

June 25, 2021

Psalm 19

- ¹ The heavens are telling the glory of God;
and the firmament proclaims God's handiwork.
² Day to day pours forth speech,
and night to night declares knowledge.
³ There is no speech, nor are there words;
their voice is not heard;
⁴ yet their voice goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.
- ⁷ The law of the LORD is perfect,
reviving the soul;
the decrees of the LORD are sure,
making wise the simple;
⁸ the precepts of the LORD are right,
rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the LORD is clear,
enlightening the eyes;
⁹ the fear of the LORD is pure,
enduring for ever;
the ordinances of the LORD are true
and righteous altogether.
¹⁰ More to be desired are they than gold,
even much fine gold;
sweeter also than honey,
and drippings of the honeycomb.
¹¹ Moreover by them is your servant warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.

The opening verses of this psalm reflect the earliest biblical cosmology also found in the first book of the bible: Genesis. The earth was believed to be a flat disk-shaped entity floating on water, with heavens above and an underworld below (the biblical word is: '*sheol*', appearing in many psalms). The 'firmament' includes the earth and skies. The 'heavens' include the sun, moon and stars.

The vision of this psalm is of God constantly communicating to us in multiple ways. God speaks to us in language we can hear, read and understand (namely through scripture which teaches the 'law of the Lord...' v.7ff which also becomes truth for us personally when it is confirmed within our hearts v.8). But God is also speaking to us in language which is not audible or readable in words, but language we are also called to learn to

hear, read and understand (namely, the heavens and the earth). Imagine if we truly listened to what the heavens and the earth were telling us. What would they say? Would the beauty we take in with all our senses proclaim the glory of their creator? Would the suffering of the earth and the heavens at our hands proclaim judgement upon us all, calling us to repentance and change in our lifestyle choices, dependencies on fossil fuels and reliance on earth-destroying technology and production?

The vision of this psalm is of us humans being suffused with knowing the presence of God and hearing God speak to us at all times and through multiple means, whether through nature or through scripture, and speaking to us in one voice: Love the Lord your God with all you are, all you do and all you have... and your neighbour as yourself. The quality of love for your neighbour reflects the purity of your love for God.

And who is our neighbour? Is it just the person who lives next door? Or is it also the earth and all its creatures? We know the answer, don't we? But hearing it proclaimed to us continually every time we not only take in the beauty of creation but listen to what it is telling us... this is a challenge no? Will we hear God speaking through creation and offer our hearts in love to God and creation? Or will we block God because we prefer not to disrupt the earth-destroying lifestyle choices we have been taught by society to internalize and crave?

As a society, we are being confronted increasingly by a do-or-die scenario. Either we begin even now to change specific day to day choices, habits and practices that despoil our planet earth or the decision will be made for us and future generations will condemn us (as we are condemning our forbears who conceived of residential schools and the wider public that went along with little resistance). Either we demand our governments prioritize massive requirements of us all to save our planet earth, which will include big changes and sacrifices in how we currently do things, or our grandchildren and great grandchildren will remember us as selfishly clinging to ways of being that were not loving toward them. God is speaking to us, lovingly challenging us to rise up to our call to better love our neighbour the heavens and the earth, and in so doing, better love our future generations.

PRAYER: We are being challenged, O God... We are being challenged to expand and deepen our loving... Loving others enriches us, but it also demands something from us. The rewards and the fulfillment we receive in loving others grows out of the commitment, service and sometimes sacrifice we make for the well-being and flourishing of others... Teach us to listen to the creation around us of which we are a part. Teach us to include creation who is our neighbour in the love you call us to live

out. Teach us how to trust that the inconvenience, change and mindfulness in our lifestyle practices and choices for the sake of our planet, and our social voices and votes for the sake of future generations, will bring untold new blessings into our lives... You can do all things in us and around us, O God. You can make possible what seems exceedingly impossible. You can "move mountains" so to speak. May it be so in our lives and in our world. May it be so in our hearts beginning anew this day... Amen.