

Psalm Ch139v1-24

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Date: 21 July 2024

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[0 : 00] Psalm 139 is on page 628.

You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise. You perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down.

You are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue, you, Lord, know it completely. You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. Where can I go from your spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

If I go up to the heavens, you are there. If I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me.

[1 : 15] Your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, surely the darkness will hide me, and the light become night around me, even the darkness will not be dark to you.

The night will shine like the day. For darkness is as light to you. For you created my inmost being. You knit me together in my mother's womb.

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful. I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. How precious to me are your thoughts, God.

How vast is the sum of them. Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand. When I awake, I am still with you. If only you, God, would slay the wicked.

[2 : 26] Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty. They speak of you with evil intent. Your adversaries misuse your name. Do I not hate those who hate you, Lord, and abhor those who are in rebellion against you?

I have nothing but hatred for them. I count them my enemies. Search me, God, and know my heart. Test me and know my anxious thoughts.

See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me to the way everlasting. Thanks very much, Sarah.

So let's keep our Bibles there. Today, we were hoping John Daunt was going to come and speak. John hasn't been able to make it.

He's unwell and passes on his apologies. So that means you've got me again today. And I thought we would stick with Psalm 139.

[3 : 36] So we'll see how we get on this morning. Let's pray. Let's pray. Father, the words that we have just read are perhaps familiar to us.

So we pray that they may become fresh to us, light new, giving us life, giving us nourishment, helping us to see that we are loved, cared, and treasured by you.

Help us by your Holy Spirit, we pray, that you would speak to us through your word this morning. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, the title I've given this psalm today is Our Personal God. So I'll give you the headings. I haven't got a PowerPoint. So if you're taking notes, I'll give them as we go along.

So Our Personal God. I don't know if you know that the population of the world right now is 8.1 billion people and counting. So already today, there's about 200,000 people being born around the world.

[5 : 07] That's a lot of people, isn't it? 8.1 billion. And with so many people and so big a population, we can almost feel lost in the midst of all of that.

Insignificant. Who am I in the mass of all these people? We can maybe feel a little bit like Wally.

You know Wally? Wears Wally with his little red and white hat where you have to search the page for the one Wally amidst hundreds of others that look like him.

And we can maybe feel like that in this population and this world. We're just another person. A number in this ever-increasing population.

And in the midst of it all, we can ask, does anybody care about me? Does anybody think about me? Well, Psalm 139 teaches us about a God who is deeply personal.

[6 : 17] And he does think about us. And he cares about us deeply. The psalm breaks up into four sections, six verses at a time.

So we're going to look at four parts to this psalm. First, God is intimately knowledgeable about me. God is intimately knowledgeable about me.

Look at verse one. You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. God knows us. And he knows us in all kinds of different ways.

He knows what we are doing. Look at verse two. You know when I sit and when I rise, when I go out to work, or when I go out to college and when I return. Verse three, you discern my going out and my lying down when I get up and when I go to bed.

God knows what we are doing. God knows what we are thinking. Do you see verse two again? You know when I sit and when I rise.

[7 : 29] You perceive my thoughts from afar. Who knows your thoughts right now? God. In fact, it's even telling us that before our thoughts became a thought, God knew about it.

Isn't that extraordinary? He knows what we're thinking. And he knows, verse four, what we're going to say. Before a word is on my tongue, you, Lord, know it completely.

He doesn't just hear our words. He doesn't just know about our words. He knows what we're going to say even before we get them out. He knows every detail about our lives.

As it says in verse three, you are familiar with all our ways. I mean, we think we know ourselves pretty well, but no, God knows us better.

He knows our past. He knows our present. He knows our future. But more than that, God doesn't just know about us in an informational kind of way as if God had an exam to take and he wanted to, you know, how much does God know about you?

[8 : 55] He'd get 100% every time. No, it's more than that. He knows us relationally. Look at verse five. You hem me in behind and before and you lay your hand upon me.

I'm not much of a stitcher. I do stitch the odd thing every now and again, but you know that term to hem something in behind and in front or what does it say, behind and before.

It's like God has put you in a pocket of care. And his hand is upon you. God is intimately bound up with your life.

He's not some distant, impersonal, all-knowing being that just is somewhere out there. No, he knows you intimately and relationally.

Now what do you do with a God like that? Well, it can be a bit troubling, can't it, to think that God knows all about me.

[10:07] That God knows my thoughts and what I'm thinking, what I'm saying and what I'm doing. Nobody else might know, but God sees and knows it all.

That can be pretty scary, can't it? But this isn't meant to leave us in fear. Look at verse 6. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.

It's meant to lead us not in fear, but in worship, in amazement and wonder at how big and awesome and great God is that he knows about me.

and that he knows me relationally. For those who are Christians, we can say, I know this God and he knows me.

So first, God is intimately knowledgeable about me. Second, God is continually present with me.

[11:16] He is continually present with me. Look at verse 7. He poses the question, where can I go from your spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

Is there any possible place on this earth that I could go and God is not with me? Well, look at the answers.

He is with us in the depths. Look at verse 8. If I go up to the heavens, you are there. If I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

Not just the depths in terms of the struggling hard times, but it's referring to the grave itself. That God is with me as I pass from life into death.

He's with me. He's with me in the distant places that I might travel. Verse 9. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there, your hand will guide me.

[12:30] Your right hand will hold me fast. It doesn't matter where we go or how far away we may go. He has us in the grip of His hand.

Not just the depths, not just distant places, but He is with us in the darkness. Verse 11. If I say, surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me.

You know those times of utter distress? when life is so overwhelming and things become dark and we're despairing?

And even the best of times, even the good times as we look at them, become dark. We can be in those places sometimes.

But even there, verse 12, even the darkness will not be dark to you, for the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.

[13:39] Even in our darkest depths, even in our distant places we may go, God is with you. North, south, east, and west.

Outside, inside, there is no place, there is no circumstance, there is no experience that we will go through in this life and God will not be there.

365 days of the year, 24-7, moment by moment, the God who knows all about you is with you.

That means there is nothing that can happen or nothing that we can do that will ever be able to remove us from God's presence.

God will never ever turn around and say to you, because you did this or because of this, I am not going to be with you. You will never hear that from God.

[14 : 46] Now, what do you do with a big God like that? Well, it should leave us astounded that God would bother with an insignificant me.

The God who creates all things, who rules all things, who knows all things, is with me in every detail. He's with you in your depths, in the distant places, and in the darkest of days.

So, God knows you. God is present with you. And third, God is wonderfully creator of me.

He is wonderfully creator of me. He gives the reason for why God knows all about us, and the reason why God is present with us.

It's because, look at verse 13, for you created my inmost being, because you made me. That's why God knows all about me.

[15 : 52] That's why God is present with me, because he's the one who put me here. Aren't these verses wonderful? He created us physically, verse 13.

You created my inmost being. You knit me together in my mother's womb. Verse 15, my frame was not hidden from you, when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.

When we were not even a thought, God knew about us. Yes, it took a mother and a father.

Yes, it took an egg and a sperm. But it's God who made you. He made you who you are. And he formed us wonderfully.

He not only created us physically, he formed us wonderfully, verse 14. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

[17 : 03] Your works, and we are part of God's works, your works are wonderful. I know that full well. Do you know you're wonderful?

You're a wonderful person because God formed you and shaped you and gave you the gifts and the skills that you have and made you the kind of person that you are with your personality and your quirky ways and the unique person that you are.

He formed you. But he did more than that. He ordained every one of your days, verse 16.

Your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

everything about your life from beginning to end is all ordained and all known by God.

[18 : 16] Such a different message isn't it to what society tells us. It tells us and teaches us that we're nothing more than a collection of cells. That we've come from nowhere and we're headed nowhere.

we're just in a series of random chances. We just all happen to be here. And our job is to stumble along in this crazy world and try and make the best of things.

But no, we're so much more than just a random set of cells. God made me and designed me and shaped me. You're not a mistake.

Your life is not a chance or an accident or some kind of regret. God ordained your birthday and he has set your death day.

And he holds it all in his hands from beginning to end. All is under his good and sovereign control. What do we do with such a big awesome God as this?

[19 : 28] Well, look at verse 17. How precious to me or how amazing to me are your thoughts, God.

How vast the sum of them. Do you realize and do you know that God thinks about you? It isn't just us who just wonder and ponder and think about God.

No, God thinks about you. God is concerned for you for every detail of your life. And God has you here and he made you because he loves you.

You are alive today because he has purposes for you in this time and in this generation. When you lie awake at night and you can't sleep, just think and wonder, does anybody care about me?

Well, the God who made you and the God who formed you so wonderfully, the God who ordained every one of your days, thinks about you and is concerned for you because he loves you.

[20 : 55] So God knows you. God is present with you. God is creator of you. And then fourth, God is passionately jealous for you.

He's passionately jealous for you. Look at verse 19. If only you, God, would slay the wicked. Verse 22.

I have nothing but hatred for them. I count them my enemies. Well, it's not what we expect, is it, as we read through this psalm.

Where did these verses come out of? The rest of the psalm is so encouraging and so helpful that God knows me. He's present with me.

He made me. But slaying the wicked, hating our enemies, what's all that about? It seems like David got as far as 1 to 18 one night and went to bed and got up very cranky the next day.

[22 : 00] Somebody upset him. We're very comfortable, aren't we, with verses 1 to 18? We're quite happy to read it. It's the kind of thing we might ask a non-Christian friend to read and say, this will encourage you.

But by the way, don't read verses 19 to the end. We kind of get a bit embarrassed about them. Maybe we should leave them out.

Well, before we do leave them out, I think there is something that teaches us here. It seems that David, who is the author of the psalm, has a whole bunch of enemies that are causing him trouble.

In fact, they are wanting his life. Verse 19, away from me, you who are bloodthirsty. So in the midst of his trial, in the midst of his depths, in the midst of his darkness, he cries out to God, God, if you are so big and so great, if you know all about me, and if you are present with me, and if you wonderfully created me, then why don't you do something about it?

If only you, God, would slay the wicked. If only you would deal with the problem. after all, they're God's enemies too, aren't they?

[23 : 28] Look at verse 20, they speak of you with evil intent. Your adversaries misuse your name. Do I not hate those who hate you, Lord, and abhor those who are in rebellion against you?

You see, the wicked, those who are intent are doing evil, are not just enemies of David and causing him trouble, they are ultimately an act against God.

And maybe as we read this psalm and we think about our own situation, we think, well, God knows about the Christians who are living in Ukraine and Russia.

He's present with them. He made them. Why doesn't he do something about it? Well, the war in Palestine and Israel and all those innocent people being killed every day, God knows.

Why doesn't he deal with it? All the other mindless things that go on in this world and the evil and the violence and the extortion and trafficking and if only you, God, would slay the wicked.

[24 : 46] Maybe you have enemies. Maybe there's things you're struggling with and you're also crying out to God today and asking, you know me, you're present with me, you created me, surely you're big and powerful enough to do something about it.

Well, God is not immune to all that is going on. He does see, he does know, and he will judge. The Bible is very clear about that.

But our job is not to take vengeance. Our job is not to play God. Instead, look how he responds, verse 23. Search me, God, and know my heart.

Test me and know my anxious thoughts. see if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Yes, God is concerned with all that is going on in the world, but God is concerned for you, for your heart. God will take care of the big things of this world, we can be sure of that, but he's concerned for your heart today.

[26 : 14] The God who knows us, who is present with us, who created us, longs, verse 24, that we would walk in his way, in the way of everlasting. You see, God is passionately jealous for us.

He does know us. He saw us from the beginning of time. He saw us as we entered into this world, and he knows our need.

He knows our mess and our brokenness, and God sent Jesus to be with us. God who created the universe was formed inside the mother of Mary, became one of us, to be present amongst us in the mess and the brokenness of this world.

world. His life was ordained that he would come. It was all planned by God before the world ever existed, that he would come as a person into the mess and the brokenness of this world.

And he came to die for us, to take our blame, to take our sin, to take the judgment that we deserve.

[27 : 35] he faced a greater enemy, the enemy of death and sin, and he was victorious over them all as he rose again from the grave.

And he comes to us afresh today, and he says, I am passionately jealous for you. I died for you. I loved you.

Follow me in the way everlasting. everlasting. We may only be a number to some. We may only be one person in 8.1 billion people.

But you are precious to God. You are loved by him. He knows you. He's with you. He made you.

And he jealously longs for you. Let's pray. Father, we confess, I admit, that we have only scratched the surface of your awesomeness and your greatness.

[28 : 55] So would you please take these few thoughts that we have looked up together and impress them upon our hearts today, that we may go worshipping you in wonder and praise of an almighty God, to know that you long for us, and that we would walk in your paths and your way.

Help us now, we ask. In Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to sing together as we finish.

What love could remember, no wrongs we have done, omniscient, all-knowing, he counts not their sum. Let's stand together as we remind ourselves of the awesomeness of God and worship him.

Thank you.