

Lord, God Almighty, heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot, not one tittle shall pass away from your law until all is fulfilled. The entirety of your law is true, O God. So this evening we pray, O Lord, that you would open our eyes so that we might see wonderful things in your word, that you would enlighten the eyes of our heart and pour out upon us a spirit of wisdom and of revelation and the true knowledge of God, that we might be filled with the knowledge of Your will, to please You in all respects and to increase in the knowledge of God. And we pray this evening for any here, O God, who do not yet know You, that tonight would be the night when You open not just their eyes of their soul, O God, but you remove the death that clings to all of our souls by nature. We're dead souls in dying bodies. And can these dead bones live, O Lord? You alone know. But when you speak, it is done. And when you command, it holds fast. So come this evening, Lord Jesus, and cause the living and the dead to hear your voice in this place, that we might all rejoice in the hope of the glory of God in Christ. We offer these prayers in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, if you would, please turn with me in your copy of the Word of God to the book of Psalms for one last time this summer, at least as a major text. And the 19th Psalm. I'm gonna read this evening from the New American Standard version. I know many of you have the ESV, you'll find it very similar. This is the Word of God. For the choir director, Psalm of David, the heavens are telling of the glory of God, and their expanse is declaring the work of his hands. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words. Their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their utterances to the end of the world. In them he has placed a tent for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber. It rejoices as a strong man to run his course. Its rising is from one end of the heavens and its circuit to the other end of them. There's nothing hidden from its heat. The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever. The judgments of the Lord are true. They are righteous altogether. They're more desirable than gold, yes, and much fine gold. Sweeter also than honey in the drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them your servant is warned in keeping them. There is great reward. Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults. Also keep back your servant from presumptuous sins. Let them not rule over me, then I will be blameless, and I shall be acquitted of great transgression. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord,

my rock and my redeemer. Amen. The grass withers and the flower falls off, but the word of God endures forever. I wonder, have you ever looked

up at the night sky and wondered, are we alone in the universe for centuries? And throughout really all civilizations, human beings have looked up and been fascinated by the heavens and the stars and the cosmos. Authors, scientists have all pondered the existence of other life forms and planets far removed from us. I remember as a boy watching the intrepid journey of Captain James T. Kirk and Spock on the Enterprise, space, the final frontier. These are the voyages of the Starship Enterprise, its five-year mission to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations, to boldly go where no man has gone before. And in our modern age, this interest has gone from the sublime to the ridiculous. On the sublime side of things, we see tech billionaires and governments investing billions of dollars in telescopes and satellites and space stations, all probing the space above us, listening, perhaps if there might be a voice out there, another civilization reaching out to us, and yet, We're greeted, scientists tell us, by the eternal silence of space. Recently, we've heard about unmanned aerial projectiles the size of a football flying at Mach 5 and suddenly stopping on a dime, doing a right-hand turn, or going straight down into the ocean and continuing their speedy trek through the waters. Interesting footballs. The good news is, if they're aliens, they're very, very small. The bad news is, if they're capable of that kind of aerodynamical hieroglyphics, and their weaponry is as good as they're flying, we're probably in a great deal of trouble. But if aliens do show up on the earth, as I said before, I know three things about them. I know whence they came, they came from God's universe, how they began at God's command with his creation, and why they have come somehow for his glory and our good. But can you imagine the scientific excitement if suddenly one day we heard a voice from another world? A sign that there was intelligent life somewhere else in the cosmos. A message from an alien society reaching out to us, reaching down to us. Yet this evening we're gathered in this place gripped by the conviction as Christians that that is precisely what has happened. Not that there is, for certainty, scientific life in this, or intelligent life in this universe beyond this planet, but that there's scientific, intelligent life beyond this universe in the heavens. And God has spoken to us. He has revealed Himself to us. And the question that greets us this evening in our psalm is, do you know him? Are you listening? The psalm falls neatly into three points. First of all, God has shown himself in nature. Are you watching? God has spoken in scripture. Are you listening? And then thirdly, practically, God has spoken, then how should you respond? And we'll see that at the end of the sermon. First of all then, God has shown Himself in nature. Are you watching? It's a glorious psalm. Let's

work through it verse by verse. The heavens are telling of the glory of God. And the verb telling in the Hebrew is a PL verb. It's an interesting, if you're a Hebrew scholar. But the PL verb in Hebrew is a special form of a verb that intensifies its meaning. You can often translate a PL verb by adding the word really. So if your children vexed you, And you think they might do it again. You might say, son, do that again, and I'm really going to kill you. That'd be a PL verb. What's the PL verb here? The heavens are really telling of the glory of God. They're doing it well. And the verb itself is an ING verb in the English and in the Hebrew participle, which says not just that they're doing it well, but they're doing it all of the time. Their telling of the glory of God, the Hebrew concept of glory is the idea of weightiness. The holly sang, he ain't heavy, he's my brother. That's not the point here at all. The psalmist is saying God is heavy, or he is heavy and he is my God. His weightiness, his magnificence. The force of His personality, His being, bears down upon us. It's interesting in God is to set up the universe that the greater the weight of an object, the greater its gravitational pull pulling you towards it. You're exerting a gravitational pull on the earth this evening with your mass. But our mass isn't that great in comparison to the earth. The earth is exerting a much greater gravitational pull upon us. And the psalmist is saying that, look at the heavens, and they are telling, they are proclaiming the weightiness, the magnificence, the godness of God. And their expanse is declaring the work of his hands, the intricacy, of his creative genius. The fine detail work, like a woman fiddling with needlepoint, crochet, cross-stitching. It's intricate, detailed work, like an electrical engineer fiddling with the chips and circuitry on a silicon board. That detail work and the expanse, the sheer vastness of the scale of the cosmos, and yet the intricacy of all the parts, the atomic structure, and the laws holding it together are telling of the work of his hands. Going back to our aliens for a moment, the irony is the scientists are looking through the heavens, beyond the heavens, for scientific, intelligent life. Excuse me. In reality, we should look at them. That's where the voice is found. That's where the message is to be heard, at the heavens, as God reveals himself through them. Verse 2, day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. Pours forth is a gushing Like when you crash into one of those fire hydrants, this is not a personal autobiographical illustration, but when you crash into one of those fire hydrants and the water gushes out, that's the idea, it's gushing at you. I once knew a plumber who complained, I get sick and tired of people calling me and saying, there's a flood, there's a flood. And he said, no, he said, there's

a difference between a flood and a leak, and it's important to be clear which one you're dealing with. How do I tell? The leak is when you find the water, The flood is when the water finds you. And this gushing forth of divine revelation comes at you from all sides, day to day, pours forth speech. It's continual. It's unavoidable. And at nighttime, too, it reveals knowledge. It's 24-7, a continuous signal. I was a young boy, the television set would cut out at about 11.30 and if you fell asleep in the living room, not a common occurrence for me, my mum would send me to bed, but if you fell asleep in the living room, you'd wake up with a beep as the television signal had stopped. It'd be a boring kind of grey screen with a globe on it and a child toy sitting against the globe. Interesting, but strange. But there was no TV at night time. The signal didn't go 24-7 like today. Back then, you only had 12 hours of television not worth watching, and now you've got 24 hours of television not worth watching. This signal is coming at you at all times, in all places. There is no speech, nor are there words. Their voice is not heard. Now, there is a Double entendre here, the NIV thing takes up. There is no voice, there is no language where their voice is not heard, carrying idea of the worldwide nature of this revelation. But we'll get to that in a second in the next verse. The Hebrew, I think, is best translated as the New American Standard grabs it, and so does the ESV. There is no speech, nor are there words. Their voice is not heard. It's basically the problem with general revelation. They can take you only so far because it's all picture and no words. It'll show you, but it can't really tell you propositional truth. It can show you that God is great in the heavens, glorious in the heavens, and in His power. They can leave you inexcusable for not worshiping him. As Paul says in Romans 1, the wrath of God has been revealed from heaven against all ungodliness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God himself has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world, his invisible attributes are clearly seen being understood by what is made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse." If you're here this evening and you're not yet a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, maybe you're an atheist or an agnostic, God says to you, you have no right to be an atheist and you have less right to be an agnostic. because I've spoken to you in the heavens. I've shown you my invisible glory, that someone very great and very good is responsible for all this, and that knowledge is designed to lead you as if by the hand to God's more clear revelation, or more detailed revelation, because the book of nature is clear. It just doesn't go into propositional details about who, about what God is like in his character. There's echoes of it in creation and in conscience. But we need detailed words to

get the whole picture, and we'll get to that in the next stanza. It's like, even though the book of nature doesn't contain words, that's not to mean that it says nothing. Sometimes you don't need to say anything to say everything that needs to be said, like you're at a party. and maybe it's kind of not a very good party, and your wife is caught over at the far side of the room talking to some kind of weird guy with a huge beard and kind of this interest in kind of tweeby things, and he's talking to her and boring her with all this kind of information, and she gives you that look. It doesn't say a word, but the look says everything that needs to be said. Get me out of here, right? As the song says, only you say it best when you say nothing at all. Our wives can give us that look. We can give our children that look, and they know exactly what we're saying, even though our lips aren't moving. And that's exactly what's going on here. God is not speaking words in creation, but he is making himself known undeniably and very clearly. The question is, are you watching? Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their utterance is to the end of the world. Every nation, tribe, and tongue. No one is immune from this revelation. No tribe so dark, so ignorant, so bestial in its culture is devoid of the revelation of God in the book of nature. In them, he has placed a tent for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber. It rejoices as a strong man to run his course. Its rising is from one end of the heavens, and its circuit to the other end of them, and there's nothing hidden from its heat. The sun's an amazing planet. We can think about it scientifically. 864,000 miles in diameter, 92 million miles away from the world, a million times the size of the earth, 6,000 degrees centigrade, on its visible surface, and that temperature rises to 14 million degrees centigrade at the core. All that heat, all that energy, only a billionth of which reaches the earth. Any more would be burnt to a crisp. But all that heat and energy is formed by hydrogen atoms in the sun colliding together with such terrific force that they form helium. It's nuclear fusion. That reaction causes the sun to lose, wait for it, four million tons a second of its mass. But don't panic. There's enough hydrogen left for it to burn for 5,000 million years. That's a scientific way of describing the sun. David here prefers the poetic way. The sun is like a bridegroom coming out of his bride chamber after his first night of the honeymoon, full of the sense of his power, his virility, grateful for the blessing of God upon his new marriage that he has just consummated. He's never felt more alive, pulsating as a man, standing in the rising heat of the morning sun. He's alive, he's happy, he's

vibrant. He's potent. That's the picture of the son. He's a happy son with a smiley face. He's also like a strong man running his course. Now, don't get your pantyhose in a twist here. If you're a scientist, he's not breaking the laws of physics. I know the sun, we revolve around the sun. He's not denying that. He's speaking about an earthly perspective, the sun rising and setting. As I look, it appears to us that he's running from one end of the heaven to the other, like a sprinter or a marathon runner, giving heat to all the world. This is one of the details of this creative, like, you're an agnostic here this evening. Do you really believe that sun I just described arrived, arose because of a meaningless, purposeless explosion? I mean really, seriously, that your arm was twisted up behind your back. You have to give an honest answer from the depth of your soul. Do you really believe that? Because the Bible says you know better. And it's an idea with consequences. If the world came from nothing and is headed to nothing, as one person said, we began as a fluke, we end up as fertilizer. How can your life in between fluke and fertilizer be anything else but a farce? If you're suspended from nothing and headed to nothing, what's your life mean in between? Atheism is an idea with consequences. And like all bad ideas, it has victims and leaves them strewn in its wake. If there's no meaning to the beginning of the universe and no meaning to the end of the universe, it's like the sun going supernova, and no meaning to life in between these two meaningless beginnings and endings, that means everything is meaningless. means you're meaningless. Your love for your wife is meaningless. Her love for you is meaningless. Your children are meaningless. Their hopes, their plans, their dreams, their futures are meaningless. Beethoven is meaningless. Bach is meaningless. Jay-Z is meaningless. And even the question, does it have meaning, is meaningless. What a difference listening to the plain voice of nature makes. Everything is not meaningless. Everything began at a moment of specific design and divine genius when God spoke and created the universe and has left evidences of His glory strewn left, right, and center, gushing at you from all sides. It's like a crime scene. In the hood, And the police officers murdered, and there were hundreds of witnesses, but no one saw anything, of course. We live in a world, not a crime scene, but there's a scene of divine revelation, and most human beings see nothing. Why? Because they've closed their eyes. Because they don't want to see. It doesn't change the fact that God is there and God has spoken. He has shown himself in the book of nature. Are you watching? Secondly, God has spoken in scripture. Are you listening? These two books, the book of nature, the book of scripture, go together like water and wet, right? The one leads to the other. You

look at creation, you see God's Glory in the heavens. And you read in the Bible, you open the scriptures, and people say, well, the Muslims have got their holy book, and the Hindus have got their holy book, and so forth and so on. But if you read them just for a moment, they're not worthy of comparison to the scriptures of the Old and New Testament. 66 books written by over 40 authors spanning 1,400 years, three continents, three languages, and one message. God saves sinners. The Old Testament is about the promise a great Savior is going to come into this world to rescue us from the sin of Adam and Eve and the consequences of that choice all those years ago that have left you and I horribly, irretrievably self-centered. alienated from God and hostile in mind and engaged in evil deeds. That's why the news is filled with what it's filled with, and that's why you and I struggle to live with one another in our marriages, in our homes, because it's difficult being a sinner with other sinners. And the New Testament tells the story of how God kept all of those great promises and sent a great Savior into this world to rescue us and redeem us. from our sins. And like the many facets of the diamond, David picks up Scripture, and he kind of twists it in his poetic mind and examines the different facets. There's the facet of law. The law of the Lord is perfect. Torah in Hebrew isn't like a list of do's and don'ts. It's a father's instruction. Proverbs, again and again, you'll hear the father say, my son, give ear to your father's Torah. It's a father's instruction. I tell my children again and again and again, son, daughter, I am the friend of your happiness. That's all I want. All I want is for you to be happy. and to be holy, happy not just in a will-o'-the-wisp moment of mindless delight, but true and solid joy and lasting pleasure that none but Zion's children know. I want you to be happy now, but I want you to be happy forever. And I would do anything. I would go anywhere, carry any burden, spend any price, if I could guarantee your eternal happiness. And because of that, I want to talk to you about life, about sex, about money, about marriage, about relationships, about the world. It's a father's instruction to his son. The law of the Lord is perfect, without defect, restoring, literally causing the soul to repent. It's the Hebrew word shuv, which means to repent, to turn around, to make a U-turn. Here we see the first difference between the book of nature and the book of Scripture. The book of nature can leave you without excuse, but it can't change you from the inside out. But oh, the book of Scripture is different. It can restore your soul. It's a book, you might say, designed for prodigals. The testimony of the Lord is sure. Testimony is a term for legal, authoritative witness. It's God standing and saying, I swear to tell you the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. And it makes wise the simple. The Hebrew word for simple is built upon the concept of openness. You know, we speak

about open-mindedness

as if it was a virtue. But to be open-minded, the Hebrew would say, is the virtue of a fool. Think of the door in your house, what's the door there for? The door is there for you to open and close at the right time. And you close it to keep bad things out, and you open it to let good things in. But a fool is a man who's no door in his mind. No discernment, everything comes in and everything goes out. But this book, reading this book, can give wisdom, to a simple fool and make him into a wise man. It's law, it's testimony, it's precepts, which carries the idea of the nitty-gritty details. Reminds me of Mr. Preston, a Puritan, and one of the bishops said, Mr. Preston, I like you well enough, but I find you a very precise man. And he said, ah, but sir, I serve a very precise God." And these nitty-gritty details, notice they aren't a drudgery to this man. They actually bring him joy. The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. He finds joy in such precision. He loves obeying God in the small

things. We often think of that's the

vice of the Pharisee, nitty gritty. Now the Pharisee is a judgmental nitty gritter, nitpicker. But don't you love it when your children take care of the small details? Just because mommy loves it this way or daddy loves it this way? And they fix maybe when they make the bed, they do it the way mummy shows them. Not the easy way, but the way mummy shows them because mummy loves it this way. And they take care of the details because details matter in a heart that loves its lawgiver. Commandments, authoritative declarations of right and wrong. The commandments of the Lord are pure, enlightening the eyes. They fill the eyes with light. They make decisions easier. Sometimes

young people struggle to find God's will in your life. 90% of finding guidance in life is simple obedience to God's revealed will in His commandments. And you forget that at your peril. And having the commandments of

God in your heart, enlighten the eyes. They're like having torches on your eyes and inside your eyes, filling your mind with light and filling your way with light. They're a lamp to your feet, a light to your path, the psalmist says. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever. Now he's still speaking about scripture, but he's speaking about the way the Bible has this wonderful capacity to grip the soul of a man or a woman with the reality of God. A God-controlling mindset and trajectory for life, to make you clean in your life and not grubby or filthy. The judgments of the Lord are true, they're righteous altogether, judgments, the decisions of a sovereign king. This book reveals the ways of God, the psalmist might be saying. He's also saying it'll prepare you to stand in that last great august day of judgment when the judge comes to judge the quick and the dead. God has spoken, and this book



has redemptive power. I want to encourage you, read it every day. John Piper's grandmother wrote in the Bible she first gave to him when he left high school, I think for college, in the front cover she said, this book will either keep you from sin or sin will keep you from this book. Read the Bible every day. Man, read it to your wife, read it to your children. My greatest regret as a father is I let days go by without reading scripture to my children. where she could go back and fill those days with as much Scripture as possible. Sitting on their bed at nighttime as they're going to sleep and just reading a verse of Scripture to them, praying with them every night. You do that when they're young, but it's so easy in teenage years when they get busy and they're staying up late for homework and they've got sports games and everything else, running, they're young. You can let those old habits fall by the wayside. I want to encourage you, don't do that. This book has the power to, is your teenager a natural born fool? Of course, they're teenagers. Well, this book is the answer. It can change them from the inside out. It can turn them around and bring them back to God. God has spoken. In Scripture, are you listening? And then lastly, and quickly, God is speaking, how should you respond? Well, look at the psalmist. It's beautiful. The psalmist says, he's not writing an apologetic tract. He's writing a personal testimony. God has shown his glory to me in creation. And he's spoken to me in Scripture. And you think, what difference does that make? And he goes, oh, it's made all the difference in the world. Oh, I love to read, and I hate to sin, and I want to please. I love to read these words of God. They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold, sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, buy them, your servant is warned, in keeping them there's great reward. They're pleasant like honey, do you see, and they're profitable like gold. sweet to my taste, and they bring wealth to my soul. At times I read them and I'm rebuked, and at times I'm rewarded, oh, but I'm always delighted. By them your servant is warned, rebuked in keeping them, there is great reward. I like to read, do you like to read the Bible? It's one of the great evidences of life in your soul. There's a wonderful story in Scottish church history where there was this Little girl, young, 10, 11 years of age, comes to the session to profess her faith, and the session talked to her, and as there's always a danger when young children come to profess their faith, they climb up. They began asking their deep questions, and she couldn't answer, and she was at sea. One of the elders leant forward and said, my dear, let me ask you a question. Do you like to read your Bible? She said, oh yes, I love to read my Bible. Why? Oh, because it's so sweet on my tongue, and I read it, and I meet the Lord Jesus in

the Bible, and I can see his face through the words, and I can hear his voice, and the power of his promises and his commandments. I want to please him. And she began extolling the virtues of the Bible. And he said, do you like to pray? She goes, oh, I love to pray. And on it went. And at the end of the meeting, they said, we need to ask no more questions. Do you love to read the Bible? God has spoken. He's shown himself in nature. He's spoken in Scripture, and I love to listen. I love to read the psalmist says. Do you? Secondly, I hate to sin, he says. I hate to sin. Verse 12, get that sense, don't you? Who can discern his errors? Ah, quit me of hidden faults. Also keep back your servant from presumptuous sins. Let them not rule over me. Then I'll be blameless and I shall be acquitted of great transgression." Don't you love the way the Bible describes sin and the three different types of sins? There are errors, sins I didn't mean to do. Other week, my washing machine broke. Long story, you heard about a bit of it last week. And I got down, and those leggy things beneath the washing machine, they can lift the washing machine up or lower it down. Who would have known this? And I was trying to twist them, because I discerned there was a screw. And I tried to twist it to try and raise the, but it was difficult, because my fingers are sore, and the feety thing is sharp. So I thought, scratch that. And then I looked, and went, oh, there's a wee, the top of this foot is kind of square-shaped. Ratchet will grab it. So I went and got my ratchet, and I put it on, and I had almost the right ratchet side, but not quite, and I'm there going like this forever with the ratchet, and nothing's happening. And I realized I got the wrong side of ratchet head. So I go back, get the right side of ratchet head, and go back, and hey, presto, and I managed to lift and lower the dishwasher to get it out from under the granite countertop. But it was an honest mistake. I wasn't trying to waste time. I wasn't intentionally being stupid. I'm not a teenager. But I was making a mistake, and we can sin like that. We can honestly commit an error. I was listening online the other night to a pastor talking, and he made this comment about parenting, and I was convicting. He said, you know, when you teach your children, you're never teaching them the lesson you think you are. I'm listening. Like whenever your four year old is running through the kitchen or the living room and she runs past an expensive lamp and almost knocks it over and you yell at her to stop it. You think you're teaching her the lesson, lamps are valuable, don't knock them over, but you're not. You're actually teaching her the lesson that in this house, when you're mad, it's okay to get angry and yell. And how often do we make that mistake? And it's an error. We don't realize the consequences of our actions. It's an error. Acquit me of hidden faults. Sins

I didn't know I'd done. The error. Sins I didn't mean to do. Didn't know I'd done. Hidden faults. And then, sins I did in purpose, presumptuous sins, what the Puritans would call a sin of the high hand. He can discern his errors. There's more in there than I can know. Equip me of hidden faults. There's a depth of hiddenness to my heart, a crookedness I don't even understand. Oh, but keep me back from my presumptuous sins. Let them not rule over me. The psalmist is aware that sin is a force that controls him by nature, or seeking to control him. And he has this awful capacity of doing that which he knows is wrong, like my dog Baxter. We've got a lovely cream chair in our living room, or in our bedroom, and Baxter loves sitting on it. And he knows it. Like, when I walk into the bedroom and he's sitting there, happy as a king on his throne, and I look at him, and I give him that look, I say nothing, but I don't need to use words, and I look at him, and the dog's ears just drop, right? He knows. People tell me dogs don't have a conscience. I'm telling you they're wrong. He knows. He knows he's doing wrong, backs her off the chair, and he gets down. He's doing it deliberately, I think, to annoy me at times. I love that dog. But we're like that, too. We do that which we know is wrong presumptuously. We defy God. We break His law thoughtlessly, carelessly, deliberately. And the psalmist is conscious of that. In his heart, are you conscious of that in your heart? And the psalmist says, oh God, I read your word, I like to read, but I hate to sin, and I pray, oh God, you would control me, put a leash upon me, and hold me back, and don't let these sins rule me, oh God, because there is in my heart this strange mixture of carelessness and godlessness that makes me foolish, forgetful, and leaves me filthy, and I need you to help me, oh God. And in this book, we have the antidote. So he prays for grace to restrain and power to resist. And then, lastly, he likes to read, he hates to sin, and he loves to please. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. There's both resolve here and there is realism. Let the words of my heart Words, lips, heart, soul, outwardly, inwardly. I want every part of my being, he says, to be acceptable in your sight. My words, my meditation. What I say, what I think. Don't let people tell you the Old Testament was a farcical religion of all externals. No, it wasn't. Thy word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against you. Let the words of my heart be acceptable in your sight, and the meditation of my heart. And he's praying, because he's conscious that his thoughts and his words are not pleasing in God's sight, and he wants them to be. So he's resolving to try, but he's praying for grace to bring that intention into being. He's saying, Paul in Philipians

1, I work out my salvation, O God, but you must work in me to will and to do for your good pleasure. And to live such a life, the psalmist says, I need a firm rock beneath me and a friendly redeemer beside me. O Lord, my rock. and my Redeemer." That's where the psalmist ends. This is not work your way to God, pull yourself up by the bootstraps. He's conscious that his feet are slip sliding away. from God's commandments. He's conscious of a waywardness. Lee Marvin sang, I was born under a wandering star. The psalmist is conscious, I am born with a wandering heart. And he needs a firm place on which to place his feet. And he lifts his eyes to God and says, you're my rock, the rock beneath my feet, my foundation, my standing place. And you're my redeemer, my friendly redeemer. And you know the very essence of the term redemption, whether it be for the recovery of a slave, or the recovery of a prisoner of war, or the rescue of a man under debt, however you slice that onion or skin that cat, the idea of redemption has within it always the payment of a price. He's looking forward to Jesus, in whom we have redemption at a very great price. the forgiveness of sins by His blood, according to the riches of His grace, which He freely lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight. This God who has spoken to us in Scripture and shown Himself to us in nature is a Son, is a God who's willing to wrap Himself up in our flesh. and to die our death in the darkness of Golgotha under the curse of the Father to redeem us. How could we look at the revelation of such a God and see nothing? How could we listen to the word of such a God and hear nothing? And if you're here this evening determined to remain an agnostic, what's that tell you about your heart if you're willing so easily to reject a God who speaks to you and seeks to redeem you at such a cost to himself? What costs us nothing, redemption, costs another everything. Jesus Christ. And if you can walk away from him with ne'er a thought or a pang of your heart, what's that tell you about your heart, my brother, my sister, my fellow creature? You need rescued, not just from sin. You need rescued from yourselves. And for that, this book is the answer. Read it, I challenge you, read the Gospel of John, read the Gospel of Mark, ask Jesus to reveal himself to you if you dare. the law of the Lord, the fatherly instruction of the Lord, not just in the Ten Commandments, but in every place of this book, the Gospels, the Epistles, the Psalms, the Proverbs, the Prophets, the Torah, the Pentateuch, every part of this book, the fatherly instruction of the Lord restores the soul. And if you dare expose yourself to it, it'll restore your soul. If you have ears to hear, what the Spirit says to the churches. Let's pray. Father, we thank You for Your Word this evening, for its power, its glory, its beauty. its capacity to speak to us, to challenge us, to awaken us, to convict us of sin and righteousness,

judgment to come. We pray, oh Lord, that you would draw near to these dear folk this evening, in this hot summer evening, grant that the words of my heart and the meditation of my, the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart would not only be acceptable in your sight, but would do them some good along the way. For Christ's sake we pray, amen.