

The Sufficient Scripture

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Let's turn to Psalm 19. I actually got up this morning and grabbed some sermon notes to figure out what I wanted to talk about because we haven't really had laid out the whole week because we've never done a whole week like this before. I want to come back to Psalm 19, and when I talked about "The Theological Foundation For Preaching," one of those was our view of God and the idea of our view of God was that He reveals Himself. I talked about revelation, the doctrine of revelation, and the idea is that God cannot be found by our own searching, God must come to us. God must reveal Himself. But one of the greatest passages in the Bible, about the Bible about God revealing Himself in the Bible, is Psalm 19; Psalm 19 an amazing psalm. C.S. Lewis said of Psalm 19, "It is the greatest poem in the Psalter and one of the greatest lyrics in the world." Now, this is C.S. Lewis talking about the greatest lyrics in the world, Psalm 19?

Psalm 19 is one of my favorite psalms. It's a psalm of David. Its theme is the self-revelation of God. Say, you want to preach on Sunday morning about God reveals Himself, you even want to preach on the doctrine of revelation, Psalm 19. Someone was asking me about how to preach through the Bible and things, so I want to make sure that tomorrow—Wednesday, Thursday and Friday—we get very nuts and bolts practical, and we talk about different ways you can preach through the Bible—topical series, how to teach a topic in the chapter—and we're going to look at some of my topical series, and I'm going to tell you what books I use to preach them.

Say you want to preach a sermon on the self-revelation of God. You turn to Psalm 19:7-11 (you're going to get a copy of my notes after this session again), and you just preach it. You preach Psalm 19:7-11, and it's just a psalm about God's self-revelation. So, Psalm 19 is God's self-revelation, and David puts this self-revelation of God in two categories: the general revelation of God in creation, verses 1-6; and secondly, the special revelation of God in Scripture.

Now, let's back up to verse 1, and let's read verses 1-6. This is the first category of God's general revelation. "The heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. 2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. 3 There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. 4 Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, 5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. 6 His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof." Now, that's God's general revelation in creation.

In verses 7-11 is what we want to look at is God's special revelation in Scripture. So, the idea here is that God's Scripture is sufficient. This section is going to cover a lot of doctrine of Scripture, but the overarching theme is that it's sufficient. It's sufficient. What can motivate you to preach the Bible is that you have an assurance of its sufficiency. Let's read verses 7-11, "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise

the simple. 8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. 11 Moreover by them”—that is, the Scriptures, the law of the LORD, the statutes of the LORD—“is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.”

I believe the Bible is God's greatest revelation to man. In Psalm 19:7-11 we have perhaps the greatest summation of the Scriptures in all the Bible. This is what the Bible says about the Bible—what is the Bible; what does the Bible say about the Bible. It speaks of Scripture's inspiration, Scripture's inerrancy, Scripture's authority, Scripture's clarity, and Scripture's sufficiency. I believe, and if I'm not mistaken, we're going to have a copy of James Boice's *Inerrancy* for you. If you don't have the little book that we properly got permission to publish, it's called *Does Inerrancy Matter?* by James Montgomery Boice. If you have it, then fine; if not, we want to make sure you get a copy of that. You should read any and everything Boice has ever done. So, you'll want to read John Stott, Robert G. Gromacki, James Boice, and about a hundred other guys. Please read James Montgomery Boice. At least give him a good shot, he'll be a blessing. He's written a book that we published, we got permission to print again, it's called *Does Inerrancy Matter?*

In this text, David makes six statements about Scripture, that's Psalm 19:7-9, and then on to verse 11. He makes six statements about Scripture, and each statement contains three characteristics. You maybe heard me preach on this before or teach on this before, but I wanted to kind of go over it. Maybe we can ask questions about it in the Q&A session, but it's a masterful text, and it's amazing the way it's packaged. There are six statements about Scripture, each statement contains three characteristics. Let me show them to you quickly. First of all, what it is called—what are the Scriptures called, its titles. Look at the text with me. Verse 7, it's called, “The law of the LORD . . . the testimony of the LORD;” then look at verse 8, it's called, “The statutes of the LORD . . . the commandment of the LORD;” and in verse 9, it's called, “The fear of the LORD . . . the judgments of the LORD.”

Secondly, we see what its nature is—what it is. Look at verse 7 again, it's “. . . perfect . . . sure;” verse 8, it's “. . . right . . . pure;” verse 9, it's “. . . clean . . . true.” Thirdly, we see what it will do—its power. So, its title is what it's called; its nature is what it is; its power, what it will do. I love this. Go back to verse 7, “. . . converting the soul . . . making wise the simple; . . . rejoices the heart . . . enlightening the eyes,” verse 8; verse 9, “. . . enduring for ever . . . and righteous altogether.” You just take those statements about the Scripture. If this doesn't get you stoked and excited to preach the Word, I don't know what will. You ought to meditate and master this psalm. It'll get you really excited to preach the Word.

The six phrases, notice, have the phrase, “. . . of the LORD.” Did you notice that? “. . . of the LORD.” We already talked about the Scripture's inspiration, 2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:20-21. Thomas Watson, the Puritan preacher said, “The devil is always trying to blow out the light of Scripture.” Let's look at David's six statements about Scripture's sufficiency and ability, verses

7-9. First of all note, verse 7, “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul.” The title, “The law of the LORD,” so it’s God’s laws. We have the Ten Commandments, the Decalogue. It’s not God’s suggestions, it’s not God’s recommendations; it’s God’s manual for life. It’s God’s authority, it speaks with authority, God’s laws.

Secondly, its nature, notice verse 7, “. . . is perfect,” that means complete or comprehensive. It means all-sided. It means lacking nothing. It means it’s sufficient. Years ago there was an attack against the Bible and its sufficiency saying it wasn’t sufficient to help people who had deep psychological problems, so we have to jump start their counseling by using psychology, and then when they get themselves fixed up, then we can take them to Scripture, but Scripture alone is not sufficient. Scripture alone is not sufficient, so we had a lot of preaching of psychology rather than Scripture. God’s Word is sufficient. It’s comprehensive. I like when it says, verse 7, “. . . is perfect,” it means that it’s complete, it’s comprehensive, it’s sufficient. It’ll meet all the needs. Remember Paul said it’s good for “. . . doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

Notice also its power is in verse 7, “. . . converting the soul.” So, it’s God’s laws. It’s perfect or comprehensive, sufficient, and it converts the soul, “. . . converting the soul,” or restoring the soul. I love Psalm 23 when David said, “He restoreth my soul.” In the context here he’s talking about that He brings total spiritual renewal and restoration, and we know that the Spirit of God using the Word of God regenerates the soul. If you want to see people saved, preach the Word—the Spirit of God, through the Word of God, people coming to believe in Christ and be born again and regenerated. It speaks of a total transformation of the inner person, brings them back or restores the soul. The Holy Spirit uses Scripture to convict and convince of sin. Charles Spurgeon has written a book called, *The Soul Winner*, another book, write it down, *The Soul Winner* by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. In that book he’s got a chapter called, “Sermons Likely to Win Souls.” One of the points on “Sermons Likely to Win Souls” is a sermon that’s full of Christ—full of Christ, Scriptures about Christ, preaching Christ. It’s the most likely sermon to win a soul, and that’s a good point.

The Holy Spirit uses Scripture, Romans 10:17, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” We know 1 Peter 1:23. It says, “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.” So, it’s the starting point. It’s the starting point at what brings us to salvation. It’s the seed, the Word of God and the Spirit of God coming together producing life in an unregenerate heart, they become a child of God.

Secondly, notice, verse 7, the testimonies of the Lord, “. . . the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.” Here the title is, “Testimony of the Lord.” It’s God’s own testimony or witness. When you testify, you’re speaking out of your own life. So, God is testifying of who He is. He’s witnessing to Himself. This is the clear spot where it’s saying God’s self-revelation about His person, His nature, His character, and His will. If you want to get to know God, you discover Him, you learn about Him, you draw near to Him in the Scriptures. By the way, that’s

the goal of Bible study, and that's the goal of preaching, encountering God. Not just getting information about God, but coming to know God and experience Him.

Then, notice Scripture's nature, verse 7, “. . . is sure.” I love that. This is reliable or trustworthy. It's inerrant. It's incapable of being wrong. The Bible is God's Word, it cannot lie, so the Bible cannot lie. What Scripture says, God says through human agents, and it is without error.

Scripture's power, verse 7, “. . . making wise the simple.” The “simple” in Hebrew is described as a person with a simple mind. We would use the term “simpleton.” The root idea of that kind of person is one with an open mind. Isn't it interesting that people talk about not being closed-minded, “Jesus isn't the only way. How do you Christians think you're so right and that you know how to get to God and get to heaven,” and “You need to be more open-minded.” Well, their minds are so open, nothing stays in it. It goes in and comes right out. So, once the truth comes in your mind, shut the door, right? Keep that truth lodged in your mind. The root idea of the simpleton is that he's open-minded. It's a person that is indiscriminate and undiscerning. The Bible will make a person wise about life, wise about marriage, wise about parenting.

I love Psalm 1, “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night:”—not meditates, meditates day and night, right? Verse 3, “And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water . . . his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away . . . the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment.” So, we want to be wise men, grounded and growing and bearing fruit in the things of God.

Notice, thirdly, we move on, verse 8, we have now “The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart,” so these three statements, “The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart,” so using these categories, the title, “Statutes of the Lord.” It means precepts or God's principles. These are God's principles, God's precepts, for life; and the nature, they are right or they teach right paths or they show right paths. Psalm 119, which is another entire psalm, the longest chapter in the Bible all about the Word of God, Psalm 119:105, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” We love that verse.

Then, notice its power. What will God's Word do, verse 8? It will “. . . rejoicing the heart.” It's the path to joy. You want to have joy? Get into God's Word. You want your church to be full of joy? Preach God's Word. Jeremiah 15:16, “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.” In Colossians 3:16, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,” and it speaks of being filled with joy, singing songs “. . . and hymns and spiritual songs.” In Ephesians 5:19, “. . . singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” Again, Psalm 119:111, “Thy testimonies . . . are the rejoicing of my heart.” So, when you get God's Word in the hearts of God's people, there is joy in the house of the Lord.

Fourthly, notice, verse 8, “. . . the commandment of the LORD is pure,”—that means clean or clear—“enlightening the eyes.” So, the title is, “The Commandment of the Lord,” not

suggestions but commandments we must obey. Ephesians 5:25, “Husbands, love your wives,” this is not a suggestion: if she’s lovable, love your wife. No, it’s a command. It’s an imperative. Notice its nature, it’s pure. God’s Word is pure. His commandments are pure. It means clear. This speaks of the perspicuity of the Scripture or the clarity of Scripture. It’s clear. We can understand it.

I talk to Roman Catholics that say, “Well, Scripture is not clear. It’s hard to interpret. You need the priest or the Pope.” No, it’s not true. We have a clear Word from God. It’s clear. In 2 Timothy 2:15, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” We can cut it straight.

Notice its power, verse 8, “ . . . enlightening the eyes.” I love this. It helps you see and understand in this darkened world. It helps you to think biblically. It helps you to have a biblical world view. It enlightens the eyes. The Bible gives you an eternal perspective. Again, Psalm 119:130, “The entrance of thy words giveth light.” R.A. Torrey said, “The man who studies the Bible and neglects all other books will be wiser than the man who studies all of the books and neglects the Bible.” I love that. We need to read the Word of God to have enlightened eyes.

Fifthly, notice verse 9, “The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever.” Its title, “Fear of the Lord.” The Bible teaches us to fear the Lord and to worship Him. Proverbs 9:10, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.” If you want a church that has a fear for God...what do we want in our congregants? We want them to fear the Lord, right? We want them to be God-fearing people. Immerse them in the Word of God. They come to know and understand God, and they live and walk in the fear of the Lord. Notice its nature, verse 9, “ . . . is clean.” That means it has no spot or any blemish. It’s holy.

Notice its power, verse 9, “ . . . enduring for ever.” It’s unchanging. It’s immutable. It’s eternal. Jesus said in Matthew 24:35, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.” The Bible teaches that truth is absolute, unchanging, and that it is grounded in the character of God who is Himself immutable or unchanging. The Bible’s relevancy doesn’t change, but it’s relevant to all times and all cultures.

Sixth, look at verse 9, we have, “ . . . the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.” Its title, “Judgments of the Lord.” God’s Word is the final authority. Again, this is something as a preacher/teacher of the Word you must be totally convinced of—the Bible is God’s Word. God said it, I believe it, that settles it. That’s the final court of appeal. We don’t argue with God. We don’t debate God. We don’t change what God said, we accept the authority of Scripture and that it is the only immutable, eternal, inerrant Word of God. We don’t debate it, we accept it. It is the authority.

It brings about comprehensive righteousness in its power, notice verse 9. Its nature, verse 9, it’s true. Its power, “ . . . righteous altogether.” It brings about comprehensive righteousness. God’s Word has power to transform our lives.

Write down 1 Thessalonians 2:13. Paul said, "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when you received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God." We want those that we preach to to know they're getting God's Word and that they respond in obedience to the Word of God.

How should we respond to the Word? This is the closing, verses 10-11, "More to be desired are they than gold, yea, then much fine gold." It should be delighted in, " . . . sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb." And, it should be put into practice. We should be doers of the Word, verse 11, "Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward." Three things: First, desire God's Word, verse 10; delight in God's Word, verse 10; thirdly, be a doer of God's Word, verse 11. The Word warns us and rewards us. It rewards us and it warns us, " . . . by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward." Remember James said, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." So, the Spirit of God, uses the Word of God, to transform the man of God, into the image of Jesus Christ the Son of God.

Let me say something, if you are immersing yourself in the Scriptures and studying the Word of God in order to preach it expositionally, you will be the first beneficiary of your discipline. Your life will be transformed. You know, with the passing of John MacArthur this past week, and I want to say that he is a beautiful example of an expository preacher. I may not agree with every little fine point of his theology, but I love and respect him for his commitment to the authority, the sufficiency, the clarity of Scripture, and his commitment to expounding the Word of God. What an example he has been. Let's take the baton and run with that, be committed to preaching God's Word. And, the beneficiary of that was his transformed life.

If you immerse yourself in the Word now, you hear about preachers/pastors falling away and falling into sin and having moral problems. It's kind of hard for me to believe that they were spending hours humbly, prayerfully, letting the Spirit of God speak to them through the Word of God in order to deliver God's Word to God's people. How could you do that and go awry? I don't understand. So, you let God...and that's why Haddon Robinson says it first speaks to the preacher's heart, then it speaks to the people's heart; first transforms your life, then it transforms others' lives. And then you can preach with authority, too, because you've experienced it in your own life. So, all the benefits and blessings of the sufficient Word that God will do in your life.

David prayed in verse 14, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer." God, use Your Word to change me, and make me the man You want me to be. It's not just about you preaching the Word, it's about you being changed by the Word and transformed by the Word that you can impart God's Word to others. Let's pray.