

Taste and Treasure

The Song, Part 6

Psalm 19:10-14

Oswald Chambers wrote, “If the average believer truly understood what would happen if he used the Bible more often, he would use it more often.”

Why? Because all the other books in the world were given for our information – this Bible was given for our transformation.

So if you see a Bible that is falling apart, it usually belongs to someone who is not.”¹

The stunning truth is, God happens to be speaking through His word.

We’ve been discovering how in Psalm 19.

David writes, first, that God speaks daily in His big book – Creation – which is general revelation.

And, in our last study, we began to explore the nature of God’s little book – the Bible – which is special revelation.

So far, in *Psalm chapter 19*, we’ve discovered what **the Bible is**:

- The law of the Lord is theologically and ethically sound;
- The precepts of the Lord are always good advice;
- The commandment of the Lord is uncontaminated;
- The fear of the Lord is without corruption;
- And the rules of the Lord are the authority on right and wrong.

Then, we also discovered not only what the Bible is, but what **the Bible does**:

- It brings you back;
- It makes you wise
- It gives you joy;
- It helps you see;

- It lasts forever;
- And it never leads you astray.

This is what the Bible is; this is what the Bible does; and now, next, David goes on to tell us what the Bible becomes;

1. First, it becomes your greatest treasure.

Notice *verse 10. More to be desired are they than gold – more desired are they* – they, what?

He’s referring to the previous verses – the law, the testimony, the precepts, the commandments the rules – more desired are these things – what the Bible is and what the Bible does, *than much fine gold*.

Not just *gold*.

Not just *fine gold* – refined to perfection.

But *much fine gold*.

So take a trip to Fort Knox, located at the intersection of Gold Vault Road and Bullion Blvd. – seriously – and go into that building which is nothing more than a huge vault and go into the inner recesses where you are surrounded by 5,000 tons of gold bullion – nearly 5% of all the gold ever refined in all of human history – and take your Bible in there.

Now lay your Bible in the middle of all that gold and then – you get to make a choice – the Bible, or all that gold bullion.

David says, “Let me help you decide . . . choose the Bible . . . it’s a greater treasure than all that gold.”

Why? Well for starters, go back to what the Bible is and what the Bible does.

Gold can’t:

- bring you back;
- make you wise
- give you joy;
- help you see;
- promise to never lead you astray.

And keep in mind that one day, gold will be so abundant it will cover the streets – it will be used for asphalt . . . are you going to live for something that in the Father’s golden city will be nothing more than common curbing?

You want money?

- Rockefeller said, “I have made many millions, but they have brought me no happiness.”
- Vanderbilt said, “The care of 200 million dollars is enough to kill anyone.”
- Henry Ford said, “I was happier when I was a mechanic.”

J.C. Penney – a multi-millionaire – was suffering in a mental hospital, racked with fear and anxiety, having lost so much in the stock market crash of 1929.

While languishing in the Battle Creek Sanitarium for the Mentally Insane he heard a hymn being sung in the hospital’s chapel. It was the hymn, “God Will Take Care of You.”

Upon hearing that hymn sung – and recalling the gospel he’d heard in his younger days, he gave his heart and life to Jesus Christ – he would tell people that he was born again in a Sanitarium.

He was soon dismissed from the institution with a passion to share his wealth and he immediately began to give to charitable causes – many of whom were connected with the gospel of Christ.

In 1940, while visiting a store in Des Moines, Iowa, J.C. Penney provided personal training for a young man named Sam Walton on how to wrap packages with a minimal amount of ribbon.

J.C. Penney continued to go to his office regularly until he died in 1971.

As one author wrote – he discovered that money can buy:

- A bed, but not sleep;
- Food, but not an appetite;
- A house, but not a home;
- Medicine but not health;
- Amusements but not happiness;
- And a passport to everywhere but heaven.ⁱⁱ

Choose the Bible . . . make it your greatest treasure.

2. He goes on to write, the Bible has also become my sweetest delight

Verse 10 again; More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold, sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.

Makes your mouth water doesn’t it?

We have a couple in our church that keeps bees and bottles honey – we have a jar of it sitting on our refrigerator at any given time.

One 16 ounce jar of honey exists only because thousands of bees gathered nectar from around 4 million flowers. By the time the life of each bee ends – which is less than 2 months – they will have made their own personal contribution to the hive, each bee flying 500 miles in less than 50 days.

Other bees worked in the hive, carrying the deposits of nectar into tiny cells where they processed it through their own digestive systems some 200 times, all the while fanning their wings to reduce its water content and raise its sugar level – literally fanning nectar into honey. And when it ripened to perfection, other bee specialists capped off each wax cell, creating a honey comb ready to burst with sweet, pure, enriching, raw honey.ⁱⁱⁱ

And here’s the wonderful analogy David may have had in mind:

You really had nothing to do with creating honey . . . bees do that, according to the creative plan of God.

Your only chore is to tend it, collect it and eat it.

One author commenting on this text wrote: Think of it; honey has been provided through the work of someone else; a bee, virtually laying it on our platter.

Furthermore, honey is a natural food that doesn’t need a lengthy time of digestion before it can benefit you – it is immediate energy.

So here’s the gold of scripture. You didn’t create it . . . you didn’t invent it . . . your only chore is to dig into it, and use it wisely.

And here is the honey of scripture. You didn’t make it . . . you didn’t invent it . . . your only effort is to collect it and eat it and immediately gain energy and joy and delight from it.^{iv}

This is what the Bible should become:

Our greatest treasure; our sweetest delight;

3. The Bible should become, thirdly, our wisest monitor

Verse 11. Moreover, by them is your servant warned . . .

Charles Spurgeon provoked my thinking when he wrote, “the Bible isn’t just your mentor, it’s your monitor.”^v

That’s David’s idea – you could render it, by the monitor of the word is your servant warned.

Frankly, the reason a lot of people don’t like the Bible is because it gets in their way . . . I mean, nobody likes a monitor.

You remember the hall monitor in school? He wasn’t your friend.

I can remember on one occasion, I attended a small Bible college that had a long list of rules. One of those rules was absolutely no physical contact . . . no holding hands . . . you couldn’t even sit close to each other.

I know, it sounds like I went to school in a monastery.

We had campus monitors. Guys that walked around, especially at night – you know, monitoring everybody . . . and if you broke a rule you got a demerit slip in your mailbox the next day with a description of what you did wrong.

My girlfriend – now my wife – was the most careful rule follower . . . it was terrible . . . because I was a rule . . . refiner.

At any rate, much to our total chagrin, one morning we got a demerit slip and a monitor claimed he saw me kissing her goodnight in front of her dormitory – right by her front door.

That was ludicrous.

Yes, I had walked her back to her dorm the night before; yes, we had stood at her door saying goodnight. But I didn’t kiss her there . . . Ok, I kissed her back by the tree. No, I didn’t.

Listen . . . if you can believe the mystery of God’s will, a couple of months ago, around 75 pastors gathered here for our quarterly fellowship of pastors, sponsored by Shepherds Seminary; and a man came up to me and said, “Do you remember me?”

I said, “I don’t know . . .” He said, “We went to the same Bible College and I was the monitor who gave you demerits that night for kissing Marsha at her front door . . . I need to admit that I didn’t really see you do it . . . I had just wanted to warn you.”

He laughed and said, “Will you forgive me.” I said, “Are you kidding?” Ok, yes.

Thirty-eight years later, here comes that monitor . . . and he remembered that night.

Listen, David writes, “This monitor – this Book – will watch you and warn you all the days of your life – **by them** – that is, by the law and testimony and precepts and commandments and rules of the Lord, **you are monitored – you are warned.**

David effectively says, “The Bible comes along and says, “Excuse me . . .

- But should you be thinking that?”
- Should you be doing that?
- Should you be planning that . . . saying that?

“Let me warn you . . .”

No wonder John Bunyan, the author of Pilgrim’s Progress, once wrote, “This Book will either keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this Book.”^{vi}

But notice, you are not only warned, but rewarded.

v. 11. In keeping them there is great reward.

Would you notice that David doesn’t say that if you keep God’s word you’ll get a reward – he says, “Your reward is in keeping them.”

In other words, the Christian’s reward is the satisfaction of being an obedient Christian.

Augustine said that sin is its own punishment and virtue its own reward.

I can remember my father saying a thousand times over, growing up in our missionary home – he would say it this way, “If I found out after I died that Christianity wasn’t true after all, I would still want to live the life of a Christian.”

It’s the best way to live.

So this is what the Bible is. This is what the Bible does. And this is what the Bible becomes. Now what David does in the final stanza, is turn this song into a short list of prayer requests:

Lord, I need your help. Why?

Because of four reasons:

1. First, David writes, because I am blind to my own faults:

Notice verse 12. Who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from hidden faults.

Spurgeon wrote in the Treasury of David on this text; The hairs of a man’s head can be counted; the stars can be reckoned, but no arithmetic can number our sins. Before we can recount a thousand sins we

shall commit ten thousand more – there is no possibility [to know them all or count them all.]^{vii}

Here's the point – there's no way you could ever begin to remember all your sins to confess them – you need a Redeemer who sees them all and pays the penalty for them all!

I am blind to my own faults.

2. Secondly, I am capable of the worst sins:

Verse 13. Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me! Then I shall be blameless and innocent of great transgression.

David isn't just praying for forgiveness from blindness; but from brazenness.

These are premeditated sins. These are sins you know you're going to commit and you commit them in utter rebellion against God.

It's one thing to sin and not know it, it's another thing to sin and want it.

These sins can become the dominating influence in your life – which is why David asks God to keep him from sin's domination.

Paul would write, "Don't be under the influence of wine . . . be filled – literally, be dominated by the influence of the Spirit of God."

David prays: I am blind to my own faults; I am capable of the worst sins;

3. Thirdly, I am constantly needing evaluation

Verse 14. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight.

Lord, evaluate my words . . . and my wishes.

May they meet your good pleasure.

How easy it is to have the wrong wishes . . . and to use the wrong words.

Sin is so easy to grab and hold – and so difficult to release.

Gary Richmond was a former pastoral staff member who served at First EV Free Church in Fullerton, California. At one time he used to teach 500 single adults in his Sunday school class for young professionals – and he used to work for the Los Angeles Zoo as well.

He wrote about the day when the curators of the reptile section of the zoo needed to perform surgery on a king cobra. They came and asked him to help them. They said, "Look, Gary, you need to come

with the four of us. We're going to go into the large cage of this reptile."

To just fill you in, beloved; the King Cobra will grow to right around 10-13 feet long. It is extremely dangerous and when it bites, it typically hangs on. When it rears up, it can stand up to 4 feet high. It doesn't hiss, like other snakes, its voice is a much lower register, sounding almost like a human voice when it growls.

Okay, back to my story.

Gary wrote that all he could think about was this huge king cobra standing, with its cape spread wide just before it strikes.

The other, experienced staff informed Gary as they walked toward the reptile house, "Now what you'll do is help the surgeon. We're going to capture it and we want you to assist the surgeon as he performs a rather quick operation.

Gary said, "So they walked into the cobra's large, elaborately designed cage which mimicked a wild Amazon forest.

And, just as these men explained when they arrived, it wasn't long before the king cobra slithered around a corner, and recognized their presence.

He immediately reared up, spread his cape and then looked back and forth at each of the men, some 10 feet away, as if deciding which one to eat. As instructed, Gary was standing a bit behind the others and, sure enough, the snake lunged at one of the men.

He anticipating it, leapt out of the way and soon the men had the snake pinned to the ground. As Gary was helping the surgeon, the doctor suddenly said, "Gary, get some paper towels, and I want you to wad them up, and I want you to stick them in the snake's mouth."

Gary said, "All the while this king cobra is growling, and lurching, its mouth wide open, long needle sharp fangs exposed.

Richmond added the footnote that a king cobra has enough venom to kill an elephant.

So Gary wads up the paper towels and he sticks them in snake's mouth, and the snake bit down and begins to grind.

Gary said that in moments, the venom literally dripped from those paper towels to the ground.

The surgeon said to Gary, while he worked, "You know, the reason we do this is because the danger isn't really in catching the snake. The tough part is letting it go (laughter) and getting outta here without

getting bit. So we milk this thing so that if he does get a hold of one of us, we won't suffer and die."

They finished the task and were able to release the snake and get away without being bit.

The truth is, we can easily reach out and grasp sin . . . but it's so much more difficult trying to let it go.

"Lord," David prays, "save me from the dominating effects of sin; here's my mouth – look at what it pronounces; here's my heart – look at what it prepares . . . keep them both clean.

So David effectively prays:

- **I am blind to my own faults:**
- **I am capable of the worst sins:**
- **I am constantly in need of evaluation;**

Finally,

4. **I am totally dependent upon my Lord.**

I love the way this Psalm ends.

Lord, you are my rock and my redeemer.

my Rock – that is, my stability

my Redeemer – my atoning sacrifice

So Lord, thank You for revealing Yourself in the big book of creation – what amazing glory You have.

Lord, thank You for revealing Yourself in Your little book of scripture – what a wonderful Savior You are.

This manuscript is from a sermon preached on 2/9/2014 by Stephen Davey.

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i Quotes from Robert J. Morgan, Nelson's Complete Book of Stories, Illustrations and Quotes (Thomas Nelson, 2000), p. 62

ii Adapted from Morgan, p. 575

iii Eric Miller, *Shock and Awe*, Books and Culture (September/October 2006), p. 22; www.preachingtoday.com/illustrations/2007/january/3010107.html

iv Adapted from Charles R. Swindoll, Living Beyond the Daily Grind: Book I (Word Publishing, 1988), p. 63

v Charles Haddon Spurgeon, The Treasury of David: Volume 1 (Zondervan, 1977), p. 274

vi James Montgomery Boice, Psalms: Volume 1 (Baker Books, 1994), p. 174

vii Spurgeon, p. 289