

“FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE.”

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First Christian Reformed Church

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Scripture Texts: Psalm 139:1-18

Psalm 139

Our GLOW girls theme verse for this year comes from Psalm 139:13-14

Of the 150 psalms in the Book of Psalms we all have a few favorites, our top ten list perhaps. Psalm 1, 8, 19, 23, 51, 91, 100, 121, 139, 150.

This is truly a classic, one of the most beautiful pieces of poetry ever written.

Who is Psalm 139 about?

It would be easy to say it is about the psalmist, about David who wrote it. He says he is fearfully and wonderfully made. There is a lot of I, I, I in the psalm.

But the psalm is also very much all about God. David is reflecting on himself and his life and realizing it is all about God from beginning to end.

John Calvin wrote in the very first paragraph of his Institutes of the Christian Religion, “Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves.” That’s what Psalm 139 does, it gives us wisdom about our God and ourselves.

This psalm is poetic theology or theological poetry. It is deeply theological, about God and about God’s omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence, but it says all that without using any big theological words. It says the truth about God in words that are very personal, down to earth, even a child can understand. That is part of the beauty of this Psalm.

Since it is written that way I am going to preach it that way. Rather than have three points of God’s omniscience, God’s omnipresence and God’s omnipotence, my three points will be God knows me, God is with me and God made me.

First, God knows you and me, verses 1-6 (God’s omniscience).

Notice the key word in these six verses, the word “know” in verses 1, 2, 4, and 6.

Who is David talking about? He is talking about God. And what does God know? Does he say God knows everything, that God has in Himself all the knowledge of the universe and all the knowledge of earth and everyone one on the earth?

No, that’s not how he says it. What does God know?

Psalm 139:1 O Lord, you have searched me and known me!

God knows you and me. It is one thing to say God knows everything and everybody, it is quite another thing to say God knows me. He starts with a general statement, but then to prove the point he lists a bunch of personal specifics.

God knows me when I am sitting down doing nothing and when I am up and about. God knew before you got up this morning when you would get up, what you would eat for breakfast, whether you would have cereal and which one, or eggs or toast, or oatmeal and coffee. And He already knows what's on the menu for lunch and for tomorrow's lunch. Some of us can't remember what we had for breakfast yesterday, but God knows.

He knows where we go, what route we take, how long we are there. He knows what we do at school or work, who we talk to, what we say, and what we do on our cellphones.

God knows what we think, He knows our thoughts before we think them. God knows our wishes, dreams and desires. God knows our feelings, fears, worries, doubts. God knows us better than we know ourselves. God knows our past, our present and our future. We cannot so much as move an inch but God knows and His hand is on us.

You can't pull the wool over His eyes or sneak anything past Him. We can't lie to Him or deceive Him, or trick Him, or say one thing and do another, He knows. He knows our hypocrisy, our guile, our motives, our reasons.

I can fool you, I can deceive you, I can keep secrets from you. I can conceal from you where I go during the week, I can cover up anything from my past I want to or exaggerate about my past. But God knows it all.

The Book of Common Prayer, "Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden, we come to you."

Now how does this make you feel? Is it scary, is it embarrassing, does it feel intrusive, like an invasion of privacy? Do you ever wish God didn't know every little detail?

Think about it, a God who doesn't know everything, a God who doesn't know the future, a God who doesn't know us, would be a small, trivial God and certainly no help to us.

Notice how David thinks about it, how he feels about it. He is comforted by this truth.

Psalm 139:6, 17 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.
17 How precious to me are your thoughts, O God!

What do you think about you, about your life? Do you think you matter, that you are important? Do you think it would matter if you had never been born, never lived on earth?

Do you ever think you are alone in the world, no one cares, no one is a real, true, genuine friend who loves you the way you are?

There are eight billion people in this world and God is with you and knows you just as intimately as all of them, no less. His eye is always on you, His thoughts are always for you.

If God knows me perfectly and completely then He knows what I need perfectly and completely.

If God knows me perfectly then He can plan the perfect salvation for me.

If God knows me perfectly it inspires my confidence and assurance, He is always good.

If God knows me perfectly it sobers me to be careful in all my conduct and thoughts.

One possible reaction to this kind of intimate knowledge might be to run and hide. We see this in the next section of the Psalm.

Second, God surrounds you and me wherever we go, verses 7-12, (God's omnipresence).

Do any of you remember reading the old classic children's book, *The Runaway Bunny*?

Once there was a little bunny who wanted to run away. So he said to his mother, "I am running away." "If you run away," said his mother, "I will run after you. For you are my little bunny." "If you run after me," said the little bunny, "I will become a fish in a trout stream and I will swim away from you." "If you become a fish in a trout stream," said his mother, "I will become a fisherman and I will fish for you." "If you become a fisherman," said the little bunny, "I will become a rock on the mountain, high above you." "If you become a rock on the mountain high above me," said his mother, "I will be a mountain climber, and I will climb to where you are" (Margaret Wise Brown).

The story goes on with the bunny wanting to run away by various means and his mother saying she would do whatever necessary to find him. At the end the mother speaks of catching him in her arms to hold him fast and hug him. This is a picture of our inescapable God.

I don't think David is actually thinking about a place to run and hide. I think he is comforting himself with the fact there is no place he can go that God is not there with him.

If I go up to heaven you are there, if I go down to the depth of the grave you are there.

If I ascend to the top of Mt. Everest or descend to the bottom of the Mariana Trench, you are there.

If I take the wings of the morning, travel at the speed of light, I cannot escape God's eye.

Wherever you go, God is there, God is utterly and absolutely inescapable.

Do you know any people in the Bible who tried to run away and hide from God?

Adam and Eve tried to hide from God in the Garden of Eden, they tried hid their sin and avoid their relationship with their creator.

The *prophet Jonah* tried to run away from God.

Jonah 1:1-3 Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 2 “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me.” 3 But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the Lord.

The parable of the prodigal son leaving his father’s house and running off to a far country is a similar kind of story. He wanted to get as far away from his father as he could.

It is human nature to run from God and to hide from God. People have been trying to do it for thousands of years.

“Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love.”

Why might we run from God? Certainly if you are living in some sinful way and our conscience is bothering us. We might run out of guilt or shame. We might run out of fear or doubt. We might think God has left us, so we leave God.

If we wanted to commit some secret sin, where could we go and hide, what remote corner could we go to and God would not see? No thought is hidden, no lust is secret. When we sin against God it is always as if we were doing it right at His feet, right in front of His face.

Isn’t it odd we would be terribly embarrassed and ashamed if people saw us at our very worst or saw our sin, but we think nothing of God seeing it. Where is our fear of the Lord?

Are you comforted by these thoughts? David says even in the darkness God is there. What is the most comforting thing to a child at night? A light, a nightlight. With God we have that light, the darkness is not dark to Him, in fact it is as light to Him.

Even when we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, God is there, with us.

I have said before, when God seems most absent to you, that is when He is actually most present. The cross proves this. To Jesus on the cross God seemed most utterly absent, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Yet there Jesus also said, “into your hands I commit my Spirit.” God was more present on the cross than anywhere else in the universe, because it was there God poured out His greatest blessings.

Let us make our consciousness of God’s presence with us a way of life. Let us practice the presence of God in our daily home life, in our conversations, in our decisions, in school issues, in our check book, in our work and worship. Ask for a deeper sense of the fullness of the presence of God. Be aware of the spiritual presence of Christ as we leave here and go out to relate, interact, serve, give, love. He cannot be more with us than He always already is.

Third, God created/made you and me, verses 13-15 (God our omnipotent Creator).

David says, "I know you know everything about me, and I know you are everywhere and always with me, because you created me. How can this not be true of the one who created me?"

The key words in this section have knitted me and intricately wove me together. Notice again how personal and intimate this is. God didn't just set processes in motion thousands of years ago and let it go.

God personally formed and fashioned you just to be you. He picked your parents, He picked your sex, He picked your features and characteristics, your eye and hair color, your personality. God is the author of every detail of my being, of my physical and mental and emotional make up. God timed it all that each of us would be right here right now in this time and place. God saw it all, God was able to do ultrasounds long before we ever could.

You are fearfully and wonderfully made in the image of God. *What does fearfully mean?* What God has done is cause for reverence, trembling at His sheer majesty and power and careful attention to detail. We are made in such a way that it should cause a certain amount of fear and admiration to well up in us. David can't help himself but to break out in praise and worship.

There are more miracles going on between the top of our heads and the bottom of our feet than we can imagine. You are a living breathing, walking, talking miracle every minute of every day.

The miracle of our brains, the most powerful supercomputer able to store and process billions of bits of information using trillions of neurons. The miracle of reason, deduction, common sense, understanding, reflection, meditation, data processing, analysis, inventing and creating.

The miracle of our eyes able to distinguish up to ten million colors and take in more information than the largest existing telescope.

The miracle of our ears able to take sound and making it understandable to our brains.

The miracle of our noses able to distinguish between more than a trillion olfactory stimuli.

The miracle of breathing and our lungs with a surface area the size of a tennis court able to oxygenate blood, through thousands of microscopic capillaries.

The miracle of our hearts pumping blood 14,000 times a day through 100,000 miles of veins and capillaries.

The miracle of a baby's growth and birth. In the darkness of the womb, God does His most marvelous, wonderful, perfect workmanship.

You are uniquely you. No other human being ever born has your fingerprint, your eye retina and your voice. You have your own unique bar code, your own password.

This miracle is only possible if we are created by an intelligent designer, a personal, loving heavenly Father with a purpose and reason.

Let us not complain about what God has done, what God has formed and fashioned. What right does the clay have to argue with the potter or say you aren't doing it right. Let us cultivate the attitude of contentment. Let us learn to say, "If it pleases the Lord, it pleases me."

Let our contemplation of all the works of God's hands lead us to humble worship and adoration of His immense glory that is over all the earth. Let us be thankful in all things and for all things.

Implications and application.

David takes great comfort in knowing God knows exhaustively every detail of his life.

David takes great comfort in knowing God is with him wherever he is.

David takes great comfort in knowing God personally designed and created him.

God is the already God. God already knows what we are going to say or even think before we say or think it. God is already wherever we go. God already knows all our days before we live even one of them.

God is the already God.

God sees you and knows you intimately and completely. This knowledge carries with it the clear message God cares about you. He cares about everything about you, your rising up and your lying down, your going out and your coming in, your obedience and your disobedience.

Girls, God sees you and knows your concerns and fears.

God knows when you are hurting over a friend who has turned into a bully.

God knows when you wrestle in your mind over peer pressures.

God knows when you are lonely or worried; or upset with your parents or siblings.

God knows your questions and doubts. And because He knows He loves you and cares.

Ask God to help you to love the parts of yourself you've struggled to accept.

Memorize Psalm 139:13-14

So by all means read this psalm over and over again, read it to your children and grandchildren and they will know some wonderful things about God and themselves.