



Sunday School Lesson for March 19, 2006
Released on March 15, 2006

"God Created and Knows Us"

Printed Text: **Psalms 139:1-3, 7-14, 23-24**

Background Scripture: **Psalm 139**

Devotional Reading: **Psalm 100**

Psalm 139:1-3

1 O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me.

2 Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.

3 Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted *with* all my ways.

Psalm 139:7-14

7 Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, be-hold, thou art *there*.

9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

10 Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

11 If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.

12 Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light *are* both alike to thee.

13 For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.

14 I will praise thee; for I am fear-fully *and* wonderfully made: marvellous *are* thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.

Psalm 139:23-24

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:

24 And see if *there* be *any* wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Today's Aim

Facts: to develop an understanding of God's intimate concern for us as individuals.

Principle: to be aware that God knows us and accompanies us in all aspects of our lives.

Application: to make deliberate efforts daily to live up to God's expectations of us.

Introduction

Modern man often feels alone and at sea in the world. Bookstore shelves are filled with books that claim to give people understanding about themselves and how to have relationships with others, but still there are widespread feelings of alienation and confusion.

How sad it is that people remain in such a state when there is One calling them who has all wisdom and is present with us everywhere! The Psalmist David rejoiced in the greatness of the all-knowing, omnipresent Lord.

If we want to understand ourselves and our place in the world, what better way to turn than toward our Maker! And if we desire a relationship of perfect security and joy, what better course to follow than loving the God who made us to enjoy fellowship with Him.

God knows all about us, with our frailties and sins; yet He is still committed to us. He loves us and values us. This should prompt us to join the psalmist in praise and with a spirit of dependence. Rather than pursue the false trails of the world, we should seek God's aid in pursuing genuine life and fulfillment.

Lesson Background

True wisdom requires that we acknowledge God's ability to know everything. We cannot hide from Him. Psalm 139 captures the futility of hiding from God, as we shall see.

More than being unable to hide from God, though, David—who was the author of Psalm 139—affirms the positive aspect of this truth: we never can be lost from His sight. David was one who knew both truths! (See Psalm 69:5.) Ecclesiastes 12:14 reveals that his son Solomon knew it as well. We may be uncomfortable with God's total knowledge during those times when we are disobedient. Even so, there is

incredible comfort in the awareness that we are always under the watchful eye of our loving heavenly Father (Psalms 33:18; 34:15; Proverbs 15:3).

Affirming God's Complete Knowledge (vs. 1-3)

1. Why is it both comforting and sobering that God is watching us? (vs. 1)

God "watching us" does not mean looking to see what we are doing but it implies that God is watching us with a complete understanding of our true character and innermost being and therefore knows all about us, better than we even know ourselves. To know that God cares enough to study us in this fashion let's us know that He is concerned for our well-being and knows what is best for us. It is sobering to be under His all-seeing inspection because at times our character is not pleasing in the sight of God, but it is good to know that we are still important to Him and He desires to know (intimately) us. Even with all our shortcomings, He pursues a relationship.

2. What might it mean that God knows our thoughts "afar off" (Ps. 139:2)?

God, our creator, is omniscient. He knows everything and His infinite wisdom has no boundaries therefore, His knowledge is unlimited. He knows all about us! In verse 2, the psalmist notes how God observes his sitting down and his rising up. These acts are common, casual day to day activities of man and may seem insignificant but God takes note of it just as He does our inward thoughts which regulate our sitting down and rising up. God knows our mental activity in it's entirety. He knows our thinking, reasoning, what we imagine, our meditations, our contemplations, our ideas, our deepest thoughts, our intentions, our anticipations and expectations, our considerations, our attention/focus, judgements, opinions and beliefs.

"Afar off" can be defined as not having completely arrived, still a long ways off or a distance far away. Here, David expressed that God knew his thoughts "afar off" meaning God knew his thoughts before he even conceived them and so it is with us. Before our thoughts are conceived in our minds, God already knows its nature, its source, its drift and its result. We know that God is just and never makes a mistake therefore, He never misjudges or wrongly interprets us. We are perfectly understood by His impartial mind. He knows us better than we know ourselves (see v. 3)!

Affirming God's Constant Presence (vs. 7-12)

3. Why did the psalmist say we cannot escape God's "spirit"? (vs. 7)

Not only is God omniscient, he is omnipresent. His presence is everywhere at the same time. Therefore, wherever we are and wherever we go, so is the Spirit of God. The passage in verse 7 begins with David asking two questions: Where can we go to get away from God? Because God is everywhere all the time, there is no way to escape from His Spirit. God's spirit has no boundaries or physical limitations. He already has arrived anywhere we may wish to go long before we get there.

The other question is "whither shall I flee from thy presence?" There are times in our life when we want to run or hide from the presence of God because we chose to follow our own will instead of His. David knew he could not be hidden from the sight of God; nor could he be withdrawn from God's immediate, actual, constant presence.

When we do not follow God's will, we do not find God's presence congenial (which means suitable or pleasing in nature or character).

That is what prompted Jonah to run away from God (Jonah 1:3), and what happened to him shows the futility of any such attempt (vss. 4-17). Each time Jonah tried to flee from the presence of God, God was already in the place where Jonah had planned to arrive at. We offend the Almighty to His face, and commit acts of treason when we sin. To go from Him, or flee from Him we cannot. We cannot withdraw from the all-surrounding Deity. His mind is in our mind; himself within ourselves, his spirit is over our spirit; and our presence is covered in his presence.

4. In verses 8 and 9, how did David emphasize that God is inescapable? (vs. 8-9)

In order to give us a better understanding of our inability to escape the presence of God, David uses the expression of heaven and hell. "Heaven" represents as high as we can imagine going and "hell" means "the depths", as far down as we can go. God is in both places - "thou art there". Whether we rise up or lie down, take our wing or make our bed, we shall find God near us. No matter where we are, where we go, or where we are trying to get to, God is there. The point is simply this - there is no escaping God.

In verse 9, David goes on to make reference to taking "the wings of the morning" which symbolizes the east, which is the direction of the sunrise. The uttermost parts of the sea refer to the west, which is the direction of the Mediterranean Sea from Israel. If David could fly with all swiftness from the east to west or find a habitation where the mariner has not yet ploughed the deep, he still could not reach the boundaries of the divine presence. Therefore, if we were to speed on the wings of the morning breeze, and break into oceans unknown, the Lord would already be present.

5. Why would mention of the "right hand" (vs. 10) be comforting to David's audience?

David has demonstrated to us in verses 7-11, there is no escaping the presence of God. There is no height, no depth, no width nor length that can separate us from his presence. It is a good thing that we can't escape the presence of God or elude his attention. If we find ourselves wandering far from home, we can count on God's leading and protection. In the beginning of verse 10, the mentioning of God's "right hand" adds further comfort, for this term is indicative of God's authority, power, mercy and wisdom. With His hand(s), He sustains us.

6. How does the verb "shineth" (vs. 12) support David's argument?

As we have already ascertained, it is impossible for anything to be hidden from God. David goes on to further demonstrate in verse 12 that darkness conceals nothing when it comes to God. "But the night shineth as the day:" Night is just another form of day in the sight of God - it shines and reveals all clearly and distinctly showing all that is done. David ends this verse with "darkness and light being both alike to God - Nothing can be kept from an all-observing, all-comprehending mind. God is in all places, at all times. The Great Spirit comprehends within Himself all time and space, and yet He is infinitely greater than these, or anything else that He has made.

Affirming God's Creative Expertise (vs. 13-14)

7. What can the word "possessed" (vs. 13) also mean?

Although the word "possessed" can mean ownership, here in verse 13, it means to create. David has now turned his attention to God's magnificent power in the development of human life before birth. "For thou hast possessed my reins", mean - God, you are the owner and creator of my innermost being (reins or kidneys) and passions. All the complexities of human consciousness are due to God's creative work.

In the latter part of verse 13, the verb "covered" means that God has knit, or woven, us together and providentially watches over the development of our conception while in our mother's womb. It is within the womb that God has done His skillful work of making us what we are, and because He is our creator, His ownership of our lives begins the moment we are conceived. David describes the intimacy which God had with him. In his most secret part-his reins, and in his most secret condition - yet unborn, he was under the control and guardianship of God.

8. With what attitude should we respond to being God's creation? (vs. 14)

When David meditated on how God had created him with such skill and kindness, David couldn't help but to break out in praise. In verse 14, David did not hesitate in giving God praise. Have you ever thought about how wonderfully made you are? Who can gaze even upon a model of our anatomy without wonder and awe? Who could dissect a portion of the human frame without marveling at its delicacy, and trembling at its frailty? David had performed a common inspection of himself and had seen enough to arouse his admiration of the work and his reverence for the Worker.

Contemplating God's handiwork should fill us with awe. This is the idea behind the expression that we are "fearfully and wonderfully made". The nature of our conception is incomprehensible and mysterious and we experience a healthy and reverential fear as we think about it. David expresses his amazement at the infinite mind of God compared to the limited mind of man, especially as it relates to the physiology of human life. Just think, we are with ourselves day in and day out but yet we don't know or understand all the workings of our innermost parts and how they are tailored together but He who made us does. We are the crown of God's creation. So, let us praise God and bless His Holy Name for He is worthy to be praised (v. 14). For if He took so much care and concern in our natural birth, what do you think He will do for our new birth in Christ which is even more mysterious than the first (physical) birth, and exhibits even more the love and wisdom of the Lord.

Calling On God's Aid

9. Why did David want God to "search" him? (vs. 23,24)

David knew God as the author and finisher of his faith. He had experienced God and knew God controlled the very essence of his being. David was a diligent self-searcher, and therefore he was willing to be searched by God because God could do it better. He knew by his own search that he did not live in any way of wickedness against his knowledge, and yet he knew there might be some way of wickedness in

him that he did not know of. He knows that the sight of the Lord is infinitely clearer than his own and should the Lord see some wicked in him which he could not see, David wanted it to be made known to him so he could be delivered from it. David did not want to entertain anything that was contrary to the will of God. Neither should we!

10. Why can the believer be confident that God will lead him?

We as believers in Christ are children of God. We have confidence in knowing that He who made us, will shepherd (protect, guide, watch and lead) us in the way we should go if we desire His direction. Also, when God begins his work of Salvation in a person, He finishes and perfects that work which provides us with eternal security. The way of godliness is an everlasting way; it is everlastingly true and good, pleasing to God and profitable to us, and will end in everlasting life!

He is the Good Shepherd and we will enjoy fellowship with Him forever.

Works Cited:

Matthew Henry Commentary, The MacArthur Study Bible, and The Treasury of David, by Charles H. Spurgeon

CONCLUSION

What David knew in part, Jesus revealed in full. "The way everlasting" is the "new and living way" (Hebrews 10:20) created for us by Jesus. He is the one who bridged the chasm between us and God - the chasm of sin. The total presence that David celebrated became Immanuel, "God with us."

The promise of God's presence continues today with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. May we allow Him to continue to lead us in that everlasting path!

PRAYER

Oh God, our Creator, thank you for your loving kindness and your tender mercies. Thank you for taking such great care of us, even giving us life to this very moment. You looked down from your abode and knew we would need a Saviour before we even knew we would be sinful. Continue to search our hearts Oh Lord and purge us of those things which are not pleasing in thy sight, so that we may continue to abide in your love through your precious Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

THOUGHT TO REMEMBER

Reputation is what others think about you. Character is what God knows about you."

Anticipating Next Week's Lesson

Study Psalm 145:1-3 "Sing Praise to the Creator" for next week's lesson.