

# Declaring Our Creator's Glory

Psalm 19  
August 18, 2019



Please read Psalm 19 before going any further in this transcript.

Psalm 19 breaks down nicely into two distinct parts. Verses 1-6 celebrate how God's glory is declared through His creation.<sup>1</sup> Verses 7-14 celebrate how God's glory is revealed through His written word. Theologians distinguish these two different forms of revelation as "general" and "special."<sup>2</sup> God's created universe being "general" revelation and Scripture being a form of "special" revelation. Two Sundays ago, we talked about Wisdom Psalms and we focused our time learning about delighting in God's Law. We looked at the imagery of being like a tree, that's planted with deep roots, that drink up God's Word. So, this morning, we are going to focus more on the first part of Psalm 19; on God's general revelation through His creation.

Only, we're going to take some creative license, by looking at it from a different angle. Psalm 19, and many other psalms, do a great job of declaring God's glory through the beauty and majesty of created things in nature, like the sun and the sky.<sup>3</sup> This morning, we're going to use the 1<sup>st</sup> half of Psalm 19 as a kind of springboard, to get us thinking about another part of God's creation, that declares His glory. In Psalm 19, David doesn't describe the sun as just a burning ball of fire that offers us a free suntan and makes the plants grow.<sup>4</sup> Rather, He shows how the sun displays God's glory. It's like a champion rejoicing to run his course. In other words, the sun finds pleasure in declaring its Creator's glory.

This is how it should be, for ALL of God's creation... ALL of it... including... you and me. And THAT is the different angle that we are going to consider: How can we rejoice to run our course? To do that thing we love to do because we were made to do it? When is the last time that you thought about how YOU, can personally, declare God's glory? Not how the beautiful sunset reveals God's glory or how a powerful thunderstorm displays His glorious power. But how YOU, as an individual, can Declare Our Creator's Glory. Some of us do this WITH our words. By preaching a sermon or teaching a lesson. Or by offering up songs of praise and worship. But there are some of us reading this transcript who don't enjoy singing or who aren't all that good at expressing things with our words. We may even be intrigued by Psalm 19's mention of the skies, which proclaim the work of God's hands, but WITHOUT words. Without any speech or any sound at all. Perhaps some of us would feel more suited, to declare God's glory in a way similar to the heavens above.

Here is a Bible Trivia question for you: When is the 1<sup>st</sup> time in the Bible, that someone is recorded as being "filled with the Holy Spirit?" (I'll give you a hint, it's in the OT. It's early on in the OT... It's in the book of Exodus.) It's in Exodus 31:3.<sup>5</sup> It's a guy named Bezalel.<sup>6</sup> Exodus 31:1-5 tells us, "Then the LORD said to Moses, 'See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge AND with all kinds of skills—to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of crafts.'"<sup>7</sup> Here we find a supernatural giftedness, from the Holy Spirit, that we don't find mentioned in the New Testament lists.

<sup>1</sup> Romans 1:19-20 talks about this.

<sup>2</sup> See footnote in *The NIV Zondervan Study Bible*, Grand Rapids, MI, 2015, p. 998.

<sup>3</sup> Other Creation Psalms would include Psalm 8; 29; 104; 145; and 148.

<sup>4</sup> Some cultures in ancient times got confused about the sun. They ended up worshipping the sun itself, rather than the God who created the sun. In Psalm 19, David gets it right. God pitched a tent for the sun. Therefore, we worship the Creator, not the creation. See Romans 1:25.

<sup>5</sup> *The NIV Zondervan Study Bible*, Grand Rapids, MI, 2015, p. 174.

<sup>6</sup> "BEHZ uh leh!" (Severance, W. M., & Eddinger, T. (1997). In *That's easy for you to say: your quick guide to pronouncing Bible names* (p. 201). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.)

<sup>7</sup> Exodus 31:6-11 goes on to explain, "Moreover, I have appointed Oholiab son of Ahisamak, of the tribe of Dan, to help him. Also I have given ability to all the skilled workers to make everything I have commanded you: the tent of meeting, the ark of the covenant law with the atonement cover on it, and all the other furnishings of the tent—the table and its articles, the pure gold lampstand and all its accessories, the altar of incense, the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, the basin with its stand—and also the woven garments, both the sacred garments for Aaron the priest and the garments for his sons when they serve as priests, and the anointing oil and fragrant incense for the Holy Place. They are to make them just as I commanded you."

And yet, this is no less a Spiritual Gift than the things we find listed in places like Romans 12:6-8, "...If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully." In Exodus 31, we learn that God gives some of us artistic gifts, with skills like cutting stones or working with wood or making crafts. If we have gifts like these, we should recognize that they come from God. And, just as we are taught to use our gift of leading to lead diligently or our gift of mercy to show mercy cheerfully, so also we should build/design/create with diligence and cheerfulness. After all, THESE gifts come from God as well! All of these gifts from the Holy Spirit are opportunities to Declare Our Creator's Glory. The gifts in Exodus 31 do this WITHOUT words, just like the skies and the sun in Psalm 19.

Exodus 35:25 goes on to say, "Every skilled woman spun with her hands and brought what she had spun—blue, purple or scarlet yarn or fine linen." Verses 34-35 go on to explain that Bezalel, and these women in verse 25, were not the only ones with skills, "And he has given both him and Oholiab<sup>8</sup> son of Ahisamak, of the tribe of Dan, the ability to teach others. He has filled them with skill to do all kinds of work as engravers, designers, embroiderers in blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen, and weavers—all of them skilled workers and designers."

Now, we should be clear here. Just because Bezalel and Oholiab were given this skill from God, doesn't mean that they didn't have to work at. It wasn't like a magical power where they could wave a wand and have the engraving just appear out of thin air. This took work and sweat and diligence. It gets a little confusing when we overthink the connection between a supernatural spiritual gift versus our own natural ability or our learned skills. All of these work in tandem. All of them are gifts from God. And each one takes time and energy to hone and develop.

Are you familiar with refrigerator art? Refrigerator Art is things like crayon and marker drawings that our kids/g-kids make us by the hundreds! Each one is a special creation that represents something very important to the artist who made it. Some "Refrigerator Art" displays real skill and ability. But, if we are brutally honest, a majority of it ends up in the circular file; it doesn't end up in an art museum.<sup>9</sup> Something that each Christ-follower needs to understand and embrace in this life, is that we all have our unique calling and gifting in this world. If it's not drawing with crayons and markers, then it's something else.

Refrigerator art illustrates 2 things. The 1<sup>st</sup> thing it illustrates is that...

**1 Only SOME of us are gifted in arts and crafts.** I don't mean to hurt anyone's feelings or burst anyone's bubble. But some of us, and I would include myself in this group, just aren't cut out to be painters, drawers, or sketch artists. Now, this doesn't mean that we aren't gifted in other ways!

The 2<sup>nd</sup> thing that Refrigerator art illustrates is that...

**2 All of us have an innate desire to create.**<sup>10</sup> To contribute in some way. To make something beautiful or useful or desirable with our lives. It's not just that we want our dad and mom to gush over our artwork. It's also that we intrinsically feel something within us, that wants to make or build or achieve something. I would argue that this internal desire to create comes, at least in part, from being made in the image of our Creator. In Genesis 1:26-27 we learn, "Then God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.' So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."<sup>11</sup> Genesis is clear that mankind is most certainly NOT divine. That is, we are NOT gods! And yet, Genesis is also clear that we are the ONLY part of God's creation, that is made in HIS likeness. We are uniquely designed to learn the knowledge of God's Truth, in a way that

<sup>8</sup> "oh HOH lih ab" (Severance, W. M., & Eddinger, T. (1997). In *That's easy for you to say: your quick guide to pronouncing Bible names* (p. 201). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.)

<sup>9</sup> See discussion in Tom Nelson's book, *Work Matters*, Crossway, Wheaton, IL, 2011, pp. 143-144.

<sup>10</sup> We can include all people in this, both believers and not yet believers.

<sup>11</sup> "No distinction should be made between 'image' and 'likeness,' [because they are synonyms]." *The NIV Study Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2011, pp. 11-12.

no other part of His creation can.<sup>12</sup> This likeness means that human beings are designed to reflect God's righteousness and holiness.<sup>13</sup> In other words, because we are made in God's image, we can know God and we resemble God.<sup>14</sup>

Back in May we talked about Psalm 8. It's another one of the Creation Psalms, similar to Psalm 19. Psalm 8 clarifies that mankind is a very special part of God's creation, His crescendo in fact!<sup>15</sup> Psalm 8:4 asks an important question: "what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?" Let's be clear, our Creator is the only One who is worthy of worship. All of His creation, INCLUDING mankind, were created for His glory alone.<sup>16</sup> And yet, He does pay special attention to mankind. Psalm 8 goes on to highlight mankind's key role in ruling over the rest of his creation. It's not an absolute rule, but a participation in God's rule. To put it another way, we are stewards under God's sovereignty. We have been given a charge. We are accountable to take care of that with which God has entrusted us.

And here is what all of this leads us to consider today: If we are like God in so many ways and if we have been put in charge to take care of his creation, then wouldn't it make sense for us to be creative, LIKE Him? To have some kind of desire to create or build or beautify, just like our Creator? As we can see from the beauty and complexity of the world around us, God is a Creator who LOVES to create! Tony Campolo once told a story about God creating daises. Have you seen the beautiful fields of Goldenrods this summer? They are actually a plant from the daisy family.<sup>17</sup>

Each of us may imagine God's creative process a little differently. Here is one possibility that Tony suggests: A long time ago, God was out creating this amazing planet, getting it ready for mankind. And God was doing this with unlimited resources and unlimited power.<sup>18</sup> So, He can literally make anything! At one point, God decides to make His 1<sup>st</sup> daisy. This is the 1<sup>st</sup> daisy ever created on planet earth. As Tony Campolo imagines the story, God says to Himself, "I love daises! Daises are amazing!" So He calls the angels over and says, "hey you guys! Would you look at this daisy!" Then He makes another daisy and another one and another one. "Wow! Amazing! I love these things!" Then, He goes on to make millions and millions more!



God is a Creator who LOVES to create! In fact, He LOVED creating us. He not only loved creating us, but He created us on purpose, with a plan. Ephesians 2:10 says, "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."<sup>19</sup> In the original Greek, this word "handiwork," "sometimes has the connotation of a 'work of art.'"<sup>20</sup> In other words, we are God's "work of art," and it shouldn't surprise us, if God has prepared "works of art" for us to do, with our lives. So, let's bring some of these ideas together. If God has specifically gifted each of us with particular skills and abilities, doesn't it make sense that He would prepare things for us to do, with those particular skills in mind? Just like He did with Bezalel and Oholiab? I would suggest to you this morning, that "doing good works" would include making, building, and creating beautiful and useful things. That, as God's handiwork, we can Declare Our Creator's Glory with the work of our own hands. WITHOUT words.

<sup>12</sup> Consider Proverbs 14:31; Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Colossians 3:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:22-23; and 1 John 3:2.

<sup>13</sup> See Ephesians 4:24. The moon reflecting the light of the sun can be a good word picture for this. We have no intrinsic light of our own, but we reflect the light (righteousness and holiness) and take on the properties of the sun (and the Son) as we gaze upon it (Him).

<sup>14</sup> This godly potential is why every human life is worthy of honor and respect. Genesis 9:5-6 warns that there will be an accounting for the taking of any human life. Why? "...for in the image of God has God made mankind." There is a particular dignity to human life because of how we are made, because of the likeness in which we are fashioned. This is why James 3:9-10 warns us not to curse each other, "With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, **who have been made in God's likeness**. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be."

<sup>15</sup> See Psalm 8:5-6.

<sup>16</sup> See Isaiah 43:7 and Ephesians 1:11-14.

<sup>17</sup> Google "goldenrod."

<sup>18</sup> One could argue that He also had unlimited time, since He Himself is timeless and He has authority over time itself. We might also consider that, with God, a day can be like a thousand years. 2 Peter 3:8.

<sup>19</sup> See Ephesians 1:4-5.

<sup>20</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2011, p. 1987.

Some creative gifts are easier to display and appreciate than others. Let's broaden our thinking even further. Beyond the list of spiritual gifts in the NT. Beyond the artistic gifts that we discovered in Exodus 31. There are many other gifts and skills that God has given mankind. There are some with skills in mathematics, who see beauty in numbers. All neatly lined up in rows. All zeroed out to the last penny. There are some with skills in science, who find beauty under a microscope, or out in the forest, or under the water. They see God's glory in the physiology of the human body in all of its intricacy, trying to help it and heal it and to push it to its maximum performance. There are some with skills in operating heavy equipment or driving a school bus or semitruck. Beautifully arranging a pile of dirt into a nice even grade gently sloping so that the water runs off just right. Or, skillfully/safely delivering children to/from school each day. Some find beauty in words. In spelling and editing, or in tracing down word origins. There are skills in language translation and communication techniques. Obviously, we could go on and on. I think we all get the point. This is all a kind of "artwork." And it's important that we understand, that it can ALL be done in a way that Declares Our Creator's Glory. Certainly not every day creates a masterpiece, but every day does present each one of us with an opportunity, to glorify God by stewarding the gifts and abilities that He has given us.<sup>21</sup>

Let me close by suggesting 3 tangible ways to apply this sermon:

**First of all, say thank you to the people who clean and decorate and maintain our church building and grounds.** These are God-honoring tasks that declare God's glory. In fact, this is true for those who take care of their own homes, their neighborhood, or who work on community properties.

**Second of all, go somewhere where you can view an art display.** Let it inspire you to give God glory, to admire His handiwork displayed through another person's gifting. Take note of how each different item is a work of art in its own way. Some things are quite beautiful. Some are intricately detailed. Some are particularly practical and useful. Still others have aspects and dimensions that may not be as easily defined, and yet that's what is so cool about them!

**Lastly, get out your paint brush this week.** Or dust off your workbench. Or find your calculator. Or get out your landscaping tools. Or whatever else it might be that brings out the gifting that God has given you. Whatever skill and ability that God has blessed you with, take pleasure in it this week, by Declaring Our Creator's Glory! Like a champion rejoicing to run his/her course!

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<sup>21</sup> Some of us find beauty in numbers. Some, in fresh tilled earth. Some in the vast night sky. Some of us find beauty out in the untamed wilderness of Alaska. Some in the dessert or out on the Great Lakes or in one of our immense oceans. The trees are gifted with an ability to display God's strength. The stars display His heavenly handiwork and incredible "HUGENESS." How can you declare God's glory with your skills and talents?