

SEARCH ME, O GOD

Psalms 139

Introduction:

Psalms 139 is a psalm which, depending on your attitude toward God, can either bring you tremendous comfort or strike terror into your heart. The psalmist is King David, who probably had as intimate a relationship with God as anyone in the Old Testament. He is described as a man after God's own heart. He is described that way by God himself. In his message to Saul following his disobedience, God said to him,

"But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought out a man after his own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you." (1 Samuel 13:14 ESV)

"And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, 'I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.'" (Acts 13:22 ESV)

In this psalm, David expresses joy, frustration and introspection. In vv. 1-18 we see and read David's praise for all that God is to him. In vv. 19-22 we see something of David's problem, his frustration with the evil all around him. Then in vv. 23-24 his thoughts turn inward as he considers the recesses of his own heart.

I have divided this psalm into 6 parts. David's praise to God in vv. 1-18 encompasses the first four points. There are four distinct areas that David mentions for which he praises God. That is where we begin:

I. My God Knows Me vv. 1-6

Read vv. 1-6. Indeed, if we think about the truth in these verses, we cannot help but agree with David, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it."

God's knowledge of you—your life, your struggles, your joys, the things that make you sad, the things that make you happy—there is nothing about you that He is not aware of. There is nothing about you

that He does not have an intimate knowledge about. He knows everything about you and your life.

He knows your thoughts, He sees into the recesses of your mind; He sees and knows the attitudes and motives of your heart; He knows the words on your tongue before you speak them.

Do you see why I said the words of this psalm and the message of this psalm can strike terror into your heart? If we really understood and thought about how intimately God knows our heart and our mind and our thoughts and motives, I believe it would change us in many ways.

But the positive side of this is v. 5 – read it again. Because He knows us so well, God's hand is there to surround us and protect us and pour out his mercy on us.

II. My God is Always With Me vv. 7-12

The divisions of this psalm are really a description of some of God's attributes. The first part, which we looked at, is really about God's omniscience – He knows everything. This next section is about His omnipresence – He is present everywhere.

Read vv. 7-12 – David's question in v. 7 is this: is there anywhere I can go that you are not with me, or you are not already there? Where can I go to get away from your presence? David answers his own question:

v. 8a - as high as the heavens, you are there. You know, when Neil Armstrong set foot on the moon back in 1979, God was there. If you were able to travel to the farthest reaches of space, God would already be there.

v. 8b - to the depths of Sheol -the OT designation for the abode of the dead. The AV translates it sometimes as hell, sometimes as the grave. It is the place where the spirits of the dead dwell. David says, even there you would be with me.

v. 9 – If I fly away like a bird of the morning to the farthest places in the skies, or dwell in the farthest parts of the ocean, it doesn't matter. Even there the hand of God will be leading and protecting me – v. 10.

Again, I think you can see how this understanding would affect different people differently. It seems apparent that David takes comfort in the fact that no matter where he is or where he goes, God is there. God is watching over him and guiding and protecting him.

But if... and this is where this truth can strike terror into the heart. David says – read v. 11-12. If you are hoping to be able to do something without God seeing you, there is just no way to get away from Him.

In John 3, when Jesus was talking to Nicodemus, he referred to himself as the light coming into the world, and he said, “For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been carried out in God.” (John 3:20-21 ESV)

The darkness may hide your deeds from other people, but not from God. He sees everything, he is everywhere. You cannot escape his presence. I trust that is a comfort to you and not a source of distress.

So God knows me – everything about me. God is with me – no matter where I am or where I go.

III. My God Made Me vv. 12-16

The next part of our psalm this morning speaks of God’s omnipotence – He is all powerful. Listen to these words...

Read vv. 13-16 – What an amazing description of God’s creative work in forming and making you and me.

A couple of weeks ago, when we were at Missions Fest in Edmonton almost straight across from our VM booth was the booth of a ministry in Edmonton called “The Back Porch.” They operate out of a house right across the street from an abortion clinic and they minister to pregnant girls and women, giving information and assistance to those who may be considering abortion and sharing the love of Jesus with them.

One of the things they had in their booth – a little box with about 5 little models showing the size and development of a baby in the womb from about 7 – 11 weeks. It was amazing to see how small and yet how intricate a baby is just a few weeks after conception. At 7 weeks the ba-

by is about 1” long, yet the body looks almost completely and fully formed.

David says, “You knit me together in my mother’s womb... my frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret.”

Not only that, but You knew everything about me, you knew my days, my very life was written in your book, before I was even born.

Do you realize and accept the truth that God has made you the way you are? Everything from the color of your eyes to the type of personality you have is by His powerful and loving design.

IV. My God Has Me in His Thoughts vv. 17-18

Verses 17-18 also speak to God’s power and might. Listen to them... read them.

Have you ever thought about the truth in these verses? God is thinking about you. You are on His mind. God’s almighty power and might enables Him to watch you and think about you and be concerned for you even though there are billions of other people in the world to think about as well.

The psalmist speaks grandly of God’s thoughts. How vast are the sum of them. Read v. 18 again...

Last week, when we looked at Ps. 121 we spoke about how we can rest in God, because He is always on guard, always watching over us. He never slumbers or sleeps.

Here we have the same idea expressed. “I awake and I am still with you.” God’s thoughts are on me and on you even when we are sleeping.

God knows you... is always with you... made you... has you in His thoughts... What marvelous truths. In these verses we have seen David’s praise for God. But in the next section we see a change in tone. David is confronted with a problem – the problem of sin and evil. In order to maintain the literary structure of my outline, I have entitled this point, My God Deals with Evil, but it is really about David’s problem.

V. My God Deals with Evil vv. 19-22

Let's read these verses. The psalmist was angered by the sin around him. He resented the rebellion some men felt toward God (vv. 19-20). David was not so much concerned here with wrongs done to him personally. He was occupied with the fact that lawlessness, rebellion and wickedness are directed, ultimately against God Himself – refer to v. 20.

He called down the righteous judgments of God on the wicked, and reaffirmed his own loyalty to God (v. 21). David was as intense in his hatred of wickedness as he was in his love of righteousness. (v. 22).

David's problem was the evil he saw all around him. But his answer to that evil was to declare his loyalty to God and call on God to deal with those who rebel against Him. We have a God who deals with evil and will ultimately destroy the source of wickedness.

VI. My Response – Search Me, O God vv. 23-24

So, how do we respond to this? In the light of God's knowledge, presence, power and loving concern, what should our reaction be? David's response was a prayer for cleansing and guidance.

It is futile to try to deceive God, or to hide from Him as Adam hid, or to flee from Him as Jonah fled. It is far better to come to God and put ourselves in His hands: "Here I am, Lord—search me and try me."

David realized that he was not perfect. He knew very well the sinful depths of his heart. He began the psalm by saying, "O Lord, You have searched me and known me!" (v. 1). At the close of this magnificent poem, he humbled himself before God's knowledge, wisdom, presence, and power, and asked God to continue (v. 23) His searching, probing work.

"Point out my sins—my weaknesses," David is saying to God. He wanted God to reveal whatever grieved Him. David wanted to know what stood between him and a deeper experience of God's grace. He wanted to know what hindered God from using him more fruitfully. And he invited God to turn the white light of His holiness on His servant's heart to purge out every last trace of sin.

Conclusion

Let us not shrink from the fact that God knows our hearts. Let us not try to hide anything from Him. Let us lay unconfessed sin before Him, for He is gracious to forgive. If we are misunderstood or unfairly criticized, let us remember that God knows our hearts and every detail of our lives. He cares for us and wants to provide what we need. He wants to overshadow us with His goodness and mercy and love.

But He wants us to trust Him, to seek His wisdom. He wants us to rejoice that He knows and cares. He wants us to confess and forsake whatever stands between us and Him.

We are to tell Him the burdens on our hearts, for every detail is precious to Him. We are to delight ourselves in His all-knowing care and in the blessed fact that we are His and He is ours.

If you are an unbeliever you can make today the greatest day of your life if you will trust Jesus Christ as Saviour. There is no possibility of deceiving God. You may deceive others—you may even deceive yourself—but you can never deceive the One who knows all there is to know about you.

God not only knows everything about you, He also loves every one of you. He loves believers, who are His children, and unbelievers, whom He wants to become His children.