

The God Who Knows

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[0 : 00] Psalm 139 Psalm 139 Psalm 139

Psalm 139 Your enemies take your name in vain.

Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord? And 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. And lead me in the way everlasting. So in the song that you guys might know by Casting Crowns called, Does Anybody Hear Her?

There's a chorus that laments how the church is oblivious to the struggles of a hypothetical woman. And the chorus says, Does anybody hear her?

[2 : 42] Can anybody see? Or does anybody even know she's going down today? Under the shadow of our steeple with all the lost and lonely people. Searching for the hope that's tucked away in you and me.

Does anybody hear her? Can anybody see? And every human being wants to be known and wants to be understood, to be loved, to be seen. And Psalm 139 assures us about the God who knows.

God who knows us. And teaches us that no matter what the situation we might be in, we can trust Him because He knows. And the word know is a key word that occurs throughout the Psalm.

So it's six times throughout the Psalm. And so what exactly does God know? So first we see God's omniscience in verses 1 to 6. Then God's omnipresence in verses 7 to 12.

And then God's providence in verses 13 to 18. And then David's innocence in verses 19 to 24. So first, David speaks of God's omniscience in verses 1 to 6.

[3 : 45] It's not immediately apparent when you first read the Psalm. But this Psalm is actually kind of a protestation of innocence on David's part. He is appealing to God for vengeance, saying that he is on his side.

He has been faithful to him and calling on God to deliver him. And that comes out clearly later in verses 19 to 20 when he asks God to slay the wicked and talks about how he has hated his enemies, God's enemies.

And so this context is really very similar to Jeremiah 12, 1 to 4, where Jeremiah decries the flourishing of the wicked and asks God to judge them.

So why does the way of the wicked prosper, he asks God? Why do all who are treacherous thrive? You plant them and they take root. They grow and produce fruit. You are near in their mouth and far from their heart.

But you, O Lord, know me, you see me, and test my heart toward you. Pull them out like sheep for the slaughter and set them apart for the day of slaughter.

[4 : 48] So Jeremiah's reasoning in that chapter, chapter 12, is basically this, that God, you know me. You know my heart toward you. So deliver me and punish the wicked who oppose me, right?

And that's David's point too. O Lord, you have searched me and known me. O Lord, you of all people know me inside and out. You know what I stand for. You know that I'm loyal to you.

So come to my aid. Defend me and vindicate me. And then in verses 2 to 6, David marvels at God's omniscience, his all-knowingness. God knows all things. It says, You know when I sit down and when I rise up, you discern my thoughts from afar.

You search 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 all together. You hem me in behind and before and lay your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is high. I cannot attain it. So using pairs of opposite acts, sitting and rising, lying down and walking about, David conveys the truth that God knows all of our

thoughts, all of our ways, no matter what we're doing.

[5 : 54] So God goes before us. He comes after us. And his providential hand is always on us. And for that reason, God has complete, exhaustive knowledge of us.

He intimately knows us. And even though we ourselves cannot begin to fathom the depth of God's knowledge. And this was, for David, a source of comfort. So likewise, when you feel like no one understands you, when you feel lonely, when you feel like no one truly knows you, that no one really is listening to you, you can know this, that God knows.

And then in verses 7 to 12, David speaks of God's omnipresence, how he is everywhere, all presentness. Where shall I go from your spirit? Where shall I flee from your presence?

If I ascend to heaven, you are there. If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there. If I take the wings of the morning and 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, surely the darkness shall cover me and the light about me be night. Even the darkness is not dark to you. The night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.

[7 : 02] Once again, David's using here the extremes of heaven and Sheol, the under-earth realm of the dead, and the uttermost parts of the sea, these expressions to communicate the truth that there is no place in the cosmos where God is not present.

There is no place that is not known to God where we can hide. It's the same sentiment that Jeremiah 23, 24 expresses. Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him, declares the Lord?

Do I not fill heaven and earth, declares the Lord. So because God fills the heaven and earth, even Sheol, the mysterious realm of the dead, is known to God, then how much more is everywhere else, every other place known completely to God?

Even the cover of darkness cannot hide us because even the darkness will be like light to God. And this is supposed to be a source of comfort for us as well, right?

When you are studying abroad and you don't know anyone and feel isolated in a foreign culture, when you are sitting in the dark and feeling lonely in a room alone, when you feel like running away from everyone, when you feel like hiding out of guilt and shame, when you contemplate maybe even taking your own life as a way of escape, right?

[8 : 23] God knows. There is no place where God is not. There is no place where He does not see you, knows you, and loves you, and He will never let you run from Him, right?

And David uses God's omnipresence as kind of an alibi for himself to prove his innocence. So he's saying, God, you know where I've been. You know everywhere I've been.

You know all my thoughts. My heart is laid before you. You know that I have never denied you. You know that I have been faithful to you. So that's David's plea. But not only is God everywhere, He's also been with David throughout his entire life and eternity beyond that.

And so verses 13 to 18 is about God's providence. It says, 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. Wonderful are your works. My soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance.

[9 : 26] In your book were written, In 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 would count them, they are more than the sand.

I awake and I am still with you. So David's exclaiming that he is God's handiwork. He is God's personal handiwork. And the metaphor of knitting really conveys kind of how intimately God is involved in our creation.

And David praises God, saying, What does that mean? Fearfully and wonderfully, meaning in a manner, God created us in a manner that inspires awe and fear, reverence, wonder, right?

I don't know if you guys have ever seen, I mean, I guess we all probably have. You've probably seen one of those Apple marketing videos with Johnny Ives, Johnny Ives, you guys know what I'm talking about?

So he used to be the chief design officer at Apple. He has this, you know, smooth voice and this sophisticated British accent. And he talks in these Apple marketing videos about this painstaking detail that they paid attention to and the premium materials that they used and all the stuff, the

rigorous process that they went through to create this Apple product.

[10:44] And then by the end of the video, most people watching it are salivating. And when you look at the way he describes how they made those Apple products, really the best way to describe it is the tone is really almost reverential.

You know, they talk about how fearfully they made it. You know what I mean? And so in that sense, in a much greater sense, it's true of us. You know, God fearfully and wonderfully made us.

And it says in verse 15, My frame was not hidden from you when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Our frame, however strong we think we might be, however weak we think we might be, however healthy we might be, however frail, and we might be, it's not unknown to God.

He made us, right? He knows our every cell. He knows every organ in our body, every muscle, every vessel. He knows our every DNA. And He made us fearfully and wonderfully.

And He didn't just create us just to leave us to run on our own, like a watchmaker who makes a watch and lets it run by itself, right? He providentially guides every single day of our lives, right?

[11:58] And it says in verse 16, 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.

So before we took our first breath, right, before we were conceived, before even the foundation of the world, as it says in Ephesians 1, 4, every single one of our days was written in God's book.

So that means the biggest surprises of your life, your highest triumphs and your lowest setbacks and disappointments didn't surprise God, right?

When you were diagnosed with that illness, right? When you were abused by that person, when you married that man or woman and met that person, nothing has ever caught God by surprise.

And nothing has ever happened outside of His perfect, sovereign will. And even though we might not understand why some of these things have happened, we can't understand the who and that is that God who loves us and cares for us and who is sovereign over us has always been there for us and has been guiding us and overseeing our lives.

[13:00] God knows. And that's what's so precious. That's a precious thought to us and it was precious to David. It says in verses 17 and 18, How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!

If I would count them, they are more than the sand. I awake and I am still with you. So that no matter what the situation is, we can trust God because He knows. And it's that knowledge of God's knowledge that enables David or motivates David to plead his innocence before God and to call for the judgment of his enemies in that last section, verses 19 to 24.

He says, So David knows that he has not sided with the enemies of God.

He, this doesn't contradict Jesus' teaching to love your enemies because these are not David's personal enemies. These are God's enemies and it's precisely because they are God's enemies that people who oppose God that David counts them as his enemies.

And it's not a virtue to be indifferent toward evil. Loving what God loves and hating what God hates is what godliness is, right? And so David is attesting to his innocence, but he's not claiming to be sinless.

[14:36] He acknowledges his sins freely in other places like Psalm 51, but he's making the case that he has never turned decisively away from God. He has always worshipped God and in that sense and never betrayed Him.

And so he asks God, he began the psalm by praying, O Lord, you have searched me and known me. And he ends in verses 23 and 24 with the same thought, Search me, O God, and know my heart.

Try me and know my thoughts. So consistent with the rest of the psalm, David's not asking God to identify kind of the grievous way, sinful ways in him and then to correct him.

Rather, he's asking God to search him and test him knowing that when God does that, he will be vindicated. Knowing that God will then come to his aid and deliver him and lead him in the way everlasting.

And we as God's people can also lay hold of this promise as David did. And this is actually, we were just singing about this. We sang the song, His Mercy is More.

[15:38] We said, What love could remember no wrongs we have done. Omniscient all-knowing, He counts not their sum. Thrown into a sea without bottom or shore.

Our sins they are many, His mercy is more. And that's what's amazing about this is God is omniscient. He knows all things. He knows all the secret lusts of our hearts, the sacred, you know, the sins, our grumbling of our hearts.

He knows where we have been, everywhere. He knows every single one of our days like an open book before Him. And if we are honest with ourselves, this is something that should make us tremble.

And yet, God, who is omniscient, chose not to remember our sins against us. He chose not to count the sum of our sins, and that's because of what Jesus has done. Because another David came, Jesus, the new David, the better David, of whom the Father said, My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.

The Father searched Jesus and knew Jesus and there was no blemish in Him. And yet, Jesus died on the cross. He was punished for sinners, for sins, because He was carrying our sins.

[16 : 53] And it's only when we put our faith in Jesus, it's only when we have been declared innocent, justified, declared righteous by God, that we can really pray this, as David did, just pray this psalm.