

The Knowledge of God in Creation

by Paul van Engelenhoven

This sermon emphasizes the undeniable evidence of God's existence through His creation, highlighting that all individuals have seen the work of God's hands and are without excuse for not acknowledging Him. It challenges believers to live in response to what they know about God and to proclaim His glory to others, urging them to seek salvation through Jesus Christ.

Scripture: Romans 1:19, Matthew 22:13, Isaiah 55:6, Psalm 19:1, Romans 1:20

Topics: "God's Creation", "Proclaiming His Glory"

Description

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Transcript

Let us open our Bibles. We're going to read from Paul's epistle to the Romans, which is written by the Holy Spirit, inspiring the Apostle. Romans 1 verses 19 to 20.

Romans 1 19 to 20 is the living word of the living God. This is what it says. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.

For his invisible attributes, namely his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world and the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, we pray that you would help us to see through your word that your world reveals your glory, that there is no excuse, for we see the work of your hands. Father, we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Beloved, is faith in God a leap of faith or common sense? Do we, as Christians, are we people that take a blind leap of faith, or do we follow what is common, what is clear, what is logical, and what makes sense? The Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard came up with the phrase *saltus fide*, which is Latin for a leap of faith. It's a very common expression in our days. Well, you have to take a leap of faith.

And he argued that God is only spiritual, but so spiritual that he is completely separated from the physical world. And so a man of faith has to take a leap of faith out of what he thinks is common sense and what is clear and obvious, and he has to take a leap of faith to cross into a reality even though there is no evidence of the reality of God. In other words, his believers are people that have, that take a leap of faith hoping there is someone on the other side that answers the call.

Kierkegaard's understanding of God was that a God was so separate from this world that there was really no way of knowing whether he existed or not. And this is really how the world looks upon the church, isn't it? If you meet people that are not believers, they see you and they respect you, maybe, or they don't, but they consider you a person who has taken a leap of faith hoping that your religion, hoping that your prayers, hoping that what you've learned and what you trust in has a receptor on the other end, but for them it's completely a leap of faith. The church in their eyes is a group of people who place their entire hope in a God they cannot even see, an imaginary God, a people who take a blind leap of faith hoping that there's a God somewhere in the universe, an invisible God who cannot be seen, who cannot be heard, and therefore cannot be known.

And so the world lives without God. They consider this world as a physical world where there is no God, where you live in your own way, make your own morality, and perhaps say something like this, well you've got to make sure that we can all live together in this world, where another person takes his morality and say, well it's survival of the fittest that we got to kill off the weaker ones, or another person in the world says I am just concerned about the happiness of me and those around me. Always convinced of their own morality and giving good reasons in their own mind that this is the right way of living, because they consider that there is no God.

After all they don't believe in God, why would they follow an old book? They can't see God they hear people pray but they never see, they never hear an audible answer, why believe in God? Well this morning the Apostle Paul responds to this these arguments and this is what the Apostle says, oh God can be known and is known in this world. In fact you have seen the physical evidence of God every day of your life. You have so much evidence of God that you cannot deny God other than transforming and just jumping out of logic and closing your eyes and say there's no world out there.

Kind of like the the rabbit and the hunter, right? When the hunter is chasing the rabbit and finally the rabbit is outrun by the hunter and then he looks at the hunter and what he does, he puts his two little paws in front of his eyes because he thinks that if he doesn't see the hunter, the hunter is gone. That's what the person that doesn't believe in God does. You have to put your hands in front of your eyes, in front of your understanding, in front of your reason to say that there is no God.

Because the Bible says the evidence is so clear you have to willfully ignore the evidence of God. And so what I want to do this morning is ask three questions and then seek the answers to these questions. These are the three questions.

How can we see an invisible God? Secondly, what can we know about God? And thirdly, are we responsible for not seeing God? Let us begin our first question. How can we see an invisible God? And I want to answer that question with two other questions. First of all, in what way can we see God? If the Bible says we see God, what does it mean when we see God? I told the children, I asked the children the question this morning, can you see God? And they all said no.

And if we're honest, you and I cannot see God. You cannot point and say God is here or you can say God is there. Or if an atheist on the street asked me and say, well show me the evidence of God, I cannot bring God into the conversation and say, well here He is.

Or let me open up the heavens and you see God. So how can we see God? What does Paul mean that he is clearly seen? Unfortunately, our ESV translation, I think, cuts the corner a little bit on this translation of Romans 1 verse 20. So if we have it on the screen, I have two other translations and you can see what I mean.

The words that I'm speaking about is the being understood. So the LSV, that's the Legacy Standard Bible, says this, for since the creation of the world, His invisible attribute, both His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen being understood through what have been made, so that they are without excuse. The King James does the same for the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen being understood by the things that are made, even as eternal power and God had, so that they are without exchange or without excuse.

You see the difference? Being understood. In a way, the ESV says the same. You have seen it and seeing and understood in our language can mean two things, right? If you see the light, it can mean that you understand something more clearly, right? He has finally seen the light on this or that.

Then what we mean is that He's not seen physical light. It means He's understood. But Paul is putting two things together.

He's saying this, you have seen God by being understanding. In other words, you've seen the evidence with your eyes and in your mind you will make the connection to God. You don't see God in trees.

You don't see God in plants. You don't see God in the rocks or the valleys or the rivers or the rain. But when you see it, there's a connection in your brain that you understand someone must have made this.

Even a little child understands that the trees must come from somewhere. That the plants come from somewhere. When we see design in our understanding because we're intelligent beings, we understand someone made these things.

But that's what the verse, that's what Paul is saying. In your mind, if you have a normal functioning mind that is open to knowledge, to understanding that is logical, you will understand that there is a God. You see what Paul is after? So we're not saying look at the tree, that's a picture of God.

No, what we're saying is this. Look at the tree. You know the tree must have come from somewhere.

Look at your hands. It must have come from somewhere. Someone designed this.

Someone made this. Someone formed this. Somebody put thought in this and material.

Somebody brought the material and thought together. And that's you. When you look in the mirror every morning, you have evidence that God exists.

The atheist, when he looks in the morning in the mirror, he sees the evidence that God exists. It's undeniable. Now you can say I don't want to know this.

I want to come up with different reasons. But if you open your heart and you think logically, you will come to the conclusion that someone has made this. That's what the Bible tells us all.

All of us have seen the evidence of God's hands because we understand. We see and perceive that this must come from somewhere. Now what happens in our brains and our understanding is this.

When we see color and we have a functioning brain, we must say somebody made the color and somebody has given me eyes to see that color. This is not from nowhere. Someone has put this here together.

Someone has made smell and somebody has given me a nose to be able to smell it. Somebody has made sound and somebody has given me ears to receive the sound waves and in an amazing way translate those sound waves into sound that I hear in my mind. And it brings to us the overwhelming argument of God's existence.

There was someone before the rocks were created. There's someone before water came into being. Either we don't exist at all and all of this is a dream but that's a problem because then how can we dream if there's nothing at all.

Or all of us made ourselves or the rocks made us but rocks don't have a mind. We don't make ourselves. We come from somewhere or God created the heavens and the earth.

It's really the only three possibilities. We've made ourselves. The world has made itself but how can something made itself when it's not there in the beginning? There's nothing.

It cannot create something. Or we have been from everlasting but we haven't because there is a beginning to all that is time and material. Or God created the heavens and the earth.

There was someone who was eternal but not only that. There was someone that was so brilliant that he can create something out of nothing. Someone that can make the world.

Someone that is so intelligent that he has created all the animals, has created a perfect environment where we can live that is not too hot or too cold, that is so far from the moon to the exact distance. If it'd be further we'd be freezing. If it'd be closer we'd be burning in our relationship to the Sun.

That has placed the universe and hung up the stars in such a way that we can have a livable environment for thousands of years. God has made it plain that he exists. There is no other option because God has made it.

Every flower is a sermon. Somebody made me. Somebody has not just made me, somebody has given you the eyesight, the scent, the heart to appreciate it, the mind to think about it, to consider it, to look around it, your arms, your legs to perceive it, to study it, to understand it.

God has made the flower a sermon to your heart and to all of us. Every day our atheist neighbors have to shut off their minds all throughout the day not to see that God exists. God has made it plain.

And so in a sense when I talk to somebody who says that doesn't they don't believe in God, I don't have to convince him that God exists. All I have to do, this takes the power of God, is to take his stubborn arms away from his eyes that he can see what his eyes actually already see. You see that? They're willfully ignoring what their mind can see and know.

Now the Bible tells us that they're in the power of the prince of darkness, that this world is holding them in a grip so they're not probably not even conscious that their eyes are in front of their face and in front of their minds and in front of their ears and in front of their nose to see what they actually see. But by God's grace their arms, their hands can be pulled off their eyes, taken off their nose, taken off their ears so that they're free to see, free to hear, free to smell the evidence of God's creation. You see the beauty of all of this? God has given us evidence in every possible way.

I mean if God had only created the human mind it would be enough, isn't it? The human mind is evidence that God is intelligent. Rocks don't create brains. Rocks and soup and chemicals don't create brains.

Wisdom creates brains. Somebody who can see can create eyes. Somebody who cannot see cannot think of what sight is so somebody who has made the eye must be able to see himself.

Somebody who has ears can create an ear. Otherwise how can he know what ears do? Somebody that can taste can create taste. Otherwise how can he know what taste is? So what God does is he has created the eyes, created the ears, created all our senses as reflections of what he is, who he is.

And so it is absolutely obvious to the human mind that God exists. So you find that even atheists on their deathbed when all is said and done they often shout and scream to God when they feel their lives slipping away saying God help me because that which they have been denying all their lives now becomes plain as they stand before God and their weakness is taking their stubborn hands away from their eyes and now they can see. But often it's too late.

You see God has made himself known. And we if we are believers in God we should praise the Lord because he has weakened our arms and pulled them off our eyes and pulled them off our nose and all the rest to see God. That's his grace because by nature we said I don't want to see him.

I don't want to know him but God by his grace has lifted our eyes or our hands away from our eyes so that we can see him. So where do we look? Well the Bible literally tells us that we don't have to go far. Romans 119 for what can be known about God is plain to them because God has shown it to them.

It doesn't say God has placed it somewhere in creation on the other side of the hills on a long journey following after the rainbow you found a golden treasure. No. God has revealed his treasure to our eyes.

He has shown it to us and it says in verse 20 ever since the creation of the world in the things that have been made. God shows us clearly and every part of creation says here I am. This is who I am.

This is who I am. I am eternal. I am powerful.

I am creative. I am able to create all the world out of nothing. This is not something that is hard to find.

It doesn't require a degree in theology or philosophy or the natural sciences or anything else. Every human being can see that God exists and more often the less intelligent people are wiser than the more intelligent people. The less intelligent, the youngest child can see that God created the heavens and the earth.

Isn't it? Every plant. It doesn't come there by nowhere. It's silly.

You ask a three-year-old and tell him, you say by the way this plant you know how it came into being? There was a big explosion and there was a plant. They laugh at you. They think you're making a cartoon.

It's silly. Sometimes intellect separates us from God. Makes us put all kinds of ideas and places a self and a pride in the place of God so that we no longer see God as he is so easily seen.

A child can see it. You would have to be willfully ignorant and place yourself above God and above creation to ignore God. When you see trees moving back and forth, do you jump out of your couch and say, whoa the trees have come alive.

Whoa you call the whole neighborhood. You see the trees are waving to me. We're friends.

No, what you say is the wind is going through the trees. Something is moving the trees. If you see a leaf falling on water and the leaf is moving away, you jump after the leaf and study it to see if you can find an engine somewhere in the leaf that propels this strange leaf forward and moves it in different directions.

Of course not. You realize there's a current in the water even though you don't see the water moving in the current, you know that the water is carrying the leaf away. In the same way you see all creation in front of you.

You don't see the hand of God as a physical hand, but we know that God made all these things. You see, God is like the wind. He has brought forth all creation and given life to all the earth, all the trees, the plants, the animals.

He has created and given it life and we see creation and then we know there's a God just as you see the moving of the trees and you know there's wind. And so creation requires a creator. Life requires a giver of life.

Color requires the making of color. You see, I'm often fascinated by life. What makes something alive? If you've had the sad experience of a pet dying, you see this strange thing, isn't it? In the morning the animal is alive and well and then by night the life is gone.

What's the difference? All the molecules of the animal are still there. It's got just as many teeth, same heart, same kidneys, same amount of blood, but the life is gone. Who gave life? And why can we not give life? You cannot go to a dead animal that's been dead and breathe into it and bring them back alive.

Where does life come from? God breathes it in to all that is alive. Well, I could go on but let's move on in our sermon to our next point. What can we know about God? Romans 120, for His invisible attributes, namely His eternal power and divine nature.

Many translations translate it in a different way. The most literal be something like this, His invisible things, His invisibleness, which is the eternality of His power and deity. We can simplify it.

There are many things we cannot see, but some of God's attributes come visible to the world in His way of creating the world and it's this. He is incredibly powerful and He is God. He is not part of the creation.

He stands outside the creation and He forms the creation. Somebody outside this world must have made this world. Someone that is not physical and stuck in this world must have created the world by His power.

In creation, simply said, God shows us His eternal divine power. You have seen the eternal divine power of God. You don't have to be a systematic theologian to know these attributes about God.

You don't even have to be a Christian to see this attribute about God. You know God is God and He has eternal power. He can create things by His will.

God has revealed Himself through His work and we can see it. See that He's powerful. You know God is powerful.

When you give birth, well when you're a woman, you give birth to a child, you see the divine power of God. That something is not there 10, 11, 12 months before and then a year later there's a crying baby in your hands and you have no idea how that formed in your womb. Now we have videos that there's one cell that multiplies and multiplies and after a while at a very young age you can see little fingers, little feet, little toes.

You can see a little heartbeat and then you realize that it's this big on your monitor but in reality it's like a peanut. How is that possible? How can we be formed out of something that is smaller than a peanut? How can that develop and create into a brain, eyes, lips, nose, mouth? How is it possible? It shows us that God is divine. He can create something out of nothing.

He can create you in your mother's womb. It literally says that he has woven you together. God when you were unknown before your parents ever took a test and see if you were pregnant, before your mother was nauseous, God was at work in your mother's womb forming you together.

That's the power of God. You say I would love to see the God, the hand of God at work. You do see it.

Look at a child when he grows up. It's incredible isn't it? When you hold a child in your hand all he can do is open his eyes, make dirty diapers and then after a while they can turn around and as you're a first time parent you're excited. Wow my baby can turn around.

This is amazing. The muscle, you know how many, Abigail what did you tell me? How many muscles does it take to say a word? 70 muscles? It takes 70 muscles to say a word. I've been exercising this morning.

It takes 70 muscles to make a word. It takes God to create 70 muscles for you to say mama, papa. Papa is more difficult.

It's got to be more more muscles because you got to let your lips explode. The power of God is visible when you look in the mirror. To me I love the eye.

I've probably said this before but I love eyes. It's incredible isn't it? The light reflects from your forehead to my eyes. I can see your forehead.

Same on mine. I can even see that some of you have a mustache. I can see your hairlines.

I can see whether you're smiling or sleeping. I can see because God has given me eyes to see. It's the power of God.

It's so visible isn't it? I could preach on this for a year you know. To just think on everything God created. I'm becoming self-conscious now when I put my hands together.

I just makes no sense this movement but I could put my fingers together and then open. I could put them together again and open them. It's the power of God.

I didn't make myself. My mom has no clue how she made me. She had her choice.

She might have made some changes. God made you. Now what do we learn about God? We learn of his majesty and how he ought to be praised.

If all my life I would just meet you. I'd be in a box for my whole life. Completely oblivious to myself but only see you.

I would have to praise God for the majestic creation that you are. That you have a functioning body. We see his grand design and his majestic power and how he formed the universe and the world in it.

We learn of his strength and how he ought to be revered. For we see all that lives he has received life from him. How he has both fed the lion and the rabbit and made them all.

We learn of his beauty and how he ought to be loved for his beauty and his creation of the flowers and the sand and the beautiful rays of the sun when it goes down or rises up from the horizon. We learn of his wisdom and how he ought to be followed if we see the intricate detail that he has created in creation. I don't even know how oxygen is made.

Well I have the same books as you. Probably in Dutch rather than English. I know photosynthesis but I don't understand it.

I don't know how oxygen is made and yet I've been breathing it all my life. I see his wisdom in all of this. We learn of his sight and how he ought to be sought.

He has given us eyesight so that we would seek him and his glory. We learn of his graciousness in giving us all these things and how he ought to be thanked. Do you realize that you have been sucking oxygen this entire sermon which was a gift from God? Do you know that your heart has been pumping blood this entire sermon? God formed that in you? Do you realize that your kidneys have been working? That just the system has been working and you're not walking around with your bread or your Cheerios in your stomach and hurting all morning? And that could go on and on.

How many things in your body are there to clean your blood so that it doesn't clot all the time and you die? The muscles you have in your body so that you don't fall over like a potato bag and sit without strength. You have muscles in your neck that your head doesn't roll down from your neck. It's amazing isn't it? In other words, creation tells us that he deserves to be worshipped.

He deserves the voice, our voices to praise his holy name. He deserves our hands to be raised up on high and give him the glory. He deserves our lungs to sing forth with praise to God.

He deserves our feet to walk in his paths, our hand to touch what he desires us to touch and work how we work for his glory. He deserves to be thanked and glorified. You know, I love to hear the choir sing.

I love the way they sing and they sing beautiful. But I especially love that they're using their gifts to give praise to God. Because he deserves to be praised.

That's the glory of the choir. It's the glory of us singing together. It's not about if they are perfectly singing and the best choir making the angelic choirs jealous.

I'm impressed about the way they sing. But that's small compared to the joy of singing their praises to God. And how he deserves to be praised.

God is invisible. But you can see his work. And you can know God.

You do not know the gospel from creation. But you know God. It's very evident.

For the moment you open these eyes until this very moment you have seen the work of God. Every step of the way. Which brings us to our last question.

Are we responsible for not seeing? Not seeing and understanding. Why does Paul tell us all these things? He tells them for this little sentence in Romans 1 verse 20. Which is terrifying.

So they are without excuse. They are without excuse. Paul is making a very strong statement here.

It's saying no one in this world has an excuse when he stands before God. None of us have an excuse not to worship God. Not to be thankful to him.

But the sinner says, but Lord. I didn't know. I wasn't told.

I wasn't shown. And the judge of all the earth will say I have shown it to you. I have made it plain to you.

I have shown you the work of my hands every single day of your life. The sinner will say. I am guilty.

For I have ignored all the work of your hands. All your love. All your wisdom.

All your words. I have willfully ignored. And the judge of all the earth will say to the angels.

According to Matthew 22 verse 13. Bind them hand and foot. And cast them in the outer darkness.

In that place there will be weeping. And gnashing of teeth. Do you understand the seriousness of this? What Paul is saying is God has made himself and shown himself in the world.

And we're saying praise the Lord. Hallelujah. But he says that also means that you have no excuse before God.

For any of your sins. Means that there will be a multitude standing before God. On judgment day.

That will be cast into hell fire. As they marched up to the judgment seat. They thought we have confidence.

We have reasons. We have excuses. And when God is done with reading out why they have no excuse.

They're bowed hand and foot. And thrown. Into the judgment.

My dear friends. It is a terrible thing. To fall into the hands of the living God.

Now you may say. I have drunk from the grail of atheism. And have persuaded myself that God does not exist.

But it won't help you when you stand before them. For one day there will be no more atheists. Every person who lies and cheats.

People that we say how does God let them live. That question will no longer be asked before the judgment seat of Christ. You know I'm terrified.

When I see. Politicians paying lip service to God. And then live as though he doesn't exist.

I'm terrified for their soul. Because they will have no excuse before God. As they're cast into eternal judgment.

For their willful ignorance of God and his creation. Can you imagine standing before God. And you have written into law.

The destruction of his creation. That would be a terrifying thing isn't it. Can you imagine.

Butchering the family of a judge. And then be judged by that judge. But to all of us.

If we're honest. Do we respond to what we know. I'm talking to you as believers.

Do we live according to what we see and what we know. Do we live for him the way he ought to be lived for. This is a message for.

For us as well isn't it. He has given us so much. How do we live.

In return. Let us live in this world. Until our dying day.

Proclaiming Jesus Christ and what he has done. Revealing to the world. All the works of God's hands.

Pointing them to our neighbors and our friends. And saying look. Don't you see.

What God has made. And then what God has done. And then how they can come to God.

Let us take this message. Not as. Something to go into our neighbors and say.

You should have known. But in humility. In love.

Never to give up and tell them. That there is a God. And he has created the world.

And even though they have sinned against him. And used the breath that they freely received from him. To use their lips to curse him.

He is still willing to forgive. The sword is still down. The judgment.

Is still held back. For today is the day of salvation to sinners. Such as you and I. Let us call them.

To see what they already know. To come to the God. They've already seen.

To find life. From him who has given them life. In this earth.

Let us pray. Heavenly Father. Oh Lord.

How we love. Your word. And the works of your hands.

Father when we turn to scripture. We see you. In intense ways.

Speaking to us. When we lift up our eyes from our word. We see.

The evidence of your power. Help us Lord to bring more in. So that they will not hear.

Have to hear. That there is no excuse for them. But they would come now.

And flee through your. To your throne of mercy and grace. And be saved.

For father we pray this in Jesus name. Amen.

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