

Victory Lutheran Church- Jacksonville, FL
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Worship Series: *Prepared to Answer*

Service Theme: *“Where’s the Evidence that God Even Exists?”*

Sermon Theme: *Hear the Voice of God*

September 24, 2023—Psalm 19:1-6

In 1961, Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first human to journey into outer space. At the heart of the “Space Race,” Gagarin was so appreciated in the motherland, that he was recognized as “Hero of the Soviet Union.” But I bring up Gagarin because during his space flight, he reportedly told the crew back on earth, ***“I don’t see any God up here.”*** In the cosmonaut’s mind, he’d ventured to the furthest reaches of the known universe and hadn’t seen any physical, visible evidence for God. Therefore, God must not exist. An “I’ll believe it when I see it” approach to God’s existence.

In this sermon series, ***Prepared to Answer***, each week we’ll receive some training in “Apologetics.” Not apologizing for our beliefs, as if we’re sorry for them, but defending our beliefs through Scripture and logical argumentation. As our culture increasingly shifts away from Christianity, quoting “Thus sayeth the Lord,” to people who question the validity of the Bible won’t be very effective. But Apologetics seeks to “put a rock in the shoe” of the skeptic; to shoot some holes in what they assume are bulletproof aspects of their beliefs. Now understand, we can’t argue, rationalize, or logic someone into believing in God. But apologetics seeks to shake up the skeptic’s certainty so they’ll listen with open ears to what can bring them to faith—the Word of God in the Bible.

The question we’re preparing to answer today is, ***“Where is the evidence that God even exists?”*** Interestingly, although Yuri Gagarin claimed he hadn’t seen God in space, according to Psalm 19, he’d actually had a front row seat. As King David wrote by God’s inspiration, ***“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. In the heavens God has pitched a***

tent for the sun...It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is deprived of its warmth.”

God points to the sky where he placed the sun, moon, stars, and planets, the very same sky where Yuri Gagarin claimed he didn’t find God; God points to the sky and the atmosphere and says, “You can see me there.” As you stare up into a country night sky and see millions of stars twinkling; as you look in awe at the dancing, vibrant colors of the Northern Lights; as the sun makes its consistent daily trip across the sky, giving life-sustaining light and warmth to the earth; as the earth makes another annual orbit around the sun, God whispers, “You can see me there.” While Gagarin claimed he couldn’t see God in space, God tells us his fingerprints are visible all over it!

And not just in the skies above us, but in the earth all around us, and even inside of us! Theologians call this the ***“natural knowledge of God,”*** the basic understanding of God’s existence that all people can have simply by observing the nature he created. As Paul wrote in Romans, ***“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 people are without excuse.”***

But like I said, “Thus sayeth the Lord” doesn’t resonate with many people today. The skeptics, whose materialist worldview forces them to explain everything without God, are quick to paper over the natural knowledge of God with scientific theories about the Big Bang, Natural Selection, and macroevolution. Many are blind to God’s fingerprints because they’ve put their faith in science and human wisdom.

So how can we as Christians respond? That’s where apologetics can be helpful in putting that rock in the skeptic’s shoe and asking, “Are you sure that’s the voice of coincidence, and not the voice of God you hear when you look at nature?”

One is called the ***“Teleological Argument.”*** Basically, this is the argument for God’s existence from order and design. Imagine you dropped a bag of Skittles, scattering the little colorful candies

everywhere. You go to grab a broom, but when you return you find all those Skittles now grouped together in neat, color-coordinated piles. What would you assume? Not, “Wow, what a coincidence of random chance circumstances in the universe!” You’d assume, “Someone did this.” Someone with wisdom and intelligence. Likewise, the incredible design and orderliness we see in nature should lead us to say, “Someone did this! Someone with wisdom and intelligence.”

Just reflect on the amazing design of our bodies. A person’s heart beats around 3 billion times during an average lifespan. If you laid all the blood vessels, veins, and capillaries in one adult’s body end to end, it would circle the equator 4 times. And if that circulatory system stops functioning and cooperating to transport life-giving blood throughout your body, you die. Or consider that if you unraveled all the nerve fibers coiled together in your brain and laid them end to end, they would reach to the moon and back. And that gray matter inside your skull is so complex that it processes over 11 million bits of information per second, almost all of it completely subconsciously! Or consider that your body produces 25 million new cells every second. Each of those cells contains about 200,000 amino acids. But the time required for the chance formation of even one of those chains of acids is mathematically equated to take roughly 300 times the 4.6-billion-year age an evolutionist gives to earth. So, the easy answer that order and design can always happen given enough time doesn’t really hold up to scrutiny! Not even mentioning that science has never observed life emerging from non-life; nor order coming from destruction. Yet, these are key tenants of evolutionary theory. So, is it really scientific fact? Or just as much based on faith as creation by an intelligent designer?

Or going outside our bodies, consider how finely-tuned earth’s ecosystems are. I recently read a study about the total impact wolves have on the ecosystem in Yellowstone. By 1926, the wolf population had been eliminated from the park. Without these apex predators, you’d think the ecosystem would thrive. Instead, almost everything in that ecosystem was negatively affected. From elk, to trees, to birds, to beavers, to fish, the removal of just one piece of the puzzle had destructive impact on the whole ecosystem. However, in 1995, wolves

were re-introduced to Yellowstone. And over the last 30 years, many parts of the Yellowstone ecosystem that were harmed by the removal of wolves have flourished and returned to full health with them back. How could all the balanced dynamics necessary for many different kinds of flourishing ecosystems have come into place, except by an intelligent creator who knew, created, and brought together all those necessary factors?

It’s been called “The Fine-Tuning Argument.” Scientist Francis Collins writes in his book, *The Language of God*, ***“When you look from the perspective of a scientist at the universe, it looks as if it knew we were coming. There are 15 constants...that have precise values. If any of those constants was off by even one part in a million, or in some cases, by one part in a million million, the universe could not have actually come to the point where we see it. Matter would not have been able to coalesce, there would be no galaxy, stars, planets, or people.”*** Imagine a control room filled with millions of knobs and dials, and each of them needs to be situated just perfectly, or everything falls apart. That’s the reality of life in this world! Again, how plausible is it to credit all of that to random chance?

Again, the worldview of the secular materialist forces them to explain the universe apart from God. So, they’ll chalk it up to random chance circumstances just so happening to click right over billions of years, because how else could they explain it? Philosopher Alvin Plantinga compares it to a card dealer who deals himself 20 straight hands of 4 aces. He claims it’s just the random circumstances of the universe lining up in just the right way to make it happen! I suppose that’s statistically possible. But if you’re sitting at that table, would you accept that as a legitimate explanation?

Likewise, one astronomer calculated the odds of an island of life forming and continuing based on all the necessary forces, properties, and conditions required for life at 1 in 1,000 quintillion, quintillion, quintillion, quintillion, quintillion, quintillion, quintillion. Possible, I suppose. But are you willing to bet your eternity on those odds? Even Stephen Hawking grudgingly admitted, ***“The odds against a universe***

like ours emerging out of something like the Big Bang are enormous. I think there are clearly religious implications.”

All the order and intricate detail fits perfectly with what David writes in Psalm 19, doesn’t it? Nature doesn’t speak with an intelligible voice. But nature’s existence, order, and design shouts out loud, “God did this!” “God is here!” **“Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.”** In nature, we hear God’s voice! As we survey the grandeur of soaring mountains, the color-streaked canvas of a sunset, or the sound of your child’s beating heart on an ultrasound, you hear it. God’s voice whispering, “I Am!” See my all-knowing wisdom; my eternal power; my love; my providence; my eternal divinity!”

That’s not even including the compelling evidence of conscience—that innate sense all people have that some things are right and wrong, regardless of what culture, age, or place they’re from. How else can that be explained except that a common lawgiver has etched his law into every human heart he’s created? With each pang of conscience, we hear God’s voice declaring, “I Am!”

With all the ways we hear God’s voice through that natural knowledge of God, Paul can write that **“people are without excuse.”** And David can rightly say in Psalm 14, **“The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.”** And yet, there are many who still do. Blinded by their faith in science; enslaved by a worldview that blocks them from believing in God; driven by a desire to not be accountable to God, or to be god in their own lives, there are many who question the evidence for God’s existence while it’s staring them in the face. Because when it comes down to it, there’s no rational argument that will convince someone to believe in God. There will always be rational comebacks. There will always be people who demand physical evidence, an “I’ll believe it when I see it” viewpoint about God. Like Yuri Gagarin. 7 years after Yuri Gagarin proclaimed he didn’t find God in space, he died in a plane accident. And for better or worse, he found God then. Like

Thomas, Jesus’ Apostle, who said “I’ll believe it when I see it” about Jesus’ resurrection. Until he saw it.

But as Jesus told him, **“Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”** Ultimately, it doesn’t matter how many philosophical arguments we point to, or how many scientific facts we espouse. When it comes down to it, we don’t even need them. Yes, they’re helpful in leading people to give the Gospel a second thought. But the only thing we really need—and actually, the only thing that can really lead us to believe in God—is to hear God’s voice as he speaks to us through his Holy Word! Hear God’s voice as he recaps his creation of the universe with only his word. Hear God’s voice as he explains the meaning, purpose, and joy that his existence gives our lives, compared to the pointless, meaningless life of the secularist who thinks we’re just here by chance, and that there’s nothing beyond this. Hear God’s voice, as he speaks through the inspired writers of Scripture to point us to his Son, our Savior, who gives us eternal life!

As the Apostle John concludes his Gospel account, **“These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”** Hear God’s voice, as nature proclaims the glory of God, and the world whispers his, “I am!” Hear God’s voice in his Word, and drop to your knees in worship, **“My Lord and my God!”**