

Wonderfully Made

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 22 July 2023

Preacher: Dr. Wes Feltner

[0 : 00] All right, if you've got your Bible, we'll go to Psalm 139.

Psalm 139. As we continue in our series that we started just a few weeks ago called Summer in the Psalms, and we're just taking several psalms and kind of finishing out the summer, meditating and teaching on those.

Now, last week, I actually said I was going to give you the opportunity to make some suggestions. If there was a specific psalm that's your favorite, and I don't normally take sermon requests.

In fact, I almost thought I should have titled this series Jukebox, right? So you just request whatever psalm you want, whatever psalm you like. Well, ask and you shall receive.

In fact, many of you have emailed me or in one way or another requested your favorite psalm. And so I think I have enough now to finish out the rest of the year.

[1 : 21] But tonight's psalm, Psalm 139, is actually from several of you that requested this psalm. So ask and you shall receive, right?

So if you don't like tonight's message, there's nobody to blame but you, okay? So anyways, and actually I think Psalm 139 is an appropriate psalm for us to look at right off of the heels of Psalm 2. Here's what I mean is, I think Psalm 2, last week's psalm, last week's message, which was all about what? It was all about the sovereignty of God and His authority over all of creation, His authority over all the nations of the world, that the center of everything is God, right?

And so I think it's appropriate to have that as a background as we look at Psalm 139, because I don't want anything that I say tonight to take away from the fact that God is the center of everything. Sometimes we have a tendency to make ourselves, to make humanity the center of everything, but God is the sovereign one. I thought of it almost like this, when you think about God's design of parents and children, the idea that children are loved, children are cherished, children are a blessing, but they are not to be the center of the home.

[2 : 48] Now we in American culture get that wrong, but biblically, the parents are the center of everything, even though the children are loved and cherished.

I think Psalm 2, God as the center of everything, and Psalm 139, as we will see His care for us, go hand in hand.

So I wanted to kind of make that clear up front, that we want to preach this psalm in its fullest intent, while understanding that all of it is underneath the sovereignty and majesty of God.

You ready? Psalm 139, if you're able to stand, please do so, as we honor the reading of God's Word. I love this psalm. I know many of you love this psalm. It's why it was so requested by you.

Psalm 139, it's a psalm of David. And David writes this, O Lord, You have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up, You discern my thoughts from afar.

[3 : 52] You searched out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, You know it altogether.

You hem me in behind and before. You lay Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is high and I cannot attain it.

Where shall I go from Your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You're there. If I make my bed in Sheol, You're there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand will still lead me and Your right hand shall hold me.

If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me and the light about me be night, well, even the darkness is not dark to You, and night is bright as day, for darkness is as light with You.

For You formed my inward parts. You knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. And wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well.

[5 : 02] My frame was not hidden from You when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. You saw my unformed substance. In Your book were written every one of them.

The days that were formed for me when as yet there was none of them. How precious to me are Your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!

If I were to count them, they were more than the sand. I awake and I'm still with You. Oh, that You would slay the wicked, O God! O men of blood, depart from me!

They speak against You with malicious intent. Your enemies take Your name in vain. Do I not hate those who hate You, O Lord? Do I not loathe those who rise up against You?

I hate them with complete hatred. I count them My enemies. Search Me, O God, and know My heart. Try Me, and know My thoughts, and see if there be any grievous way in Me.

[6 : 03] and lead Me in the way everlasting. What a beautiful psalm. Let's pray that God teach us tonight from it as we look to His Word.

God, just even reading that psalm again, I realize how much I need help to teach this. There's so much here You want us to know.

There's so much, like David, You want us to stand in awe of. So, bring forth worship in our hearts tonight. May we overflow with praise to Your name for the beauty and the truth that we see in this psalm.

Help us, like David, stand in awe of what You have done. In Jesus' name, I pray this. And God's people said, Amen. You can be seated. I am a man.

That's what the sign said. It was an image made famous during the civil rights protest of the 1960s. The image is that of a long line of African American men, actually sanitation workers from my home state in Tennessee, who were standing up for their basic human rights.

[7 : 27] And they stood there holding a sign that said, I am a man. That was, after all, what the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 60s was about.

Listen, faith in with the movement was so much more than just about who gets to eat at what restaurant or who gets to drink at what water fountain or who has the right to vote.

It was much, much, much, much deeper than that. The fundamental issue of the civil rights movement was that an entire group of people were being treated as less than human simply because of the color of their skin.

And we have a tendency in our culture to call things like that social issues. But long before they are social issues, they are theological issues.

Because listen to me, faith family, the Bible teaches, the Bible declares that every human being, everywhere, be they red, yellow, black, or white, are created in the image of God and should be treated as persons.

[8 : 47] This is a theological issue. And yet if you look at the history of humanity, human beings have a tendency to dehumanize and devalue other human beings.

It has happened in almost every culture and it continues to happen today. The Nazis called the Jews rats. The Hutus called the Tutsis cockroaches.

Slave owners called the slaves animals. Babies in our own day are called medical waste. The dehumanization of human beings is not new in the history of humanity.

Let me say that again. The dehumanization of human beings is not new in the history of humanity. And it doesn't just happen on large scale issues like racism or abortion.

It also happens in much smaller, practical ways every single day. To the doctor, you're not a person. You're an insurance claim.

[10 : 03] To the landlord, you're not a person. You're just a tenant. To the politician, you're not a person. You're just a vote. To the boss, you're not a person.

You're just an employee. To the salesman, you're not a person. You're just another sale. To the social media world, you're not a person. You're just another click.

And I'm going to let my friend Brad Paisley finish this list for me. To the teller down at the bank, you're just another checking account.

To the plumber that came today, you're just another house. At the airport ticket counter, you're just another fare.

At the beauty shop at the mall, well, you're just another head of hair. He does it better than I do, all right? But be honest with me.

[11 : 00] Have you ever felt that way? Dehumanized. Devalued. Just another statistic. Just another face in the crowd.

In a culture of all-star athletes and glamorous supermodels, you feel like nothing but a to whom it may concern. If you've ever felt that way about your life, return.

Often. To Psalm 139. Look at verse 1. Oh Lord, you have searched me and known me.

The first amazing thought that David expresses here in Psalm 139 is that God knows you. God knows you.

And listen, faith family. Sometimes the simplest of thoughts can capture our minds in profound ways. And that's what's happening to David here.

[12 : 05] He is captivated. His mind is blown away at the reality that God knows him. God knows him.

That's remarkable of the billions of people in the world and all that God has to do to uphold the universe. Think of the millions of names and faces and people and lives that have existed throughout all of human history.

Let your minds go there right now. Think of how many people have existed throughout human history. It's like the ending of a movie with all these credits. It's just name after name after name after name after name.

And among all of those names is yours and God knows it. God knows you.

And just how much does God know you? Look at verse 2. You know when I sit down and when I rise up and you discern my thoughts from afar.

[13 : 13] You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. That's David's way of saying God knows everything about you.

The Hebrew word yada, which means to know. It's an intimate knowing. It's not just a general knowledge. It's that God, in a very personal and intimate way, knows you.

He knows when you wake up and when you go to sleep. He knows the details of your day. He knows where you're going and what you're going to do. He knows what you're going to say before you even think it, much less say it.

David's point here is that there is nothing about our lives, be it in word or deed, that is outside God's intimate knowledge.

Your boss may overlook you. Your spouse may undervalue you. The elites may look down at you. Your friends may abandon you.

[14 : 15] But rest assured tonight, your God knows you. He knows you intimately. This idea of God's exhaustive knowledge of us reminded me of a scene from a movie that's now several years old called Bruce Almighty.

It's a good movie, but I would just say as your pastor, don't take your theology from it, okay? Pretty, pretty wise point there. Don't take your theology from Bruce Almighty. But in the movie, Bruce, who's played by Jim Carrey, he's struggling with this very idea as to whether or not God is aware of his situation.

Does God really know all that he is going through? And so he gets the opportunity to meet God, who knew that God was Morgan Freeman. And so he meets God and he finds out just how much God knows.

You must be Bruce. I've been expecting you. This is hilarious.

So you're the boss and the electrician in the jet. Must be a killer at Christmas party. Don't get drunk, though. One of you might need a ride home. You always were funny, Bruce.

[15 : 26] Just like your father. He didn't mind rolling up his sleeves either, son. And people underestimate the benefit of good old manual labor. It's freedom in it. Some of the happiest people in the world go home smelling to high heaven at the end of the day.

Murray, what is this? How do you know my father and how do you get my pager number? Oh, I know quite a lot about you, Bruce. Just about everything there is to know.

Everything you've ever said or done or thought about doing right there in that file cabinet. Wow, a whole drawer just for me.

Yeah. Mind if I take a look? Sure like it. That sounded to me good. This last entry was a little disturbing.

Now, hopefully, heaven has a little better technology than filing cabinets.

[16:45] All right. But the point here is clear, both from the text and from that clip, is that God knows everything there is to know about you. You are intimately known.

And how is it that God knows all of this about you? Well, David tells us. Look at verse 7. He says, Where shall I go from your spirit and where shall I flee from your presence?

I mean, if I ascend to heaven, you're there. If I make my bed in Sheol, you're there. If I take the wings of the morning or dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me and your right hand shall hold me.

If I say, well, surely the darkness will cover me and the light about me be night. But even the darkness isn't dark to you. And the night is bright as day for darkness is as light with you. One of the reasons why God knows everything about you is because God is always with you. Always with you. He knows so much about you because His presence never leaves you.

[17:53] David says, If I go up to the heavens, well, you're there. And if I go to the very depths of Sheol, you're there. And if I try to go to the east, you're there.

If I go to the sea, that is to the west, you're there. Anywhere I go, even to the darkest of places, you're with me. There ain't no mountain high enough, ain't no valley low enough, to keep God's presence from you.

He knows you and He is with you. That is why His knowledge is perfect and complete of you. But it's not just that He's always with you that He knows all this about you.

But there's another reason. Look at verse 13. This is what you probably know Psalm 139 as. For you formed my inward parts and you knitted me together in my mother's womb.

That is, God knows you. And how does He know you? Because He's always with you. And not only is He always with you, He is the One that created you. God knows everything about you because He is your personal Creator.

[19:10] You were not created on some heavenly assembly line that was just cranking out human beings. God personally was involved in your creation.

Mind blown. And who knows the music better than the composer? Who knows the painting better than the painter? Who knows the book better than the author?

Who knows the pot better than the potter? Who knows creation better than the Creator? You were personally created by God.

In fact, you weren't just created by Him, but pay attention to what David says in terms of how involved God was in your creation. Verse 13 again.

You formed me in my inward parts. You knitted me together in my mother's womb. Verse 15. My frame was not hidden from you when I was being made in secret.

[20:17] Intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Think about that language. You formed my inward parts. You knitted me in my mother's womb.

My frame was not hidden from you. Made in secret. Intricately woven. And that is remarkable. Stop and think about the fact that God was personally involved in your being.

In your creation. That is, when that one cell from your mom and that one cell from your dad came together to form a single cell with 46 chromosomes and 3,000 genes, and there was a DNA structure that was formed unlike any that had ever been before or ever would be after, guess what? God was there. And by day three, when you had gone from one cell to 16 and you entered into your mother's womb doubling in size in just a few days, guess what?

God was there. God was there. And by month one, when you had a backbone and a spinal cord and a nervous system and you were 10,000 times bigger than you were when you started, good job.

[21:29] God was there. And in month three, when your body was formed and you started kicking because you didn't like the Mexican foods that your mother had the night before and you start making a fist, God was there.

And by month five, when your eyes could see and your ears were developed that you could recognize your mother's voice, God was there. And in the remaining months, when you could see and hear and taste and touch and you became so big that you got crowded and you began to move through the birth canal and you emerged into the world and you let out a cry that filled the room, God was there.

David's point is this. Notice it on the screen. God knows you exhaustively because God created you meticulously. God knows you exhaustively because He created you meticulously.

You are not a replacement part. You are not a chunk of flesh on the blob of humanity. You're not a statistic. Here's what you are. A person known by the very one that knitted you together in your mother's womb, you, and I mean you, are fearfully and wonderfully made.

That's the thought that has captivated David's mind in Psalm 139. He can't get over it.

[23 : 02] It's too great for him. And this truth brings about some very important implications. I'll just mention two very quickly. The obvious one that people will go to is that you can't hold to Psalm 139 and not see the importance of life.

In fact, I will say you can't take the Bible seriously and not be pro-life. Now, some of you get uncomfortable and you get uncomfortable with me making that kind of a statement because you think I'm talking about a political category.

And I'm not talking about a political category. I'm not even talking about a single issue. I'm talking about God is for all of life.

The Bible is for all. And I ain't talking politics. And I ain't talking voting categories. I'm talking this. Life in the womb and life at old age and life regardless of skin color and life regardless of economic status and life in how you speak to one another.

You see, I'll say these things and evangelicals, and I understand, will want to immediately jump to the abortion topic. But here's the verse they won't quote.

[24 : 22] James 3, 8 and 9. But no human being can tame the tongue. It's a restless evil full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God.

It's very interesting in some people's fight for life that they don't respect life. Because you can be pro-life for the abortion topic and we should be.

But what about in how you talk to one another? Do you realize that person you disagree with is a human being?

And if you run them down and tear them apart and gossip in the name of Jesus, you're not as pro-life as you think you are.

We must be for life in all of life. Including the womb, but including all of life in between because all of life matters.

[25 : 34] Amen? The importance of life is the obvious implication of this. But secondly, is the importance of your life. The importance of your life.

Can I just say something out loud that I think is true for a lot of us? No one dehumanizes me more than me.

And oftentimes, no one dehumanizes you more than you. I don't like the color of my eyes and I really don't like the shape of my body and I really wish I had a different voice.

I wish I had a voice like David Jeremiah. You ever heard David Jeremiah preach? Like, that guy's voice is, you're just ready to walk an aisle just when he says, hello. You know, it's just, you got a voice. I mean, I wish I had that voice.

And you wish you had a different personality. Listen, many of us harbor dissatisfaction to God for how we were created. The short want to be tall. Intellectuals want to be athletic.

[26 : 34] The mechanically minded want to be musical. And on and on and on and on. Listen, no one dehumanizes me more than me. And no one dehumanizes you more than you because it's easy to look in the mirror and not like what you see.

And yet that is exactly what God created. It's not just the importance of life. It's the importance of your life. That if you believe Psalm 139, you believe that you were formed by God, knitted together by God.

Your frame wasn't hidden by Him. You were intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your life matters to God.

But listen, notice this on the screen. God's involvement in your life doesn't end in the womb. It extends all the way to the tomb. Look at what He says in verse 16. He says, Your eyes saw my unformed substance.

In your book were written every one of them the days that were formed for me when as yet there was none of them. That is, God's sovereignty over your life stretches from beginning to end.

[27 : 48] The hairs on your head are counted. The days of your life are numbered. And you say, listen, this is just too much for me to comprehend. I know. It's why it ought to lead you on your knees in worship to the God who knows you.

To the God who created you. Be like David and say, how precious are these thoughts? How vast the sun of some of them. I can't handle how big you are.

Worship Him at His majesty in your creation. He has uniquely created you. He has written your story.

Fall down and worship. But now some of you, that's not your response. Your response is not to fall down and worship God. Let's be honest. You've been very uncomfortable with this psalm from the moment I read it.

And the reason that you're uncomfortable with this psalm, and I get it, is because you feel like this is divine claustrophobia. Like God is some type of a stalker. Okay? I mean, God is like tapping into my phone conversations and He's reading my emails.

[28 : 57] Look at verse 5. You hem me in. You're behind and before. You lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is to wonderful me. It's high.

I cannot attain it. You can take this negatively. That is, I don't want to be known this way. If God really knows everything about me, that's unsettling because I don't want anybody to know everything about me.

There is an aspect of God's intimate knowledge of me that is very, very uncomfortable uncomfortable because there are some things I just don't want people to know. That's why you've heard me say this before.

It's kind of a hide the beer of the pastors here. Right? We don't want to know the pastor. We don't want the pastor to know we've got beer here. We want to hide that. I mean, God, I'm fine if you know my compassion for the poor, but I don't want you to know my lust for the woman at the gym. I'm fine if you want to know that I'm caring for my elderly parents, but I don't want you to know about my bitterness towards people that are married because I'm remaining single. It goes like this. Notice it on the screen.

[30 : 06] I'm really glad I'm not generic, but I'd rather God not get too specific. I'm glad I'm not just a number. There's a point to which I'm glad I'm known, but I don't want to be that known.

I don't want everything to be there. So why is David able to rejoice in the fact that God knows him this way?

Verse 17. How precious to me are your thoughts, O God, how vast is the sun of some of them. If I would count them, they are more than the sand.

I awake and I am still with you. One of the things that captures David's mind in this psalm is the fact that not only does God know him, not only is God with him, not only did God create him, but God intimately loves him.

And I think this may be the most profound point of the psalm. That is that David understands, listen, and if you've zoned out, this is a point for you to zone back in. David understands that for God to know everything about him and still love him is a thought one can hardly bear.

[31 : 32] That is, the God who knows all should crush me with his hand, but he guides me. The God who knows all should cast me into darkness, but he holds me.

This is the point that will preach. Are you ready for it, faith family? Here it is. Here it is. Notice it on the screen. The one who knows you best is the one that loves you most.

That's insane. That's crazy love. That is, the very one that knows the darkest of dark places in your life and the very thing you want nobody to know not only knows it, but loves you still.

And the reason why that's so insane is because there is not a love like this anywhere else. All human love is the more you really get to know me, the more likely it is you're going to walk away or distance yourself.

We experience that all the time. But listen, David understands that the one that knows him most is actually the one that loves him the most. That isn't shunned away or pushed away by the dark things.

[32 : 57] By the ugly things. And how much more... If David can say this, how much more those of us post the cross.

Listen to what the writer of Hebrews says and tell me that it doesn't sound a lot like Psalm 139 and then watch how it gets applied.

This will preach. This is Hebrews 4. No creature is hidden from his sight. Sounds like Psalm 2, doesn't it?

There's nothing that God does not know. He sees everything. All are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give an account.

God knows everything about you and you must give account to that reality. But then notice what the author says. Since we have a great high priest who passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God who can sympathize with our weaknesses, for He was tempted as we are, yet without sin, so let us with confidence draw near, I'm being in context, draw near to the God who knows everything.

[34 : 16] The God who knows everything, to whom everything in creation is not hidden from Him, to that God draw near, for His throne is a throne of grace.

That's more than I can comprehend. And if that does not lead you to worship, my friends, what will? That God's knowledge of you, though a terrifying reality on one hand, is the most comforting reality because it means that if He knows everything about you and still loves you anyways, you have nothing to fear in going to Him.

In coming before His throne. Notice this on the Strange Faith family. Only the love of Jesus can give you the confidence to stand before the God who knows everything.

Only the love of Jesus can give you the confidence to stand before the God who knows everything. And so, even more so in light of the Gospel, in light of the love of Jesus, we can worship the reality that God knows us intimately.

[35 : 34] And for David, just a few quick things and we're done. David, this created a loyalty to God. Look at what he says in verse 21. He says, Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord?

Do I not loathe those who rise up against you? I hate them with complete hatred. I count them as my enemies. That seems like a really odd verse to end the psalm.

All David is saying, he's actually saying something that Jesus is going to say. Jesus says, You can't come after me unless you hate your father and mother. Do you remember that? In Luke? And we often think, Is Jesus teaching hate?

No, Jesus is not literally saying that the prerequisite of following me is hatred towards someone else. What he's suggesting, what he's commanding is, Your love and commitment to me must be so true, you are forsaking all others.

There is no other relationship in your life that has the loyalty that I have in your life. In other words, what God's love created in David was a loyalty to God.

[36 : 42] Not an actual, I'm going to go out and hate people, but a, I am so committed to your ways, to your design, to your commands, and I hate the things that you hate, that I will be an ambassador for your purposes in this world.

He's so overwhelmed with God's love that he is loyal to God. to the end. And not only a loyalty to God, but a humility before God.

Verse 23, and we're done. Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

If you put the psalm together, it's God knows me, and I want to be known. God knows everything about me, and I want you to search me. That is God, in light of everything I've just said, my life is an open door to you.

Lift up every piece of carpet, look in every corner, dig up all the foundation, unlock every closed door, clean out every drawer, because I know being known by you is the best thing for me.

[37 : 54] God, search me, know me. You know me, know me. You know me, so know me.

God, I'm wide open, and laid bare before your presence. That's worship. That's worship.

When you move from the beginning of the psalm, to almost the God I feel hemmed in, and there's nothing hidden from your sight, to, here I am God.

Know me, and search me. We have a tendency to dehumanize other people. We have a tendency to dehumanize ourselves.

To feel like just a statistic. To feel like just another face in the crowd. To feel like something less than human. But if you're here tonight, and you feel that way, or you've been made to feel that way, go over and over again to Psalm 139, and be reminded of this.

[39 : 06] Listen, your sovereign God knows you, is with you, made you, and loves you, intimately, in the person of Jesus Christ.

And how do I know that God loves human beings that much? Because He became one. Because God, in the person of Jesus Christ, is able to say, I am a man.

I am a man. Don't you see? Nothing shows God's love for you more than the fact that He became like you.

And He became like you in order to die for you. And He died for you that you would spend eternity with Him. It is impossible to dehumanize life and His love when you remember that God took on flesh.

And all God's people said, Amen. Amen. Let's pray. Let's pray. God, thank You for this psalm because in a world where we are often made to feel like just a statistic, just another sale, just another insurance claim, it's so easy for us to just breeze by people and forget that there is a beauty in humanity.

[40 : 49] Help us see it in the mirror. And help us see it on the faces of people that we come across every single day regardless of skin color, regardless of disagreement.

But even in our deepest of disagreements, we are still dealing with people created in the likeness of You. And that not only should shape the way we think about ourselves, but it should shape the way we think about each other.

Help us be the kind of people who stand for life and all of it from womb to tomb. And everywhere in between. For God, though You are the center of all things, You have put Your image on humanity. And that gives us a significance and a value that we did not earn and we cannot create ourselves, but You have given it to us out of Your love.

Help us see that even in all the brokenness of this world. Help us, like David, stand in awe that we are fearfully and wonderfully made.

[42 : 09] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Thank you.