

Thou hast searched me and known me.

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[0 : 0 0] Psalm 139. Thank you, Mary Angela and Kristen. That's who I was saying thank you to. I know you weren't clapping for me. But thank you for singing that song. I love hearing you all sing that. Psalm 139.

We're going to walk through it with our time remaining. I won't read it all to you up front. I'll read each verse to you, give you some explanation. Let me commend you and just thank you for being here. The Bible teaches us the closer to the Lord's return, we should meet more and more together.

And so I have enjoyed every part of the service. I hope you have as well. I don't have any plans of ruining the last 30 minutes for you or for myself either. I plan to continue to enjoy the truth that we've been singing about.

Zechariah took us to John and taught us God's Word. And we want to continue and see it, God's Word before us. I was going to take us to Zechariah, but I'll do that on another night. And I believe what I would like to do, Pastor Bo, on the last Sunday night of the month is to have a Q&A; about what Bible prophecy and about Israel.

I could answer all your questions tonight. They just want me right. All right. And so I'm going to put it off and you can submit your questions. Pastor Bo can help us get it out on email so you can submit those questions.

[1 : 0 7] And I will get with different people in the church and I'll study and prepare them. It's very relevant. If you've been in the church any time along, very long, you know we don't talk about political issues. I don't talk a lot about current events.

But this is not a political issue. And this is not a current event. This is biblical prophecy. And I fully expect that Jerusalem and Israel will have a place in the newspaper and in the news for the rest of our days until the Lord returns.

It's always there. But things are accelerating. And there's misunderstanding. My wife works with a lady from Iran. And she said, how come churches seem to care about Israeli people dying but not Iranian people?

And that is not the case at all. We are saddened by the loss of life. We're saddened to hear that. And so we're not watching the Braves versus the Phillies. I got to get you out at 806.

I know, Jared. All right. We're not watching world news like we're watching a baseball game where we don't care about people on one side or the other. We're just watching the faithfulness of God being lived out.

[2 : 1 2] That's what we're seeing. Not the faithfulness of people, but the faithfulness of God. 800 times in the scripture, Jerusalem is mentioned. 25 square miles. Forsyth County is about 250 square miles.

All the nations of the world dividing, deciding, and talking about this country. Zachariah tells us that it's as if trembling into the people around about, that people are drunk.

They're obsessed on talking about Jerusalem. And that's the way it always will be, which means at your place of work and where you go, these conversations are happening. A conversation about Israel is an open door to a conversation about the faithfulness of God.

And as God's people, we need to be right in the middle of it. And so you ought to be studying about it. Ask your questions. I'll try to find answers. Not all your questions can be answered, but those that can, I'll try to get the right people to answer them so we can speak about this to our friends and be an encouragement to them.

I reached out to Josh Levesque in Dearborn, Michigan, as you would expect, quite different than the way things are here in Alpharetta. I told him we're praying for him and the conversations that he's having. God's opened up many doors for him through that.

[3 : 22] So October the 29th, we'll do a Q&A; on Sunday night about that, Lord willing. Psalm 129. And this is what I'd like to ask you tonight as I read each psalm, each verse, give you a few comments.

I would like to ask you to be honest. To be honest. Yes, we should always be honest, but this passage will not have the effective work in its heart that it should have if you don't decide right now that you're going to come to God's word and just be honest.

And it should be great encouragement to you or it should bring great conviction, this passage. Written by David. Psalm 23, verse 1 says that David was the sweet psalmist of Israel.

What a great description of those that wrote the psalm that we have. David is described as the sweet psalmist of Israel. Then it says to the chief musician, a psalm of David, the chief musician, some people say that it would be Asaph or another one of the choir leaders.

I like what David Guzik proposes is that it is unto the Lord, that our Lord is the chief musician. If that's the case or not, either way, David would be praying this unto the Lord.

[4 : 31] And probably not just the one time that it was written. This would have been something that David would have, when he laid out his life before the Lord, these would have been the words that he would have said. They should become our words.

Derek Kidner in his commentary on the passage says, any small thoughts that we may have of God are magnificently transcended by this psalm. Any small thoughts we have, this surpasses all of it.

Yet for all its height and depth, it remains intensely personal from first to last. Very personal for David. These are words that you ought to be saying, that you ought to know, that you ought to be opening up Psalms 139 and praying it unto the Lord.

So the Lord knows and evaluates every aspect of his life. Would you read Psalm 139 verse 1 for me, this first verse? Let's read it aloud. I'll say the passage and then we'll read it together.

Psalm 139 verse 1. Oh Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. That's the summary of this whole psalm here. He searched us and he knows us.

[5 : 33] We should let that sink in. All of our postures, gestures, practices, where we sit, where we stand, where we walk, where we lie. He knowest all of them. Some people can search but not know, but he does both.

He can see it. He can know it. And he can search it. And he can know our motive and our purpose. So many arguments that we may have inside of a family have to do with, well, you did this.

Well, I did that. But you didn't know what I meant by doing that. Like I left the groceries out because I wanted you to put them up because you do a better job at it. All right. Or whatever argument you may have.

That's something I do a lot of. I leave things out that I'm supposed to put up when I come home from the grocery store. And so I can argue, you saw my actions, but you don't know my motives. God says, I saw your actions and I know your motives.

I can search you and I know you. Verse 2 through 4. Thou knowest my down setting and my uprising. Thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou could pass my path and my lying down and art acquainted with all my ways.

[6 : 37] For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it all together. Everything. The words that come from our mouth and the words that are still in our tongue that are yet to be said.

My down setting and my uprising. That's a proverbial saying just to say at all times. There's no position you're in where you hide from the Lord. And God is there. God was there when I was a young boy, seven or eight years old.

And I remember my mom told me I couldn't go fishing, but I went fishing anyway. And I fell into the creek and I was walking back and I had to convince her that I wasn't fishing.

So I told her that there was this mud puddle that I fell in. And I went and showed her the mud puddle. But the problem was I was completely covered in water. It was a miracle, right?

The short little mud puddle. But somehow I fell into it and flipped over and got completely wet. But I remember, I know that wasn't the first time that I sinned. I know that it wasn't the first time that I sinned by volitional will choosing the sin.

[7 : 41] And that's the first time I remember my little heart beating in my chest when I think I have to get this story right so my mom will believe me. And in saying the words and then arguing with her and saying the great things.

I can't believe you don't believe me, mom. What a horrible thing to say to somebody when you're lying, right? Ninety percent of the time when you say that statement, you're lying, right? I can't believe you don't trust me, all right? And I remember him pleading my case there.

God knew that, but he's also known the thousands of times that I might have done something that was, that I did something that was pleasing to him that you're not aware of. So it's not all, it's not negative.

It's positive, it's factual here. He knows all these things, our thoughts. It's not enough to say that God knows everything. That's wonderful and true. But he knows everything about you.

It's to say that he is everywhere, but he's also everywhere with you. To say that God created everything, but God created you. We don't say that God is all things.

[8 : 41] That's pantheism. There's a difference between creator and creation. But we say that he's in all places, completely aware. The big word we like to use is omnipresent, but he is with us at all times.

Verse 5. Thou hast beset me, behind me and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me.

It is high. I cannot attain unto it. So behind me and before me, above me, around me, thou is always there.

And this understanding that God is always there, this knowledge, it is too incredible. It is too wonderful for me. I can't fully comprehend it.

David's saying it, and I'm saying it as well. As I explain to you that's true about God, this knowledge is too wonderful for me. We use the word wonderful usually just as a positive way of saying something is good.

[9 : 43] Wonderful has to do with wonder, a reverence, a fear. It's amazing. It would be a good word that you would say when you stood on the edge of the Grand Canyon for the first time.

It was filled, my heart and mind is just filled with wonder. When I think about this, you might have thought David would just say this is awesome, but he finds it overwhelming.

There's a difference in our lives between a constant surveillance that you might have on you wherever you go. If you work some places at your work, you would have cameras everywhere and they're watching you.

The difference between that and a baby monitor, right? The weight of a baby monitor is I'm being watched over, I'm being cared for. If something happens, I'm going to go into the other room.

Two different thoughts about what's going on here. Our God is overseeing. And so that what really comes down to is motive. Which one of those is true? When you don't believe that God is good and caring and there's surveillance, that is a negative thought.

[10 : 45] But when you know that he's all loving, then you see the protection in it. That you're never at a place in life and you'd say, oh, I'm 10 minutes ahead of God. He isn't here yet. Or God isn't aware of what's happening in my life.

Kind of being pictured as like an ant. I've taught this psalm many times with our teenagers, but you've ever played with an ant as it's running. You put your hand in front of it, then it turns around, it goes in the other direction.

It's being hedged about. That's the thought here in this verse is that God has us hedged in and it brings protection in our lives that God is omnipresent. Omnipresent at all times, he is present and it's more than I can handle.

It's probably the reason I don't like to think about it, that I don't think about it often. When I'm not walking with the Lord, the thoughts of God being present are less. And when I am walking with the Lord, they are there and they're wonderful.

Verse 7, we'll see the Lord is present everywhere we go, no matter how remote or dangerous that may be. Whether I should go from the Spirit or whether shall I flee from thy presence.

[11 : 49] Whether I go from Spirit or whether I shall flee from the presence, I'm there at all times. Stephanie Cofield and I worked at a YMCA in college, all right? One time it was her birthday and she said, I need, and I, Stephen, I was so happy to have friends.

They invited me to a birthday party and I said, great, I'm just going to have to get off work a little bit early to come to the birthday party. So I asked Stephanie, I said, hey, can you work a little bit late for me? I'm going to be going to a surprise birthday party.

I don't know if I said that. I just said, I have to go somewhere. Well, I go into the house and I say, hey, Stephen, you know, what's going on? Where's whose birthday? He's like, this is for Stephanie. Well, that's going to be a problem now, isn't it?

And so I got up early for that. But while we were working at that YMCA, I was so tired of these kids running around. I sat them all down and sat on the playground equipment and I said, when I'm not around or Miss Stephanie's not around, God is still here and he sees everything that you do and he knows when you do wrong.

The kids were petrified. They were so scared. I mean, I'm still playing for counseling all these years later for those kids that I scared to death. It was effective, but it wasn't a very good approach to that.

[12 : 57] But awareness that no matter where you go, that God will see you. Verse 8. If I ascend up in the heaven, thou art there. If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, if there shall thy hand lead me and thy right hand shall hold me.

He's not only present everywhere in the universe and any place that I could possibly go, but he is close to me and I could reach out and I could hold his hand. This could speak of just the grave.

He could have been speaking here to say, wherever I go, even when I die, I will be in your presence because it's easier for us to think in simple terms.

Like we say, no sin can go into heaven. Satan can't go into heaven. But in the book of Job, Satan goes before God. And so in hell, the focus is not in that there is no presence of the Lord, but he restrains any of his characteristics outside of his judgment.

There's nothing off limits of where God could go and be. And that's what's being said here. From the grave into my life, there's no place that's off limits to our God.

[14:10] And then verse 11 here. If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light upon me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day.

The darkness and the light are both alike to thee. Nothing hinders the protective presence of the Lord. Little kids, when you walk out to the room, like a little bit ago when Nate came up here and I thought I could help out, his dad was gone and his dad was never coming back again, right?

When you're an adult walks out of the room, the little kid says, they're never coming back. That's why you play peek-a-boo with them. It's such a big shock because they think they cover their eyes and you're completely gone, all right?

And the same way in our immaturity as believers, we believe that there are places and times where God is just not present because we have hindered it.

He's not there. This bad problem is coming to our lives. There's no presence of God. He can't be there. That's not the case. Or involved in sin. You think I can go into incognito mode or I can go private or I can go off the grid or I can go to another city.

[15:16] I can go to another state. I can hide from the eyes of God and that's not the case. And it's a miserable place to be. When you get to a place in life where you believe that you're turning on and on the presence of God, it's a very frightening place because you're going to want to turn the light on and you don't think you can because you so condition yourselves for believing that God comes and goes in your life.

And this verse is a strong challenge to say it's not going to happen. Don't believe that you can make it happen. And also don't worry because it won't happen. In the darkest days of your life, God is there in the darkness and in the light.

And all of this is so because the Lord lovingly superintended our development and planned out our lives from the womb itself. Verse 13, For thou hast possessed my reins, thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.

He was on the job before there was even a day one looking over and protecting us. The Lord had made us. He knew what he would have for us in life and there he develops us in the womb.

And he superintended it according to his plan for our lives. Verse 14, I will praise thee for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvelous are thy works and that my soul knoweth right well.

[16:30] My substance was not hid from thee. When I was made in secret and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth, thine eyes did see my substance yet being unperfect. And in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance was fashioned.

When it yet was there was none of them. That God superintended our development according to his plan. I was reading this week about how da Vinci was asked what was the greatest marvel of engineering.

And he just said, The human foot. The way that we can walk. The way that it can handle weight. The way we can feel pressure. God did all of that. He not just did it for every human, but he did yours. He designed your feet the way that he needed your feet to be for his purpose.

It's just to say he cares about you completely. Not in just a large group. He doesn't just care about all 400 million people in America and one of them. He cares about you and your family.

Verse 17. How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God. Precious. They're just wonderful. I cherish them. How great is the sum of them. If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand.

[17 : 37] When I awake, I will stand with thee. The Lord's loving intention for us are precious and innumerable. He thinks of us. There's a way in which we could take this and go into a ditch on the other side where we would put ourselves as the center of the universe.

And that's not what I'm proposing here. But God cares about you. Maybe the day you did not, until you came into this building, you did not have any thoughts of him. But according to this passage, he's had thoughts of you.

And that they're innumerable. And that you do not have to strike your body or jump up and down or give a certain amount before. He's aware of you. He was aware of you all day and the things that matter, you know.

He knows what's going on in Jason Ashley's heart with their concern about the visa. As he continues on an airplane back to South Africa with his mom and dad. And he knows what others feel inside of this room.

And he's not overwhelmed. And he doesn't just have a moment for you every year or two where he checks in. His thoughts for you are throughout the day and innumerable. And it will bring great comfort and security in the Lord if we remain loyal to him.

[18 : 44] Verse 19. Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God. Depart from me, therefore ye bloody men. For they speak against thee wickedly. And thine enemies take thy name in vain.

Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee. And am I not grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with a perfect hatred. I count them mine enemies.

Those that are loyal to the Lord, we will distance ourselves from the Lord's enemies. As he watches in our lives, he sees the things that we love. He sees the things that we give association to.

He sees the things that we give time to. And we say, we know you're watching, Lord. We know that you love us. And the things that you love, we love. And the things that you hate, we will hate as well with a perfect hatred.

So as we end the night with a prayer, I would like to give you these words from God's Word. And I'd like to have you, you can have a restored relationship. If at this point in the message, this psalm has brought great comfort to you.

[19 : 45] Because you felt all alone in something that you're carrying. You felt all alone because you can't really explain what's going on in your heart. There's been a God who wasn't absent from anything that happened. He knows exactly what happened.

He knows the thoughts and intents. He knows if you're being misunderstood. Or he knows if in your heart, if there's confusion, he knows completely. You don't have to become exasperated in trying to explain yourself to him.

He knows you. And he's been with you all day. And at times that brings great comfort. But there's other times in here when we come to the psalm, it brings great conviction. And say, even though I wasn't thinking about him today, and even though I wasn't inviting him into my life and recognizing that, he was already there before me.

And he knows opportunities that I missed. He knows the times that I went left when I should have went right. He knows the times that I did right, but my heart was not what it should have been.

And so the faithful, which is what we desire to be, desire to maintain our integrity throughout our life. Our integrity. The last verse, 23 and 24.

[20 : 51] Search me, O God, and know my heart. First verse, remember, says, O Lord, Thou hast searched me and known me, stating it as a fact. The prayer is, Lord, I welcome this into my life.

Thank you, Father. Search me and you know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts. And see if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.

Father, I know you're watching and what you see, I want to know. Bring conviction and lead. I want to live my day in your presence. I want to live my life knowing that it's in the light of you in which you see all things.

Let us pray together. I'm going to pray part of this psalm to us as we leave tonight. Heavenly Father, I thank you for these words that were penned by a human author in David, the sweet psalmist.

The Lord, through inspiration for us today, giving us words that we so often need when we feel alone. Lord, bringing conviction when we think that our lives do not matter to you.

[21 : 54] Regardless of what our activities held today, Lord, we recognize that you were present and that you were near. So, Father, we know that you search us and you know us.

When we sat down and when we got up and we went to work and when we came home and you understood our thoughts from afar off, you knew exactly what we were thinking. And, Father, when we were just filled with activity, you knew all of our ways and you knew the words that came upon our tongue that were never said.

You know it all together. You were behind me and you were before me and you were there before I will lay down tonight. And this knowledge is overwhelming. It's wonderful. And I can't understand it fully, Lord, but I'm going to rejoice in it and thank you for it.

Because if you were not present, no matter how many people were present, I would feel so cold and so alone. And so whether I should go anywhere in this world, Lord, I will never leave your presence.

Lord, you will always be there in the morning and to the other most parts of the sea. Your hand will lead me. And surely, Lord, I see that even in my dark days you haven't left from me that no cloud cover or no desire that I would have, Lord, to hide from you will ever be effective.

[23 : 07] You are there. Thank you that I have been wonderfully and fearfully made. And, Lord, you have made me for what you have called me to do. And so, Father, we rejoice tonight that you see us.

Even though we are imperfect, all of our members are written, Lord, that they're exactly what they should be. Though they don't seem perfect in our own eyes, they're perfect in what you would have us to be.

Your thoughts towards us are precious. We thank you for them, Father. And great is the sum. Lord, if we would try to count on them, they would be as the sands of the sea. Surely, Lord, those that are against you, Lord, we would be against.

What you love, we love. What you hate, we hate. We live in your presence, Lord. So we end the night, Father, asking you that you would search our hearts, that you would know our hearts, and that you would lead us in a way that is everlasting and that leads to life.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.