

**Two Books**  
Psalm 19:1-14

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, a typical fall worship schedule at Valleyview usually involves some sort of stewardship and giving focus in October and then Breakfast Theatre in November.

However this year we are doing something a bit different, we're going to engage in another Green Worship Experiment in November. And for the month of October we're going to look at some important biblical teaching which is going to prepare us for engaging in this Green Worship experiment.

Now don't get worried – I know we all enjoy the Breakfast theatre series, so we'll be making use of that format in December to help us tell the stories which lead up to Jesus' birth at Christmas.

But we are changing things up this fall friends - in part because it's wise to change things up every so often to keep things fresh and avoid becoming stuck in a rut... but also

because when we vary things up we might see and hear things that we hadn't noticed before...

And friends I guess that's really the essence of Green Worship, and the goal for the upcoming November worship experiment, that it would help us to see and hear God revealing Himself to us through His creation in ways that we really hadn't noticed before.

Because brothers and sisters if you think about it – even if you attend worship every Sunday, and you are involved in a ministry that meets and serves on a weekly basis and you are very diligent about spending time each day in prayer and reading scripture... that's only a fraction of our time where we are focused on seeing and hearing how God reveals Himself to us, and its typically limited to focusing on the Scripture in some way.

Now compare that to the time we are engaged in working, eating, playing, socializing, creating, resting and sleeping, and

at most you might end up with a 90/10 split – and given the reality of our busy schedules the split is more like 99/1.

And most of us have the tendency to describe this split along the lines of “Sunday vs. Monday to Saturday” or “our spiritual life vs. our regular life” or “church life vs. work life” or “sacred vs. secular.”

But however we describe it there is some sort of split, a disconnect, between how we experience God in one way from scripture and prayer and how our regular day to day life is something different.

Now, we try to bring God into our daily life – that’s kind of what we do daily devotions or we want sermons that give us “practical” advice for relationships or work, because that sort of brings our Sunday God into our Monday to Sat life – do you know what I’m talking about?

And there’s nothing wrong with this, but the source of that revelation and experience is still Scripture – not Creation.

And because we rightly esteem and correctly value the revelation of Scripture, and creation is often idolized and so obviously shows the stains of sin and evil we tend to pit God’s revelation in scripture against His revelation in creation.

We’re hesitant to believe that we might gain a deeper understanding of God from outside of scriptures... that really challenges us. And we tend to be suspicious of those who experience God’s revelation this way.

Let me give you an example I found on a website where people were sharing experiences of why they don’t fit into a typical church. This is from a fellow by the name of Tony, he writes *“I came to love and revere God through the wonder of his creation. One example, the dragonfly. When I think of what it took to design that little bug with its eyes with thousand of separate lenses, its two sets of wings with their perfect timing, “one set goes up while the other set goes down,” it fills my heart with awe for God. The Jews say that Abraham became aware of and loved God in the same way. I have tried to explain this to other “believers” but most of them would just*

*rather bury their nose in the Bible and they patronize me and even condescend to me cause they think I'm a tree hugger."*

So that's why our sermon series this month is called "*It's not easy being Green*" I know this our November experience is going to challenge us and stretch us out of our comfort – but that's ok, its only for a month.

Because brothers and sisters if we are able to grow in our ability to actually see and hear, to experience God revealing himself to us in His creation; in the things that we spend most of our time engaging with... then our relationship with God starts to permeate 100% of our life in a whole different manner, in a way that goes beyond just being a nice and good person when we're not at church.

We begin to experience our day to day routine as a continuous interaction between God revealing Himself to us and ourselves responding to Him in obedience and faith – and there's no more sacred vs. secular, spiritual vs. unspiritual,

Sunday vs. Monday – all of life becomes an opportunity for worship.

And the other benefit to growing in Green worship – contrary to what we might be afraid of - is that it actually doesn't devalue, or decrease, or replace our seeing and hearing God revealing Himself to us through the scripture – in fact it increases it.

Firstly because it is the scriptures themselves which tell us that the creation reveals the Creator to us.

Secondly because the scriptures help to illuminate and bring the creation into focus, like a pair of glasses, so we can clearly see how creation reveals God...

And thirdly it's also because this clear view of the creation helps to illuminate and open up the scriptures to us as well.

So let's take a look at Psalm 19 this morning because it shows us how all these factors come together and that will help to

prepare us to understand, but more importantly participate in and experience God through our Green Worship experiment in November.

Now it's hard to find a more definitive statement in scriptures telling us that the creation reveals God to us than the first verse of Psalm 19. *"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands"* but it's not the only verse in scripture which says this.

Consider also Job 12:7-8 where Job says *"ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish in the sea inform you."*

And the apostle Paul refers to creational revelation as well in Romans 1:20. He writes *"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."*

So, returning to Psalm 19:2-4 we can see that this is why Paul states in his letter to the Romans that communication through creation, which reveals who God is and what our response should be, has been going on a looong time and it reaches out to every human being who has ever lived anywhere on this earth.

Vs. 2-4 read *"Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world."*

And this is also where we see how the scriptures function as a set of glasses to help us bring this creational revelation into focus so we see it more clearly.

It might seem a bit simplistic but vs. 3 clarifies that the speech by which the heavens communicate is not verbal, it's not necessarily audible, and it's a different kind of communication than how we speak with each other.

And while that sort of seems to be a no-brainer, if we are not made aware of this fact – we might not notice it. Or we might be looking for something else instead, or we might not be looking or listening for anything at all – and we can miss what is being revealed.

Job 33:14 confirms this, it says *“For God does speak—now one way, now another— though no one perceives it.”*

And Paul takes it one step further in Romans 1:28 and says that our sinful nature makes us actively dismiss this creational revelation. He writes *“they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God...”*

So Ps 19:3 informs us, and helps us understand that what we are “listening” for in terms of creational revelation from the heavens is different from typical audible spoken communication, and helps to us focus, or tune in to things like the beauty, the majesty, the consistency and provision of something like the sun for example.

In vs 5-6 the sun’s appearance at the start of the day is described as being like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, like a gold-medal athlete ready to run a marathon.

And as the sun travels its path throughout the day and remains steady and on course, perfectly timed – it is described as a veteran marathon runner. It is perfectly paced so that it accomplishes its task of providing warmth to all – (unless of course you live in Vancouver).

Now with these verses we start to experience the creation shining some light on scripture to help us better understand biblical revelation.

In his description of the sun David draws on the creational experience of watching a bridegroom emerge from his home to go to his wedding ceremony, and the creational experience of watching a champion warrior revel in exercising his strength and power through his training exercises.

Now – how many of us have the creational experience of watching or attending the kind of wedding ceremony David would be referring to here? Or how many of us have watched a champion warrior run through his training routine?

If we did then we'd immediately understand what the scripture is revealing to us in a much clearer, more impactful, experiential way – right?

Now maybe you noticed that when I described how the sun moves across the sky I didn't refer to a warrior – I spoke about a gold-medal athlete and a marathon runner instead.

I substituted the creational reference in the Psalm which most of us have little to no direct experience or engagement with and used something that we are familiar with and perhaps have experienced – watching an Olympic athlete celebrate a gold medal, watching the steady and measured pace of a marathon runner, and now the scriptural revelation is deepened and more impactful.

In fact a large part of any teaching and preaching ministry is about helping people connect scriptural revelation with some familiar creational experience which they can relate to, so that it comes alive for them.

And this isn't simply because we need examples, illustrations and metaphors as part of good teaching and communication – it's because the creation reveals God to us, and the creation can do this friends because God created it.

Now again, that might seem to be a bit obvious – but maybe it's so obvious that we're overlooking it and its time to notice it again. So notice that David describes what we typically call “nature” – the sun, by using cultural references of marriage and warrior.

And brothers and sisters, now we switch back to the scriptures shining more light on creation again and revealing to us that even human cultural developments are considered to be part of God's creation.

The light of scripture casts a very wide beam and illuminates ALL of creation – and we discover that creation includes way more than what we narrowly call nature. And to show you I'm not making this up we have other references in scripture which connect God to marriage and to being a warrior.

Jesus himself says in Matt 19:4-5 *"at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.'"*

And David also writes in 2 Samuel 22:35 it is Yahweh who *"trains my hands for battle; my arms can bend a bow of bronze."* And in Ps 144:1 *"Praise be to the Yahweh my Rock, who trains my hands for war, my fingers for battle."*

So we can see that scripture reveals that these are human activities are considered to be connected to God the creator and thus they are part of the Creation, and they can reveal the Creator in some way, in this case being used for illustrations and descriptions in this Psalm 19.

So in these first six verses of Psalm 19 we're seeing all three of these revelational dynamics going on, pretty cool.

And the result of all this scriptural and creational revelation interacting is that from vs 7-11 David begins to praise and compliment God's law and how great and beneficial it is.

Now again... creationally our experience with Law isn't the same as David's, the word David uses here is "Torah" which better translates as instruction, guidance, and direction, given to Israel and written down by Moses when Yahweh claimed them as His covenant people.

So what Psalm 19 is revealing to us here is that this interplay between scriptural revelation and creational revelation allows us to perceive and respond to God's guidance and direction for living in His Creation –

And when one has the specific revelation that comes from scripture, along with the general revelation that comes from the creation – and both together revealing what they are

supposed to reveal give us that full and complete understanding of God's guidance which allows us to live skillfully and live well in God's creation - and friends that's what god Law really is; whether its published in Moses or fulfilled in Jesus.

For example, if we want know how to eat healthy and well we can take what scripture reveals to us about creation – for example that food is creation, it is a gift from God, we shouldn't worship it or idolize it or be controlled by it and so on... and use this to help illuminate and inform our examination and study of food and what we learn about it.

Putting scriptural and biblical revelation together in this way we will discover God's guidance and direction – His Law so to speak regarding food and if we respond appropriately to this guidance we will experience the benefits which come from that.

Thus David says that this revealed knowledge is *“sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb.”* Again see the

creational revelation this uses to help us understand what is being communicated... (vs.10)

And the correct response to what has been revealed to us is obedience, we follow God's guidance and direction, and when we do we experience the benefits of living by it. That's why David says *“By [this revelation] your servant is warned; in keeping [it] there is great reward.”* (vs.11)

Does that make sense? Can you see how that interplay between scripture and creation brings this about?

It's actually pretty simple, and a very simple way to think about how God reveals himself to us is to remember that God wrote two books; the book of creation and the book of scripture.

And Psalm 19 also reflects this in how vs 1-6 are focused on the book of creation and vs. 7-11 are focused on the book of Yahweh's Law that we know as the O.T. Scriptures.



If you can remember this – then you will be prepared to participate in our Green Worship Experiment in November as we deliberately shift the focus in our worship service to look at the book of creation and how we respond in worship to what God is revealing through it.

And you don't need to wait until November – you can begin to work with this co-illumination between scripture and creation to grow in your relationship with God starting today!

And even if you don't fully grasp all the finer details and nuances of how this interplay between scriptural revelation and creational revelation works out and you're worried about getting it wrong – that's ok... a large part of this is learning as you go along.

That's why David says in vs. 12 *"But who can discern their own errors? Forgive my hidden faults."*

In other words we won't know our shortcomings and misunderstanding in all this until we try some of this out and

start learning through trial and error – because this is the way it works with this kind of knowledge revealed in creation.

But you already know this friends – In many respects this is how we learn to live life isn't it – through trial and error, overcoming our ignorance, being corrected as we gain knowledge through our experiences of what works and what doesn't.

Only now scripture is revealing to you that this is part of Creational revelation and how God reveals Himself to us and instructs and guides us – not apart from scriptural revelation but in redemptive co-operation with it.

However, now that this has been revealed to us... now that we know this; will we learn from it and accept the guidance and deepening of our relationship with God that it can bring about?

Or will our sinfulness have its way with us and will we, like the people Paul speaks of in Romans 1, disdain this knowledge of

God that comes from the book of creation and think it not worthwhile to retain... because it does not come chapter and verse from the book of scripture or from some supernatural experience?

It's a genuine temptation for us friends and so we ought to pray along with David in vs. 13 *"Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then I will be blameless, innocent of great transgression."*

The good news friends, is that God has fully and completely answered this prayer for us in the person and work of Jesus Christ – the word of God made flesh; or perhaps we could say the book of scripture becoming a living person in and through the Creation.

In Jesus Christ we can be free from willful sins, and blameless and innocent of great transgression – friends believe this and put your faith and trust in it! Ask and receive God's forgiveness for all our hidden faults and our willful sins against

God's scriptural – and creational – revelation... through Jesus Christ.

And furthermore brothers and sisters, go and claim the promise of the Holy Spirit whom our Lord Jesus has sent us in order to, as our Lord promised, "will guide us into ALL truth" (John 16:13)

As we look to discover creational revelation, illuminated by scriptural revelation, we must claim the Holy Spirit as our helper and guide and He will cause the growth which creational revelation can bring to our day to day experience of God and also to our reading of scripture.

Friends, this is the spirit and intent behind the closing verse of Psalm 19 when David says *"May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Yahweh, my Rock and my Redeemer."* (vs.14)

And brothers and sisters this is our prayer for Green Worship in November – that what we speak and meditate on, from

God's book of creation, and how we respond to it, would be pleasing in His sight – and help us to grow in our relationship with Him in new ways and go deeper into the scriptures than we ever have before.

So – two Books both containing the Word of God – who know is made flesh and has become our savior and Lord, and in this way He truly is our all in all.

Brothers and sisters it's not easy being green – but it's definitely worth it. Amen.