to live a holy life that one is saved. I guess I read it from a different perspective and just saw it as a challenging book for my walk with God, so I shared it with Jamie.

One day she showed up at the place I was working at the time, and I could see right away by her countenance that something was dreadfully wrong.

Well, to make a very, very long story short, Jamie's faith had been shaken to the core and she literally came apart spiritually. The words from the book that she read didn't challenge her, they crushed her. She felt as if she was lost and going to hell because she saw no way to ever please God as that book described.

Being her husband, I was also shaken and afraid for my wife. I had no idea how this was going to turn out. I was devastated and scared.

Well, what brought her out of that horrible pit, was when I and several other people from that church sat with her hour after hour for days, just reading God's promises from Scripture. We prayed. We worshiped and sang. And we kept feeding her God's Word.

And slowly, ever so slowly, over a period of days, weeks, months, and even years, Jamie came out of it. And she came to understand that pleasing God is not something that we do in order to win His favor or in order to secure our salvation. It is something that we do from the place of already receiving God's free grace through the finished work of Jesus Christ. We learned that there is absolutely NOTHING we can ever do to please God in our own strength. And we certainly can't somehow earn His favor by trying to live a holy life. But rather, the desire to please God is the fruit of a life that has already been graciously changed by the mercy and grace of God.

Folks, we've seen God's compassionate mercy and amazing grace first hand in our lives. And we will never be the same again.

But it was through this horrific trial, when it seemed that everything was crumbling and we were being lost in the fury of the storm, that she and I both came to know God through His Word in a way that became more real to us than we had ever dreamed.

It was through this time that we came to see, with David, our third point this morning:

3. When God is revealed, we see that He is our rock of safety and merciful redeemer.

Look at verse 14 again, paying special attention to the last half of the verse:

*Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in your sight,
O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.*

Folks, this isn't just a nice benediction. Some nice-sounding saying that brings a message to a nice, neat close. David knew the Lord intimately as his rock and his redeemer.

First, He is our rock. The solid foundation that we stand on which cannot be moved.

The idea here is that within the loving confines of God's Word and His ways, there is safety. He is an unshakable foundation upon which we stand.

At the end of His sermon on the mount, Jesus told a parable illustrating this idea.

4 "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. 26 And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

When we build our life on the safety of God's Word, no matter the storm that assaults you from this world, you are standing on a firm foundation and all of heaven will be there to protect you through it. And you will be standing in the end.

Conversely, when we stray from God's Word, we find ourselves in unsure territory, exposed, as it were, to the dangers and destructive elements of this evil world. Continuing down this path, we will always end up in ruin. Like Gomer, who spurned the kindness and the safety of Hosea's love, we end up being sold on the auction block of slavery.

But second, since ruin is where we all started, and where we, in our flesh, would surely go again if it weren't for the Lord's salvation, we see that the Lord is our Redeemer. And like Hosea, because of His boundless love and undying compassion, Jesus came and purchased us, redeemed us, from the slavery of sin that we got ourselves into.

It probably seemed like an ordinary day to Levi. He was trained well to exact the absolute most out of people in his transactions. "Traitor! Publican! Sinner!" He had been used to the insults from his fellow countrymen for a while. So used to it, in fact, his heart was hardened.

Shunned by his countrymen, an embarrassment to his family, Levi lived life hard. He certainly had plenty of money. But the cost was high, and Levi knew firsthand what loneliness was. In the work he was in, even his so-called friends were cut-throats. So calloused was his heart that he barely felt anything anymore.

But then it happened. As he sat at his tax booth, he heard the clamor of people as a crowd approached. He had heard about Jesus, even heard some of his teachings. But to Levi, well, someone like Jesus would never give him the time of day.

But from the crowd, Levi saw that Jesus...well, He seemed to be walking up to him. Surely He's not coming here. What would he want with me? Is He going to insult me, too? Condemn me? Lecture me?

Jesus approached his tax booth and came to a stop right in front of him. Levi looked up, expecting a scowl, but instead...what was he seeing?

His gaze seemed to bore into Levi's soul. But they weren't eyes of condemnation that Levi saw. But rather, eyes that reflected the perfection and beauty of God's love and compassion. Levi wanted to smile but could not move. He wanted to greet Jesus, but he could not speak. This man whose name was on everyone's lips seemed focused on Levi alone.

Jesus whispered two simple words, "Follow me." Two simple words, yet they carried with them such power, the likes he had never seen before. And in one moment's time a million things happened in Levi's soul. All the hardness, all the pain, the loneliness, the guilt, the shame...all of it vanished. Without even thinking, he leapt from his stool, and began to follow Jesus, leaving everything, his booth, his money, everything, behind.

What could cause a man to do such a thing? To leave behind his wealth, his livelihood, and yes, his whole life in order to follow someone who simply spoke two words to him?

You see, when God reveals Himself to us, when He speaks to us through His Word, He brings His mighty power to bear on our soul, and everything changes. God speaks into our lives through His perfect and precious Word, and our stony heart is transformed. And we're made new!

And like Levi, we find that the only appropriate response to the love and compassion of our Redeemer is full devotion. To give our life back to Him in return. Why? Because when He changes our life, we see ourselves in His true light; And because of His love for us, we all of a sudden find ourselves wanting to please Him. To live our lives for Him. Because we see that He is our Rock and our Redeemer.