

Psalm 19 - A Journey from the Outside In

The Book of Psalms

A collection of prayers collected from the time of David (c.1000BC) to 400BC. That is 600 years.

They were compiled in their current form around 400BC after the exile.

It is divided into 5 books to reflect the 5 books of Moses.

The first 2 books are considered pre-exilic, before the exile of the nation in 600BC under the Babylonians.

The last 3 are considered post-exilic.

They are considered one collection.

There are 150 psalms.

The postscripts and side scripts are actually a part of the psalm and not to be missed.

Prescripts often provide a detail about who where when and what the psalm is for.

Sidescripts tend to be notations that had poetic or musical meaning we have lost.

The longest psalm is Psalm 119 - which is 176 verses about the beauty and significance of God's law.

The shortest psalm is Psalm 117 - two verses about God's Love.

The centre of the Bible, if you count the words from the front and back to the middle

is Psalm 118:9 - which is a verse about trusting God, rather than human powers.

It is a book of both personal and community prayer.

The Jewish people have used it for all kinds of occasions throughout their history.

Jesus, on the cross quotes from the Psalms.

In the monastic tradition, the Psalms are sung daily on the monthly cycle called the psalter.

Most monks have memorized the entire psalter.

I personally mark all my physical Bibles with the psalter.

30 days through 150 psalms that I can read and pray daily.

We pray the psalms at birth and death, in all times of life.

It is the prayer book of the people of God and we would do well to know it.

Learn to love the Psalms if you want to know your own heart.

Psalm 19

This is a wonderful meditative Psalm that has three movements.

It is attributed in the prescript to David.

It can be read as a spiritual journey and I want to lead you in a meditation

that will allow you to journey with this psalm.

So let us begin.

Movement 1: The Book of Nature

¹The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

²Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they reveal knowledge.

³They have no speech, they use no words;
no sound is heard from them.

⁴Yet their voice goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.

In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun.

⁵It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,
like a champion rejoicing to run his course.

⁶It rises at one end of the heavens
and makes its circuit to the other;
nothing is deprived of its warmth.

Sharing:

What in this portion of Scripture stands out to you?

What insights has the Spirit granted?

Reflection: Share a time when God revealed himself to you through the Book of Nature.

Movement 2: The Book of Scripture

⁷The law of the LORD is perfect,
refreshing the soul.

The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy,
making wise the simple.

⁸The precepts of the LORD are right,
giving joy to the heart.

The commands of the LORD are radiant,
giving light to the eyes.

⁹The fear of the LORD is pure,
enduring forever.

The decrees of the LORD are firm,
and all of them are righteous.

¹⁰They are more precious than gold,
than much pure gold;

they are sweeter than honey,
than honey from the honeycomb.

¹¹By them your servant is warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.

Sharing:

What in this portion of Scripture stands out to you?

What insights has the Spirit granted?

Reflection:

How much do you value God's word?

What gets in the way of your being familiar with his word?

What can you do individually and what can we do corporately to more deeply appreciate his word?

Movement 3: The Book of the Heart

¹²But who can discern their own errors?
Forgive my hidden faults.

¹³Keep your servant also from willful sins;
may they not rule over me.

Then I will be blameless,
innocent of great transgression.

¹⁴May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart
be pleasing in your sight,
LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

Sharing:

What in this portion of Scripture stands out to you?

What insights has the Spirit granted?

This really is a confessional Psalm.

Even with the Book of Nature.

Even with Scripture,

They exist to open the book of our hearts to God.

For us to be honest about our sin.

It is not nature of even Scripture that saves us from ourselves.

It is God who knows us better than ourselves.

It ends with a prayer of the orientation of the heart.

The desire to live to please only one.

Not the self, not parents, not others, not society.

God alone.

Our Rock & Our Redeemer.