

SAVORING SCRIPTURE

Turn to Psalm 19.. Tonight, we're beginning three messages on God's word... and here's why: because the word of God is central to all Christian spirituality. It's central, it's crucial for the spiritual life of a believer.

How you relate to this book is a very big part of how you think about God and relate to God. This word from God is a vital part of your spiritual life, if you are a believer in Jesus Christ.

How you are relating to God, in a significant way, is shown or seen by how you're relating to His word. And so we want to cherish and savor, and feast on this book!

In fact, that's my main point – that we are to **Savor God's word as uniquely valuable for God's people** And we want to do that for three reasons...

1. Savor the **CONTENT** of God's Word

Psalm 19 is a celebration of the two primary ways God has revealed himself to us – **READ vs 1-6**

Here, God's revelation through creation is celebrated – as David writes, *"the heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork..."*

That's called general revelation - everyone has that revelation of God available to them – and it's wonderful. This revelation of God is amazing, awe-inspiring if you see the pictures from the Hubble Telescope, or look up in the night sky, or study the human eye...

God's revelation of Himself in creation is utterly amazing, but not enough. We need some further revelation if we are to know and relate personally to this awesome God – what's called special revelation....

And that's what David celebrates next in vs. 7 – 11, in 6 parallel statements. **READ vs. 7-11....**

Notice how these parallel statements describe the Scriptures...

*Verse 7: "the **LAW** of the Lord", and "the **TESTIMONY** of the Lord".*

*Verse 8: "the **PRECEPTS** of the Lord", and "the **COMMANDMENT** of the Lord".*

*Verse 9: "the **FEAR** of the Lord", and "the **RULES** of the Lord".*

The point in piling up these terms to say that all of this book is in view. It's this piling on of synonyms, to say – I'm talking about all of this multifaceted revelation... And it has a unique content.

It's all about God – did you notice that? Look at it again: *"the **LAW** of the Lord", and "the **TESTIMONY** of the Lord". Verse 8: "the **PRECEPTS** of the Lord", and "the **COMMANDMENT** of the Lord".*

God is the content of this entire book. We do not discover God – he must reveal himself. And He has revealed Himself here – and revealed particular things about himself...

Notice it's "LORD" in caps – and that's the translators way of letting us know that this is the covenant name for God – *Yahweh*, we think it may have been pronounced.

It's the name for God as the One who redeemed the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, and entered into a covenant with them – a commitment from God to be their God...

That's the God they meet in this book – He is the content, and the same is true for us, when we come to this Word. We meet the God who fulfilled that covenant by sending his Son to give his life as a ransom for many, redeeming us to be his very own – if we will but believe!

In this book, we meet God our awesome Creator and Redeemer – that's it's unique content! God, and what he has done for us!

And the fruit of seeing this uniquely valuable content is a deep appreciation for this book – that here, and only here, I can come to know God and meet with God....

John Wesley once wrote of God's word, "I want to know one thing, the way to heaven – how to land on that happy shore. God himself has condescended to teach the way: for this very end he came from heaven. He has written it down in a book. O give me that book! At any price, give me the Book of God!"

Friends, is that your attitude toward God's word? Do you savor with a deep appreciation for this book – because this book tells you what Jesus has done to land you on that happy shore?

Let's have that deep appreciation that says: give me that book! At any price, give me the book of God – because....

Here, and only here, I can come to know God. Here and only here can I regularly hear God's voice! Here and only here, I can learn how to land on that happy shore!

That's the first reason to **Savor God's word as uniquely valuable for God's people** – savor it because of its content... God himself!

2. Savor the CHARACTER of God's word

If someone asked you – how would you describe God's word – what is it like? What would you say?

Here we have God's view of His word. Here God tells us what His word is like – what does he say?

Look back at those parallel statements about God's word, beginning in verse 7:

vs. 7: The law of the Lord is PERFECT,

the testimony of the Lord is SURE

vs. 8: the precepts of the Lord are RIGHT,

the commandment of the Lord are PURE

vs. 9: the fear of the Lord is CLEAN,

and the rules of the Lord are TRUE, and RIGHTEOUS ALTOGETHER

It's perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, true, and righteous altogether. Those terms describe what this word is like... it's perfect, sure, right, pure, true – and altogether righteous...

In other words, God says that His Word doesn't need improvement. It's not flawed in some way. It is without flaw, fully trustworthy and completely authoritative.

That's means, as God's people, we can bank fully and completely on this book. You will never believe this book too much. Did you know that? You cannot believe this book too much....

God will never say to you – “you took my word too seriously; I never meant for it to be taken so seriously”. He will never say that to you because He says that this book is perfect, true, and righteous altogether

You see – God's word uniquely valuable in it's perfect CHARACTER. And the fruit of seeing that is that we deeply trust it. A **deep trust** in this book – that's how we savor it, with a deep trust.

Remember, you can never believe this book too much. God will never, ever fault you for taking his word too seriously. That's not possible. So will you savor it by deeply trusting it?

Will we trust it when we go through hard things, but he says that he works all together for good for those who love him?

Will we trust it, when things don't go our way, but he says that he is sovereign and ruling over all?

Will we trust it, when we're tempted to sin – we're tempted to covet something or love this present world - but he says don't, because this world is passing away?

Will we really believe that, and refuse to doubt it – because God has said it in this revelation of Himself? God calls us to deeply trust this book because of it's character...

That's the second reason for why we should **savor God's word as uniquely valuable for God's people**. We do that because of it's content, and it's character - but there's one more reason to really savor this perfect Word from God

3. Savor the CONSEQUENCE of God's Word

Here we are provided with 6 consequences, or effects, of the word of God upon our lives... Vs. 7, “reviving the soul”, “making wise the simple”. Vs. 8, “rejoicing the heart”, and “enlightening the eyes”.

Let me just elaborate on a few of these very briefly.... First, the consequence of a revived soul. Verse 7: "The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul."

God's word alone “revives the soul.” This book is the key to continued strength, continued vitality in your soul. Are you being regularly revived in your soul?

Just as you can't maintain strong, vibrant physical life if you neglect nourishment for your body. So you can't maintain a vibrant spiritual life in God if you neglect the nourishment for your soul from God's word

A second consequence is wisdom. Vs 7 – “*the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple...*” Wisdom comes from living out your life in the fear of the Lord

It's what godliness looks like practically. This books brings the reality of God into your life, so that you live *wisely*– in light of that reality

A third consequence is joy... Vs. 8, "the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart.... I don't know of anyone who says "I have too much joy in my life..." So we need God's word

WATCHING TV, hours on the internet, or hours on the video game does not bring real and lasting joy. It's not that watching any television is evil in and of itself – but it doesn't deliver – never has rejoiced my heart!

In light of these great benefits, see how David views Scripture in vs. 10-11 (**READ vs. 10-11**)

He says they are more to be desired than gold – even much fine gold

We might say: they are more desirable, more valuable than a new home, the nicest new car, the best ipod, or even billions of dollars.

Nothing else is as valuable as the word of God! Then he shifts from a monetary to a food analogy, "Sweeter also than honey, and drippings of the honeycomb..." The Scriptures are sweet to the soul. They are sweeter and more satisfying than anything else your soul can feast upon

Then the parallelism shifts down to vs. 11, "by them is your servant warned", "in keeping them there is great reward". If you're regularly vegging out, instead of regularly feeding your soul, then you're cheating yourself out of a far greater reward.

and the fruit of this truth is a **deep hunger for this word** – a desire to feed upon it and be changed by it!

I tell my kids about getting food for their souls – have given them "food for my soul" plans for their quiet times.... Parents – let's motivate our kids that way ("did you get a chance to feed your hungry soul today?")

For all of us, let us **Savor God's word as uniquely valuable for God's people**

- in content, character and consequence!
- so let us savor it... but how?
- what does this look like practically to savor God's word?

Have a plan and have a pattern. A plan and a pattern for your savoring....

Have a plan for intentional intake of God's word If we're going to regularly savor the word of God, we need to plan for it's regular intake in our lives.

I'm sure none of us will leave our physical sustenance to happenstance this week – so let us not do so for our spiritual sustenance

Talk to your parents to help you come up with a plan – have a strategy. It could be that you're going to read and reread certain books of the Bible so that you can soak in their message.

Don't leave it to happenstance – have a plan. Then, have a pattern for your savoring. Let me suggest the pattern of Psalm 1...

READ Ps 1.1-2

Notice, he *delights* in the law of the Lord and on his law he *meditates* (thinks on) day and night

Fight for Delight:

When sitting down to savor Scripture, begin by briefly praying something of the following...

- Pray for God's help by praying Ps. 119.36, "*Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish gain!*"
- Pray for the Spirit's work of illumination by praying Ps. 119.18, "*Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.*"
- Pray for a revived soul, wisdom, and a heart that rejoices (Ps. 19.4-7)

We need the Spirit's help for savoring God's word – ask Him for help to truly delight in this word. Savoring begins with fighting for delight!

Meditate Day and Night:

In savoring Scripture, don't simply read "so that it only passes through our minds, just as water runs through a pipe..." (George Mueller), but find texts in which to meditate – or think about.

that's biblical meditation – it's filling your mind... it's thinking on God and His Word

It can be done by asking questions like...

- What do I learn about the gospel here?
- What do I learn about God here?
- What do I learn about myself in relation to God here?

Interact with God in light of your meditation - ask: what do I need to confess, repent of, believe, do, rejoice in, praise God for, etc., in light of this?

Lastly, make it your goal to take one specific thought, truth, verse, etc., from your time of savoring to meditate on and pray from throughout your day

Be like the blessed man of Psalm 1 who "takes a text and carries it with him all day long..." (Spurgeon)

Savor God's word as uniquely valuable for god's people

Let's pray...