



## Sermon Transcript

### April 15, 2018

## Listen, God is Speaking!

### Psalm 19:1-14

This message from the Bible was addressed originally to the people of Wethersfield Evangelical Free Church on April 15, 2018 at 511 Maple Street, Wethersfield, CT, 06109 by Mr. Steven Peery. This is a transcription that bears the strength and weaknesses of oral delivery. It is not meant to be a polished essay. An audio copy of the sermon on CD is available by request at (860) 563-8286. An audio version of this sermon may also be found on the church website at [www.wethefc.com](http://www.wethefc.com).

**Sermon Text**  
**Psalm 19:1-14**

The Law of the Lord Is Perfect  
To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

<sup>1</sup> The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. <sup>2</sup> Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. <sup>3</sup> There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. <sup>4</sup> Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun, <sup>5</sup> which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy.

<sup>6</sup> Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat. <sup>7</sup> The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; <sup>8</sup> the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. <sup>10</sup> More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. <sup>11</sup> Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

<sup>12</sup> Who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from hidden faults. <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

## Introduction

Is God speaking today? What is God saying?

Have you ever wondered if God is speaking today? Or have you ever wondered, if God is speaking today, what is God saying to you?

The answers to these questions vary widely within our culture today. Some in our culture today deny God even exists. Some people believe that there may be a God, but he certainly doesn't speak to anyone. Some people today believe that science has explained away the idea of God and that there is a rational, scientific explanation for everything. On the other hand, many in our culture believe in a spiritual realm that speaks all the time and can be understood by simply "finding your truth through your inner voice." Many people believe that they receive spiritual messages from within themselves all the time. I know God exists. Yet honestly, I have wondered if God speaks today and if God speaks to me. Psalm 19 creatively paints a picture with words that will help us answer the questions: Is God speaking? What is God saying?

### God is speaking through His World (19:1-6)

In verses 1 through 6 of Psalm 19, David describes how God speaks to us through his creation. Verse 1 tells us that "*the heavens declare the glory of God and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.*" We know that "*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*" In fact, God spoke everything into existence in the beginning. Here in verse 1 we see that the heavens declare the glory of the God. Creation praises the creator. The entire universe, the world, declares the glory and power of God.

Note that David begins this Psalm proclaiming the glory of "God". The title David uses for God here is the English translation of the Hebrew name "Elohim." It is a plural word in the Hebrew, which does not necessarily signify plurality of number but immensity. God is so grand and immense that no singular word can express Him adequately. David is using the title Elohim to reflect the marvel and awe of God's great power and strength as revealed through nature.

In verse 2 we read that "*day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.*" God is speaking every day, every night, always and forever. The constant and regular succession of day and night, "*Day to day*" and "*night to night,*" speak both the glory and faithfulness of God. God, who first divided between the light and the darkness, and has, from the beginning to this day, preserved that established order without variation, according to God's covenant with Noah (Gen. 8:22), that, "*while the earth remains, day and night shall not cease.*" The Psalmist is showing us that there is assurance, consistency and order displayed in God's creation. Verses 3 and 4 tells us that the voice of creation goes throughout all the earth declaring God's glory to all with "*no speech heard.*" The Psalmist is claiming that the world praises and witnesses to the

creator of the world. In verses 1 through 6 David shows that God's glory, power, and strength is proclaimed throughout the heavens and, like the heat of the sun, nothing is hidden from God.

David refers to the sun as reflecting the splendor, greatness and glory of God. We read in verse 5 that "*like a bridegroom*" who excitedly leaves his house on his wedding day, the sun rises; and "*like a strongman*", champion runner racing on his course, the sun makes its circuit. By using metaphors of a bridegroom and a strong man the Psalmist shows us that with the dawning of each new day the universe declares anew God's enduring strength and power. The Psalmist highlights in verse 6 that the sun travels in its circuit to the end of the heavens and that nothing can hide from its heat. The sun, as the centerpiece of creation, reflects God's power and strength.

God is speaking. God is speaking to us through his creation everywhere and always that He is faithful and trustworthy.

But, let's reflect for a minute on what is being stated about God through nature, in the context of our current scientific understanding of the universe. I actually work in the field of science and engineering. I started my career as a thermo-fluid dynamic, cryogenic propulsion systems engineer. Yes, you could say I was a rocket scientist. My mom does.

The Psalmist marvels at the sun, its vibrant heat and never-ending source of light. However, since the time of the Psalmist, science has shown us that the universe is in fact far greater than our finite human minds can grasp. For example, we now know that the sun, which the Psalmist considers to be the centerpiece of the universe, has the volume of 1.3 million earths. Yet, the sun is just a normal sized star out of many billions that we now know exist. We now know of a star that is so massive that 9.3 billion suns could fit inside of it. A star that is 12 million billion times larger than earth!

We also have a better understanding of the expanse of God's creation. Nothing can travel faster than light. Light travels at 186,000 miles per second or in other words a light beam could travel around the world 7 times in one second. At that speed, it would take 26,000 years to travel to the center of our galaxy, the milky way with 400 billion stars. But wait, there are now 100 billion galaxies in the known universe. The Psalmist refers to "*the end of the heavens*" in verse 6. Today the farthest known galaxy from us is Abell 1835. Traveling at the unimaginable speed of light, it would take 13.2 billion years to reach Abell 1835. What is the point of this scientific data recital? The point is that we can't even imagine the size and grandeur of the universe. What we can't even imagine, God created.

God is speaking. God is magnificent and incomprehensible.

But hasn't science proven that there is no God? Hasn't science proven that the universe began with a quantum singularity called the big bang and that life has evolved through the process of natural selection, all without the need of divine intervention?

This past month one of the great theoretical physicists of our time, Stephen Hawking, passed away. Professor Hawking was an atheist. In June of 2010 a television series aired called the "Genius of Britain". During the recording of this series Professor Hawking was asked whether he thought God existed. Hawking's reply, was: *"The question is: is the way the universe began chosen by God for reasons we can't understand, or was it determined by a law of science? I believe the second. If you like, you can call the laws of science 'God', but it wouldn't be a personal God that you could meet and ask questions."* It is interesting that, through science, this brilliant man could see the handiwork of God reflected in nature or as he states, "the laws of science", but he could not allow himself belief in a personal God.

The fact is, modern science arose in western Europe in the 16th and 17th where the Christian worldview thrived. Why? Because the scientists of the 17th Century believed the material world to be good because God had made it good and they believed that the universe is regular, orderly, and rational because God is personal, rational, and faithful. The 17th century scientists, Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, and Newton all believed that the behavior of the material world can be understood by humans because God has made us in his image and given us a mind with which to think.

Many scientists today believe that science has advanced and confirmed the conclusions of the Psalmist, that *"the heavens declare the glory of God."* Francis Collins, one of this country's leading geneticists, and longtime leader of the Human Genome Project, was a committed atheist while getting his Ph.D. in chemistry. However, while attending medical school he witnessed the true power of religious faith among his patients and became a Christian. In his book, *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief*, Collins writes that when you look from the perspective of a scientist at the universe, it looks as if it knew we were coming. Collins points out that there are fifteen physical constants whose values current theory is unable to predict. This list includes the speed of light, the strength of the weak and strong nuclear forces, various parameters of electromagnetism, and the force of gravity. The chance that all of these constants would take on the exact values necessary to result in a stable universe capable of sustaining complex life forms is beyond miniscule. If any one of those constants was off by even one part in a million, or in some cases, by one part in a million million, there would be no ordered universe, no galaxy, stars, planets, life or people. Many scientists indeed do see the work of God throughout the universe.

Paul, in his letter to the Romans, understands that the universe speaks of God to everyone, *"God is revealed from heaven ... and that 'what can be known about God is plain' and 'his eternal power and divine nature clearly perceived..... in the things that have been made... they are without excuse."* (Rom 1:18-20)

So back to our questions:

Is God speaking today? Yes, God is speaking to everyone, everywhere through His creation.

What is God saying? God is the creator and far greater and more powerful than we can imagine.

An immense, grand, and unfathomable universe proclaims an even greater creator. A creation of order and beauty reflect those same characteristics of order and beauty in God. We also see that God is faithful and reliable because his creation behaves with order and consistency. The sun rises the sun sets.

### God is speaking through His Word (19:7-11)

In verses 7 through 11 David transitions from how God speaks to us through nature to how God speaks to us through the Word. While we can learn much about God through His creation we can't know everything that we need to know. We do not see the more personal characteristics of God through nature. While we can glimpse the grandeur of the creator from creation we cannot understand God on a relational basis.

In Verses 7 through 11 David poetically praises God's law, the scripture, which is God's Word to us. In these verses David refers to *the law of the Lord, the testimony of the Lord, the precepts of the Lord, the commandment of the Lord, the fear of the Lord, and rules of the Lord*. By using these comprehensive terms, we understand that David is referencing the totality of scripture, the entire written Word. The Psalmist declares that God's laws "*revive us, make us wise, bring joy to the heart, give light to the eyes, warn us, and reward us.*" The rather abrupt change of topic from nature to the law draws our attention to the connections made between God the creator and God the Law giver. God is the creator of the world and is the provider of the Word. As creator, God has all authority and the right to define and command obedience to His Word. The creator's authority is behind the Word of God. However, as the Psalmist highlights, God provides the Law not to punish or to constrain us but to provide joy, enlightenment, and renewal.

It is interesting to note that the Psalmist shifts from singing praises to the God of creation to singing praises to the LORD of the Law in verses 7 through 11. The LORD is the translated name "Yahweh" which captures the essential being of God. The title "Yahweh" means that God is the eternally, self-existent Person who becomes all that His people need. The creator of the universe is the LORD who gives us the scripture.

Therefore, in verses 1-6, David uses "Elohim", the title that describes the power and strength of God. However, in verses 7-11 regarding the Law, the psalmist uses the title *Yahweh*, the name of God that stresses His covenant relationship to his people. David shifts to the term *Yahweh* in reference to the personal and knowable name of God. David is pointing out for us that God's Word allows us to know God personally.

God's Laws begin with commandments that define our relationship with God. "*You shall have no other gods before me, You shall not make for yourself any idols, and You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.*" These laws point to the demands of exclusivity of our one true God. This exclusive truth claim of one true God is difficult for many people to accept. Have you ever heard someone say, "There can't be just one true religion. Tim Keller states that when he asks people, "What is your biggest problem with Christianity? What troubles you the most

about its beliefs or how it is practiced?” the most frequent answers he hears can be summed up in one word: exclusivity. People claim that “All major religions are equally valid and basically teach the same thing.” “It is arrogant to insist your religion is right and to convert others to it.”

Well the fact is, exclusivity is exactly what we read in God’s Word and what we find in the universe, exclusivity is what we see in both the proclamation of the world and the Word.

God is speaking. God is saying that only God is God.

There are laws of nature that are absolute and unchangeable, just as God’s laws are absolute and unchangeable. There is great harmony between what God is saying to us through creation and through scripture. God is a God of order and reliability. The laws of the universe behave in one way and only one, consistently, and reliably “*day to day*” and “*night to night*.” Perhaps it may seem unreasonable, or unfair, for gravity to always pull objects toward the earth with the same degree of force. But it is still a fact. Can you imagine what life on earth would be like if the laws of nature, such as gravity or magnetism, were ever changing or were based on personal preference or emotions? The universe reflects the exclusivity of God, as does all of scripture. Just as we see with God’s natural order, there exists God’s moral order.

In in verses 7 and 8 the Psalmist claims that the laws of God provide us “*joy, revival, and are a cause for rejoicing*.” But do we really believe that the Law is cause for rejoicing? Don’t laws constrain us and limit our “freedoms?” Aren’t laws the restrictions that keep us from having fun?

According to verses 7 through 9, the “*Law provides revival and rejoicing because the law is perfect, sure, right, pure, and clean*.” Let’s think of those descriptions of the Law in today’s context. Can you think of anything else in our society today that is *perfect, sure, right, and pure*? Anything? Can we trust the words of our politicians? Trust our news? The government? The court system? TV commercials promising youth, health and weight loss? Yes, for just 3 easy payments of \$19.99 we can call now and remove our wrinkles, melt our fat, receive youth, riches, friends, and fame. But, call now while quantities last. Really, what can we rely on today? We know that, behind most every claim we hear, there is a self-serving interest twisting the truth.

Rejoice, purity today can be found in God’s Word. We are so blessed to have something in this life that is indeed perfect, sure, and pure. Scripture, the Law, the bible. We can rejoice. We have God’s word. Scripture is perfect, sure, right and pure. We can rejoice and be revived by truth, just need to turn off Facebook and the TV, and open the Bible.

The LORD, in His love for us, provided His Laws for knowing Him and for living in wisdom as well as warning. God’s Word gives us an understanding of how to know God, how to please God, and how to live according to His created order. It is astounding that the Law provides us an avenue to know God and to have a relationship with the mighty God of creation. We can indeed have a personal relationship with the God of creation. God’s Word also defines for us how to live with one another and within the world. God, as creator of all things, provided us the

field manual and guidebook for living the lives we were created to live. We can know the magnificent God of creation on a personal level through the understanding and application of God's Law. Out of love, God provided to us the gift of His word. God is saying that we are loved.

Verse 9 concludes with the words, "They are altogether righteous." God's scripture is the divine standard of righteousness for human beings. The Word and laws of God indeed provide us great freedom. We are not left on our own to define right and wrong. We do not need to endlessly search for our own personal truth and meaning. We are simply called to love and obey our holy God.

So back to our questions: Is God speaking today? Yes, through scripture we know that God is holy and righteous. What is God saying? God is holy, and His Word is perfect, pure and true. God is saying that we are loved.

### **Creation and Scripture expose our need for a savior (19:12-14)**

We have now spent a few minutes exploring verses 1 through 11 where God reveals himself to us through His world and God reveals Himself to us through his Word. Now as we come to verse 12, we see an abrupt shift in the tone of the Psalmist.

The Psalmist transitions from praising the greatness of God revealed in the world and the holiness of God revealed in the Law to a tone of reflection and repentance. David, in verse 12, asks, "Who can discern his errors" and requests to be "declared innocent". This response reminds us of Job's response to God (Job 40: 3-4) Job answered the Lord and said: "Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer you? I lay my hand on my mouth." (Job 42:6); "therefore, I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

Why this abrupt shift from praise to repentance and a plea for help? While God is revealed in the world and the Word, we are exposed. Nature reveals the glory of God and exposes our smallness and helplessness. The Law reveals the holiness of God and exposes our fallenness. As God is revealed, we are exposed.

Science hasn't disproved the existence of God. Science has shown us the infinite chasm that exists between us and God. Science has proven our smallness! Rather than becoming arrogant over our scientific discoveries, we should recognize that we have only better defined our dependency on God. Compared to the creator of the heavens, just who do we think we are?

All scientists affirm the first law of thermodynamics, that energy and mass can neither be created nor destroyed. Well, stated another way, God alone is the creator! I have never created anything. You have never created anything. No person, only God creates. Genesis 2:15 tells us that "God took the man and put him in the garden to work it and keep it." Humans can only take what God has created and work on it, transform it, and change it. God's creation exposes our weakness, helplessness, and our dependency upon God.



The Law, meanwhile, exposes our fallenness. According to our New City Catechism, the law of God requires of us; “Personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience; that we love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength; and love our neighbor as ourselves. What God forbids should never be done and what God commands should always be done.”

Think about that. Perfect, perpetual, obedience to God’s law. I am so helpless and broken. We are so fallen and incapable. David understands the situation. In verses 12 and 13 he pleads that he be “*declared innocent and to be found acceptable in God’s sight.*”

In addition to the humility and repentance we hear in David’s response we also can note a profound acknowledgement. David acknowledges that only through God’s pardon and preservation can we be blameless and innocent in our standing before God. We are not going to earn innocence or acceptability on our own. We are too helpless and fallen to be acceptable to God on our own! We are not going to impress the creator of the universe, nor can we meet his holy standards of righteousness. We have nothing to offer our majestic, Holy creator who is just and righteous. In verse 14 the Psalmist pleads “*Let the words of my mouth, And the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight.*” David is right in asking, even begging, for God’s help. We have no standing before God on our own, we need saving. We need a savior.

Psalm 19 presents a foreshadowing of the gospel. We can only rely on God Himself, Christ, the Word in the World, for acceptance and redemption. The Psalmist ends in verse 14 with “*O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.*” He uses the term rock in reference to strength or foundation. The Psalmist recognizes our need for divine protection and forgiveness. David sees from creation and the Law that strength and salvation can only come from God. In fact, Jesus Christ.

So, again, back to our questions:

Is God speaking today? Yes, through creation and through scripture we know that God is grand and holy. What is God saying? God is saying that we need a savior.

We started this morning considering the questions “is God speaking?” “what is God saying?” The only real question is: “are we listening?”

If I’m honest, I’m not listening. At least not enough. I don’t always find joy in God’s law and I’ve become too familiar with God’s creation to always see the glory and spectacular wonder of our creator. Does God reveal Himself through the world and through his word. Certainly yes. But the sad truth is that I don’t often live in the world that God created, I live in the world that I create for myself. I live in my own created world of busyness, worry, career climbing, anxiety, being late, yard work, house chores, television, internet, Facebook, homework and exhaustion. I far too seldom find the awaiting comfort in scripture. I don’t wake up and marvel at a new day’s sunrise. I am more prone to wake up and convince myself that I am already late and behind schedule. I overlook the vibrant colors of leaves and icicles dangling from tress, and only see the October leaves to rake and the January snow to shovel. This is not the world that God created for us to live in.

So how do we listen to God? Paul in Romans 1 helps us here with how to better listen to God. In Romans 1 Paul tells us that “*what can be known about God is plain to them.... So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.*” We must honor God as God and give thanks in all things! I need to dethrone myself from my busy little world and honor the God of this glorious creation. I must cease my futile thinking and thank God.

The *heavens declare the Glory of God, with no voice*, but we still must listen. If we are not careful, we can allow our futile thinking, our self-centered preoccupations, to blind and deafen us from hearing the silent voice of God’s handiwork revealed every day, and everywhere in creation. The *law of the Lord is sure, right, pure, clean, and true and provides revival and rejoicing*. But, as surely as we need to live in the world that God created, we must live in the Law that God has provided

## **Conclusion**

Let me close with a few concluding thoughts regarding Psalm 19.

First, God is indeed speaking to us today. God reveals Himself through His world and His Word. The world reveals God to be glorious and powerful beyond our imagination. The Word reveals God to be holy, righteous and just.

Second, God exposes us through His World and His Word. The revelation of God through His World and His Word exposes our dependency, fallenness, and ultimately our need for a savior. We need Christ.

And third, we must listen.

If we truly listen, we not only see the grandeur of God as creator, we see His love in choosing to create and sustain a world for us in which to live. God not only created all of the grand universe he created and sustains a world in which we can live and thrive. God is saying that he alone is the grand creator and God is saying that we are loved.

If we truly listen, we not only see the righteousness of God as law giver, we see His love. God provided His Word to us out of love. The Word sustains us, revives us, protects us, and provides great joy.

Because of His love and grace, we have been provided the savior we so desperately need, Jesus.

In Psalm 19 we have traveled from God’s glorious creation, through God’s Word, to our sinfulness, and then to our salvation. If we are listening, not only do we see God’s infinite grandeur and holiness, we also see ourselves as helpless, fallen and fallible. We see our desperate need of a Savior.

Psalm 19 verse 10 tells us that the Law is “*more desirable than much gold, and sweeter than the drippings of the honeycomb.*” Why is the Law so good? Because the Law, because all of scripture, points to the person and work of our Lord and Savior, Jesus. Jesus certainly believed that all of scripture pointed to Him. In Matthew 17 Christ said “*Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.*”

God is indeed speaking to us today. If we are listening, we are rejoicing and praising God.

We are rejoicing because all of creation points us to Christ.

We are rejoicing because all of scripture points us to Christ.

We are rejoicing because of God’s love and grace, we can be held righteous and receive salvation through the person and work of Christ. We have been saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

Listen, God is speaking. Amen!

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<sup>1</sup> Allen P. Ross, “[Psalms](#),” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 807–808.

<sup>2</sup> F. H. T. Rhodes, “Christianity in a Mechanistic Universe,” in D. M. MacKay, ed., *Christianity in a Mechanistic Universe and other essays* (Chicago: InterVarsity Press, 1965), 19.

<sup>3</sup> Collins, Francis S. *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief* (p. 74). Free Press. Kindle Edition.

<sup>4</sup> Mays, James L. *Psalms: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Kindle Locations 2157-2234). Westminster John Knox Press. Kindle Edition.

\*\* For a discussion of the kinds of questions addressed by science and the Christian Faith, see H. J. Van Till, *The Fourth Day* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 193-248; H. J. Van Till, R. E. Snow, J. H. Stek, and D. A. Young, *Portraits of Creation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 126-151.

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## COMMUNITY GROUPS

### Getting To Know Me Questions

1. “Can you hear me now” is a slogan associated with wireless phone service. The first iPhone was released in June of 2007. What do you think are some of the positive and negative changes that have emerged as a result of the iPhone? How do you find yourself impacted by these things?
2. What do you think causes people to question whether or not God is still speaking?
3. What is one insight you took from the sermon on Sunday?

### Diving Into The Word

4. Read Psalm 19:1-5. How does God speak to us through his creation? How often is God speaking? What do you need to do to tune your ear to what he is saying to you through what he has made?
5. Read Psalm 19:4-5 again and Romans 1:18-21. Based on what God is saying through the creation of each new day, what should be our attitude towards each day? What prevents you from receiving each day as a gift?
6. Read Psalm 19:6-9. God speaks to us more specifically through his Word. Spend some time observing what the text says about God’s Word. What statement stands out to you and why?
7. Psalm 19:10-11. What does David say about the value of God’s Word? Why is God’s Word of value? How do you treat it as something of value?
8. Read Psalm 19:12-14. What do we discover about ourselves when we hear God speak (See Job 42:1-6). How does this drive us to Jesus?

### Taking It Home

9. God is speaking. Are you listening? What is God saying to you through this study?