



Sing unto
the Lord a
new song

A STUDY ON SOME OF THE PSALMS

WEEK FIVE – PSALM 19

This is a beautiful Psalm, starting with those wonderful words about the glory of God in his creation of the universe. Given that we are hearing so much at present about our world and the damage that has, and is still being, done to it, I think this is very apt.

It would perhaps be good if, before the study, everyone could read the first two chapters of Genesis which tells us about the power of God in creation. There is much debate about this, but for those of us who believe that God is all powerful and that nothing is beyond his power, it is enough to believe that God created! As we have seen in previous studies, Scripture does not limit or doubt the power of God. We may impose limitations on him because we cannot comprehend the awesomeness of who he is.

Read verses 1-6

These verses paint a wonderful picture of God's glory in creation. If you have ever been in parts of our island, such as the north of Scotland, you will have seen the sky as we don't see it in our towns and cities. Without light pollution it is a stunning vista and utterly amazing.

- Have you ever had occasion to see what David is saying in verse 1?
- If we read what scientists have to say, there is an incredible order and mathematical perfection to our universe.

One Christian scientist, Dr. A. J. M. White says this:

"When you tell someone that you believe God created the universe, the usual reaction is one of mirth. Yet, it is scientific and rational to believe that 'In the beginning God created!'

This conclusion is reached because of the laws of thermodynamics, the first law of which implies that the total amount of matter and energy in the universe is a constant. From this law, we can conclude that the matter and the energy in the universe must have come from somewhere. The universe could not have created itself out of nothing and so it is therefore rational to believe in a Creator God – the one who created the matter and the energy of the universe in the first place."

Many scientists would agree with this viewpoint whilst others will go to great lengths to prove that there is no God. I do not have sufficient scientific knowledge to argue along these lines, but it is interesting to know that there are many Christian scientists who believe

in a creator God. I always remember listening to Sir Bernard Lovell who was the head of Jodrell Bank which houses the great telescope, who had this answer to his students who questioned his belief in creation. He had on his desk a model of the solar system and one day a student asked him if he had made it himself. Smiling, he said he had not, but had come down one morning and it was there on his desk, having made itself!

Whatever our views on this, we can surely understand David's awe and wonder at what he could see. His poetic description of day and night speaking without sound or words to make God known makes one stop and think.

Read verses 7-11

We tend to use the word 'perfect' somewhat lightly. If someone offers us a desert in a restaurant, we often say that it's perfect. Or we look at someone's house and say likewise. They may be extremely good but 'perfect' is unlikely. However, when David uses the word here, it is the true meaning of the word: **complete, without defect or blemish**. *"The instructions of the Lord are perfect, reviving the soul."*

"The law that God had given to Israel in written form was flawless. As such, it can revive the soul. It gives life to those who heed it and revival when the human spirit is downcast. David also affirms that "the testimony of the LORD is sure." This is a reference, in part, to the Ten Commandments."

- Do we often feel in need of revival for our soul? Why is that do you think?
- What do you think it means by: *"It gives life to those who heed it"*?
- What verse of Scripture in the New Testament, spoken by Peter, confirms this? (John 6:68-69)
- Why does our spirit sometimes get downcast?

"Instructing the Simple. Scripture is represented as the "testimony of the Lord" (Ps 19:7b), meaning that it contains God's outspoken witness to man. The Bible speaks frankly, openly, and directly. The Word is "sure," indicating that it is absolutely reliable, trustworthy, unwavering, and immovable."

- Is it difficult to accept the Scriptures?
- Do we believe that God's word is the sum of all the above?
- If this is what we believe, how should it affect the way we live?
- Are there particular scriptures on which we base our faith?
- Are there some things that are too difficult for us to accept?
- What do you think it means, in this context, to be 'simple'?
- Does following God's word and ways, bring joy to our lives?
- Do we believe that the laws of God are not only true but fair? Can we think of examples of this?
- Why do you think David uses the examples of gold and honey to explain the desirability of God's word?
- In what ways are the laws of God both a warning and a reward?

Read Matthew 22:34-39

How does Jesus sum up the laws of God to those who questioned him?

Read verses 12-14

Having made some wonderful declarations concerning the Glory of God in Creation, and the perfection of God's word, in these final verses David turns to prayer: for both cleansing and forgiveness but also for acceptance.

In verse 12 David implies that we don't know all the sins in our heart.

That lovely old chorus we often used to sing says:

Search me, O God, and know my heart today
Try me, O Savior, know my thoughts, I pray
See if there be some wicked way in me
Cleanse me from every sin, and set me free
Lord, take my life, and make it wholly Thine
Fill my poor heart with Thy great love divine
Take all my will, my passion, self, and pride
I now surrender, Lord, in me abide.

This beautifully sums up what David is saying. We should perhaps make it our own prayer.

The concluding verse is very well known, but one, I believe, that David knew was so necessary. We sometimes use it in our services.



PRAYER:

Father, thank you for your word and your love for us. May we live out the words from this Psalm.

Amen