

# Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

# Psalm 139

## TITLE

We have started to explore the whole subject of the glory of God. I stated in the first sermon that in my experience, when we understand what God is like, it changes us. It changes our outlook on life, it changes our relationships. When we perceive God's glory, their universe gets bigger, their understanding of God gets bigger, and we get smaller, and so do all the problems and pressures of life.

Experiencing God's glory has a profound effect on God's people. And that isn't reserved for people who achieve a spiritual level, it's for all who know and love Jesus. I put this slide up at the time.

## WE CAN EXPERIENCE THE GLORY OF GOD

We can experience the glory of God. It isn't a secret, in fact it's written large. It's written in creation, it's written in the Bible, and it's recorded in God's actions in Christ. We are going to look at these three today and the next two occasions I preach on a Sunday morning.

### PSALM 19:1-4

This morning we are going to look at how we can experience God's glory in creation. In the very first week I read this Psalm. Here are the first few verses.

### GOD'S GLORY IN CREATION

There is nothing secret about God's glory. It's written large in creation – literally. It is evident to every living human being. We experience it with all our senses. It is the most basic way in which God reveals Himself to human beings.

Of course we live in a world where science says that all this came about by chance. Our existence is determined by a combination of factors that caused life to evolve in the way that it has. I suppose I could give you a sermon, maybe a series on Genesis and try to equate our scientific knowledge with what's there.

I used to be part of an organisation that did just that. I know some scientists discuss this a lot and it's a popular subject around Christian Unions in universities. It's a stimulator of minds but one where there are few definitive answers and not very productive unless you have a very keen interest in science.

However, what is very productive is to deal with creation the way the Bible does. You don't need scientific knowledge to understand creation. The creator God isn't a scientist or engineer, but He is an artist – he creates beauty and it is in creation that we see His beauty revealed. Take a look at these pictures.

### CREATION PICTURES

Right from the depths of the universe, to the stark deserts of Mars, the intricacy of living things – we see the beauty of a Creator. God is an artist and we have in our beings the ability to understand beauty. We are the only living thing on this planet that can actually do that. And we see the glory of God everywhere.

### WE DON'T NEED ANYTHING OTHER THAN OUR SENSES ....

If we want to understand the glory of God than it's all around us, if we will only stop and look. Of course, there are the scientists that do all those wonderful TV programmes about nature and the cosmos who say "where is God?"

Yet the argument of scripture is that the glory of God is as about as plain as the nose on our faces. The human race needs nothing more than the testimony of creation to condemn the evil at people inflict on one another. Here's what Paul says in his letter to the Romans:

*Romans 1:18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, 19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.*

There is no excuse not to understand the glory of God. It's all around us. If people can't see it, then they are blind to it. People are blind to it. I'll come back to that.

We are blessed where we live – privileged actually. We have it all. We have the countryside, we have the coast and we have the whole cosmos stretched out before us on clear Suffolk nights. Our artist God desires that we sit and enjoy His beauty. Do you want want to know more of the glory of God? Then take time to look at the glory of God that is in plain sight. Take time to sit and enjoy othe beauty of creation and say "my God created this"!

## SEEING THE GLORY OF GOD IS ABOUT LOOKING INWARDS RATHER THAN OUTWARDS

However, what the psalm we read this morning actually says takes us to a different level. The psalmist leads us to look in rather than look in. The scientific way of looking at creation is seeing the universe as being a machine – something that operates according to laws and mathematical principles. Even Christians who look at the universe scientifically – creationists - use the same model. God has built something that works, functions.

But the Psalmist gives us a view of creation that is far bigger than science:

### VERSES

- 1 *You have searched me, LORD, and you know me.*
- 2 *You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.*
- 3 *You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.*
- 4 *Before a word is on my tongue, you, LORD, know it completely.*

### VERSES

- 7 *Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?*
- 8 *If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.*

- 13 *For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.*
- 14 *I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.*

## SEEING THE GLORY...(2)

God hasn't created a universe, a machine that He has left to run while He goes off and does something else. He is a God who is intimately involved with His creation. The psalmist is

just simply amazed because God knows every bit of his life. He is conscious that God is right there with him all the time. He realises that because he is created, God is intimately close to him.

Do you want to know about the glory of God? Then ask Him to help you to realise just how close He is to you. He is intimately bound up with His creation – which means that when we talk about a personal God, we mean it. He's VERY personal.

If you feel God is a long way from you at the moment then I would say; don't just look out at creation to see the glory of God afresh, but at the same time look inside and realise that you are fearfully and wonderfully made by a god who's intimately close to you.

#### APPRECIATING GOD'S GLORY IN CREATION TO THE FULLEST IS STILL A SPRITUAL EXPERIENCE

My final point for this morning is that even though it's possible to see the glory of God by looking outward to the created universe and inwards into ourselves as created beings, understanding and realising the greatness of the glory, is still something the Spirit of God needs to open our eyes to. In the first sermon in this series, we saw how it is the Holy Spirit within each true believer who opens our spiritual eyes to all the things of God. In fact my early evening sermons on Ephesians 1 went into this a little more deeply if you want to take a look back at them.

So do we want to experience God's glory? It's simple because God has spread His glory before us in creation and we are nowhere better placed to experience it. And we can understand that glory by looking at ourselves as much as looking out. The final and most important ingredient is to ask that the Spirit will open up our minds, that we will clearly see the beauty of God the artist – the One who creates beauty that we may be amazed at Him, that we will stand in awe of Him.

Now the only problem with doing that is that as we see more of the glory of God, we start to get smaller. We see our failure and our deficiency. The psalmist was aware of that. Right at the end he prays this prayer:

- 23 *Search me, God, and know my heart;  
test me and know my anxious thoughts.*
- 24 *See if there is any offensive way in me,  
and lead me in the way everlasting.*

The God who intimately knows us is the God whose end is to lead us in His ways. Let's give Him glory!

#### TITLE PAGE

*Preached by Mark Reid  
MRBC Felixstowe 10/2/13  
(c) Mark Reid 2013*