

COMFORTING AWARENESS Sunday School- November 28, 2010

Unifying Topic: GOD IS ALL KNOWING

Lesson Text

I. God Knows (Psalm 139:1-6)

II. God Made Us (Psalm 139:13-16)

III. God Examines Us (Psalm 139:23-24)

The Main Thought: For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. (Psalm 139:4 KJV)

Unifying Principle: We all experience lonely times when we believe that no one knows our circumstances. Who knows us, cares about us, and searches us? The psalmist proclaims that God knows us better than we know ourselves.

Lesson Aim: To teach that God knows us, created us, and understands us fully.

Life aim: To teach how God knows everything about us and how He made us in a wonderful magnificent way. Since He created us and understands everything about us, we should allow Him to help us grow spiritually.

139:1 O lord, thou hast searched me, and known me.

139:2 Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.

139:3 Thou compassed my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.

139:4 For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.

139:5 Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.

139:6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.

139:13 For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.

139:14 I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.

139:15 My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

139:16 Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.

139:23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:

139:24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

HISTORY:

¹The title of this Psalm in the Hebrew is, "**To the chief musician: a psalm of David.**"

To the Chief Musician. The last time this title occurred was in Psalms 109:1-31. This sacred song is worthy of the most excellent of the singers, and is fitly dedicated to the leader of the Temple Psalmody, that he might set it to music, and see that it was devoutly sung in the solemn worship of the Most High.

A Psalm of David. It bears the image and superscription of King David, and could have come from no other mint than that of the son of Jesse. Of course the critics take this composition away from David, on account of certain Aramaic expressions in it (the language appears to be lower than his time). It is most probable that it was written on no particular occasion, but is a moral lesson on the wisdom, presence, providence, and justice of God, without any reference to any circumstance in the life of David, or in the history of the Jews. It deals with the three great attributes of God: His Omniscience, His Omnipresence, and His Omnipotence. Jehovah God is clearly the object of this hymn of praise.

LESSON:

Psalm 139:1-6 God Knows

God Is Omniscient: He knows all things, past, present and future, real and potential, and He knows them all at the same time.

139:1 "O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me" – Addressing the "*all-knowing God*", the Psalmist notes that he has been searched (Heb. Chaqar). The word rendered "*searched*", has a primary reference to searching the earth by "*boring*" or "*digging*", as for water or metals (Job 28:3). The Hebrew word here also means, "*to examine carefully or explore*" and can even apply to a burglar who is searching for some valuable possessions. Then it means to search "*accurately*" or "*closely*", penetratingly, because He has scoured and ransacked every detail of our

¹ <http://www.studylight.org/com/tod/view.cgi?book=ps&chapter=139&verse=001>

life. Yet it must be remembered that although we search God's Word to know about Him, the Psalmist admits God intuitively knows us, precisely, knows me personally. Nothing is, or can be, concealed from God. Sometimes we don't let people get to know us completely because we are afraid they will discover something about us they won't like. But God already knows everything about us and still accepts and loves us. God sees all that there is in our heart and that He has been fully acquainted with our past life. He sees all.

1. A cheering thought for sinners. If God knew them not perfectly, how could he have prepared a perfect salvation for them?
2. A comfortable truth for saints. "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." --G.R.

139:2 *"Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprisings: thou understandest my thought afar off."* – 1. The first part suggests God knows what we do: God knows my routine. I am observed when I quietly sit down, and marked when I resolutely rise up. Every move one makes is observed by the Lord God. God also knows our thoughts. Before it is my own it is foreknown and comprehended by Him. People who live with us for any degree of time or are around us, begin to know pretty much how we think. This is saying that God has access to me from afar. God has both the awareness of my conscious thoughts and my subconscious thoughts. David is pointing to God's knowledge of these two extremes-sitting down and rising up-to show that God knows everything about him. The two opposites of sitting and rising represent all of our actions throughout the day. He knows everything in between. Thus, "the concept of *'everything'* is expressed by combining the two opposites *'my sitting down'* and *'my rising up.'*" "...*my thought afar off*" 2. The second part suggests God knows what we think: God knows what we think even before we think it! And He still loves us.

139:3 *"Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways."* – 3. This part suggests God knows where we go. "*Compasses*" (Heb. *zarah*) literally means to "*sift*" or "*winnow*." ²God knows where we go, because He can see everything, and can discern everything. He sifts through our lives, understanding what is really going on. He immediately comprehends the good and the bad things we do – from the time we stumble out of bed in the morning, to when we collapse into bed at night. By "*path*" is meant the outward actions and carriage of man's ordinary conversation. By "*lying down*" is signified to us the private and close actions of man's life; such as were attended only by darkness and solitude. God is so intimately aware of all our ways that He has literally sifted our seconds to insure our well-being.

139:4 *"For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether."* – 4. This part suggests God knows what we say. God not only hears everything we say, He knows what we're going to say, before we can even form the words in our mouth. Someone has said that our thoughts are like words to God – He hears them and understands them completely as if we had shouted them from the rooftop.

139:5 *"Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me."* – 5. This part suggests God knows where to place us. David is here using some imagery from war. He knew all about strategic battle plans, ambushes and how to surround a city. David felt trapped by God's knowledge of his every thought, word, and deed. He knew that God surrounded him. He cannot turn back and try to escape because God is behind him. He cannot run forward because God is in front of him – and His hand keeps David from harm. God surrounds me even as the air continually surrounds all creatures that live. We have need of Him because He knows just where to place us.

139:6 *"Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it."* – 6. This suggests God knows us completely. David can't even begin to understand, much less describe, the depth of God's personal knowledge of his every action, of his every thought, of his every trip, of his every word, and of his every need. The word "*wonderful*" is placed at the beginning of the sentence in Hebrew for emphasis. It should read like this: "*Wonderful is God's knowledge. It's too lofty for me to even understand or imagine!*" We have hidden the truth about ourselves so long that we don't even know the truth about our own self. God puts the emphasis upon the attitudes, the motives from which the actions spring. When we try to understand the greatness of God's knowledge, we will become overwhelmed. Amazement should lead to awe, which should draw us to adoration.

² http://www.pontiacbible.org/index.php?/sermons/more/our_omniscient_god
<http://www.pitwm.net//pitwm-sundayschool.html>

We're talking about an Omniscience God – In classical theology the doctrine of God's omniscience means that God knows all things, past, present and future, real and potential, and He knows them all at the same time. He not only knows what was, and what is, He also knows what will be. On top of that, He knows everything that could be but is not. ³David is saying, "God, you know me completely. You've made a detailed inquiry into my life. You know all of my actions; all of my words, all of my thoughts; you not only know what I've done, you know why I did it. You know it all!" It's hard for us to comprehend a God who can know the truth about us and still accept us anyway.

NOT APART OF THE LESSON:

SYNOPSIS OF Psalm 139:7-12

God is omnipresent: He's everywhere present at the same time.

⁴Every place is accessible to God. No one can escape the presence of God in the universe. "Omnipresence"— Man cannot hide anything from God, for He is everywhere present (Adam Clarke Commentary). He is literally everywhere in creation. If we were to have a parent, spouse or friend in attendance with us at all times, how would our conduct change? Would we still allow ourselves to use the rebel word, have the lustful glance, the inappropriate action? We are truly what we are, it has been said, when we are alone. But this is not true, because no one can ever be truly alone. God is always there, always aware. It is a discipline which will mold us into right habits, to practice the presence of God. And as we come to know our Father in this manner, we will also come to know that there is no place in which He cannot come with us. He is with us in our victories, and defeats. He is with us when we believe all others have left. He is with us in the most mundane details of our lives. Receive this truth; it will bless you today and tomorrow. [In His Time; Walk With Wisdom re Jer.23:23-4]. The Trinity is Omnipresent. The omnipresence of the Trinity thus means that everywhere, everything is at the same time before the presence of God. David then realized it was impossible to escape from such omniscient control, no matter how far or fast he might go, for God is everywhere.

Psalm 139:13-16 God Made Us

God Is Omnificent: God is "unlimited in creative power."

139:13 "For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb"(KJV) or ⁵"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb"(NIV). – The word "for" indicates that this section explains the preceding 12 verses. The "you" here is definite. God is intimately involved with our design, development and delivery. In short, He made us. It's that simple. Because God is the Creator, He is the owner of the preborn – they belong to Him. When David says that God created his inmost being, he is recognizing God's creative power and personal involvement in those things that are truly personal. In other words, he acknowledges the fact that God created his spiritual personhood. "You knit me together or thou hast covered me": The picture here is that our bones, arteries, muscles, and everything else is all woven together into a beautiful tapestry. This word in Hebrew carries with it the idea of "protection", which shows how precious the preborn is to God.

139:14 "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well." – The word "fearful" means to stand in awe or to cause astonishment. The word "wonderful" means distinct or separate. When we recognize God as the Creator of all things, especially of human life, praise is the proper response. When we see Him as our Creator, we can't help but break out into spontaneous song and protracted praise. The Bible prods us to consider the origin of human life as God sees it and to worship Him for what He does in the womb. We must respond with holy caution and with unwavering respect for the preborn because His stamp of approval is upon every human being – and He does not make junk. God places a high value on human life because we reflect His character. Therefore, David and my soul knows "right well", "exactly" that regardless of what uncertainties life throws at us, God was there and is there to take me through those uncertainties that He designed, purposed, and ordained me to be. Such is the love and compassion of the Lord.

139:15 "My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts

³ http://www.pontiacbible.org/index.php?/sermons/more/our_omniscient_god

⁴ <http://www.abible.com/devotions/2001/20010927-0000.html>

⁵ http://www.pontiacbible.org/index.php?/sermons/more/a_womb_with_a_view

<http://www.pitwm.net//pitwm-sundayschool.html>

of the earth." – Nothing is hidden from God. He personally puts our skeleton in place and then creates all the delicate parts of our bodies, weaving them together to form His living masterpiece. The same God, who keeps His eye on the sparrow, also keeps His eyes on every human being as they grow and develop in the womb. God makes us according to His plan. He makes all the parts fit together just right so they support one another. And, because He is the "*Divine Embroiderer*", unborn babies in the womb are intricate and complex, beyond the power of human observation as though it had been done low down beneath the ground where no eye of man can penetrate; But reflecting God's beauty and are therefore special and precious in His sight.

139:16 "Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." – The idea here is that before the embryo had any distinct form or the unformed lump was undeveloped it was clearly and distinctly known by God. None of it seemed perfect by the eye of man. When God creates, He does it with purpose. ⁶There are at least 10 things that God has given to us that are "*unchangeable*." (1) Our Parents; (2) Our Time in History (Esther 4:4); (3) Our Racial Background; (4) Our National Heritage; (5) Our Gender (Sex); (6) Our Birth Order; (7) Our Brothers and Sisters; (8) Our Physical Features; (9) Our Mental Abilities; (10) Our Aging and Death. God gave you your height, your bone size, your eyes, nose, and ears, your skin complexion, your teeth, your hair, your feet, your hands, your sight, your hearing, your voice, your chin, your body build or shape, your metabolism. This was all by God's perfect design. God didn't just ordain our DNA; he ordained our days. "*And in thy book all members were written*"— which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. In the book of God's eternal mind, and designs, the plan of the human body was drawn, all the parts of it described, and their form, places, and uses fixed, even when as yet not one of them was in actual being. It's as if He has a divine Day-Timer, into which He pre-recorded each day of our life – before we began to breathe!

NOT APART OF THE LESSON:

SYSNOPSIS OF Psalm 139:17-22

The work of God in forming the fetus is precious. How much more precious are the thoughts of God toward His creation? If we were to total them it would be immeasurable. If we should count them, they are more in number than the sand. More than the sands of the sea are the delightful thoughts of God toward us. God, who has seen the transgressions of the wicked, even those secretly done within the womb, will surely not allow such crimes to go unpunished. The Psalmist has resolved to have nothing to do with such sinners. He could not remain neutral on the matter of those who hate God. He was disgusted with, nauseated by, and loathed those men who unjustly raised their hatred against God. Is hatred sometimes a good thing? Understood the proper way, some hatred could be considered good—hatred of evil! i.e., hatred here is seen as zeal for God's honor. The words hate and love sometimes are used differently in the Bible than we normally use them. David used these words as he passionately announced his loyalty to God. His love meant he wanted to be on God's side; his hate meant he wanted nothing to do with those opposed to the Lord [Quest SB].

Psalm 139:23-24 God Examines Us

139:23-24 What David mentioned in verse 1 as a matter of fact – that God had searched him – he now makes a matter of prayer in verses 23-24. God wants us to invite "*Him*" to search our lives. The verb "*search*" is used for digging up valuable minerals in a mine. The term "*test/ try*" me is used of examining precious metals to prove their purity. While it is certainly a good idea to do some self-analysis, it is even better to ask God to examine you. Most of us, when examining ourselves, will arrive at the conclusion that we're OK – or at least that we're better than our neighbor or co-worker. We are really asking these 4 things of God:

1. *Search me.* All of me; even my darkest secrets and deeds. V23
2. *Test me.* To see if I am pure and true – try me and know my thoughts. V23
3. *Tell me.* Let me know what you find – give me notice if there be any hurtful way in me. V24
4. *Help me.* Show me how to correct my ways – lead me into the right way. V24

⁶ <http://old.wolkorea.org/english/syme/messages/d105.htm>

Once we understand that God loves us, we will readily invite His investigation. We desire Him to "dig" into the depths of our being. We want Him to road test our character. Why? Because not only does God know us, He knows us better than we know ourselves. And He loves us too much to allow us to keep doing the things we've been doing. Don't be afraid to ask God to point out offensive stuff in your life. Allow Him to show you things that grieve Him, or bring pain to other people. When He exposes something, own it, confess it, and yield to the God who knows you intimately – and yet, loves you completely. Be willingly accountable to Him. As someone has said, "*A good person desires to know the worst of himself.*" Will that be you?

SUMMARY:

Stedman: This 139th Psalm describes a man who is thinking about himself and his relationship to God. If you are struggling with an identity crisis and you are not sure just who you are then I suggest you read carefully as we look together at this marvelous Psalm. It is divided into four paragraphs of six verses each. It is easy to follow the outline for it is already structured for us in the RSV. In each paragraph the psalmist faces a question about himself in relationship to God....

- 1) In the first paragraph he asks, '**How well does God know me?**'
- 2) In the second paragraph the writer is exploring the question, '**How near is God to me?**'
- 3) In the third paragraph the psalmist is telling us **how he knows all this**:
 - a) First, because of deduction from the design of the body.
 - b) Then he is struck by the progress that is necessary in the forming of a human being. He is not only impressed by the argument from design but by the evidence of determination.
 - c) The psalmist is impressed by the abundance of revelation from God.
- 4) (fourth paragraph)
 - a) First, he **asks God to take care of the problem** of the wicked.
 - b) (Then) **Reveal the wickedness that may lie undetected in my own heart**, and guide me in the way that leads to fullness of life.

In order to have a relationship with God, you would have to be in relationship with God's Omniscience, Omnipresence, and Omnipotence. It is impossible to escape from such omniscient control, no matter how far or fast you might go; for God is everywhere. On the basis of these meditations, David then affirmed his loyalty to God and prayed for God to prove him by examining him.

⁷God has perfect knowledge of us, and all our thoughts and actions are open before Him. God knows all things—omniscient; that He is every where—omnipresent. God takes strict notice: He knows what rule we walk by, what end we walk toward, what company we walk with. "*When I am withdrawn from all company, thou knowest what I have in my heart. There is not a vain word, not a good word, but thou knowest from what thought it came, and with what design it was uttered.*" Wherever we are, we are under the eye and hand of God. We cannot by searching find how God searches us out; nor do we know how we are known. Such thoughts should restrain us from sin.

Secret haunts of sin are as open before God as the most open villainies. The Psalmist asks God: "*Whither can I go? In the most distant corners of the world, in heaven, or in hell, I cannot go out of thy reach*" V7. He cannot escape Him in heaven, in hell, or in the uttermost parts of the sea. "*Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me*" V10. Wherever he goes, God is already there. No veil can hide us from God; not the thickest darkness. No disguise can save any person or action from being seen in the true light by Him. The believer cannot be removed from the supporting, comforting presence of the Almighty God. Should the persecutor take his life, his soul will the sooner ascend to heaven. The grave cannot separate his body from the love of his Saviour, who will raise it a glorious body. No outward circumstances can separate him from his Lord. While in the path of duty, he may be happy in any situation, by the exercise of faith, hope, and prayer.

We cannot think how many mercies we have received from Him. It would help to keep us in the fear of the Lord all

⁷ <http://mhc.biblecommenter.com/psalms/139.htm>

<http://www.pitwm.net//pitwm-sundayschool.html>

the day long, if, when we wake in the morning, our first thoughts were of Him: and how much more admire and bless our Lord for His precious salvation, when we awake in the glory! Yet if it were not for His precious thoughts of love toward us, our reason and our living for ever would, through our sins, prove the occasion of our eternal misery.

How should we then delight to meditate on God's love to sinners in Jesus Christ, the sum of which exceeds all reckoning! Sin is hated, and sinners lamented, by all who fear the Lord. Yet while we shun them we should pray for them; with God their conversion and salvation are possible. As the Lord knows us thoroughly, and we are strangers to ourselves, we should earnestly desire and pray to be searched and proved by His word and Spirit. "*If there be any wicked way in me...*" The way of godliness is pleasing God, and profitable to us; and will end in everlasting life. All the saints desire to be kept and led in this way, that they may not miss it, turn out of it, or tire in it.

David meditates on the omniscience (139:1-6), omnipresence (vv. 7-12), and omnipotence (vv. 3-18) of God. He then applies these truths to the wicked, whom he calls on God to slay (vv.19-22), and to himself, whom he calls on God to examine and to lead (vv.23-24) [Victor Bible Reader's Companion]. The Psalmist was not afraid of being put under the searchlight of God's scrutiny. In this way God would vindicate him from unjustified attacks by the wicked; God will correct any of his sinful patterns and continue to lead him in the paths of righteousness.

Being aware of God's Omniscience, His Omnipresence, and His Omnipotence will bring such comfort to know that our life was planned with great care and is still under the auspicious (favorable) hand of God.

APPLICATION:

⁸Where are you today? Do you think God has forsaken you? Or do you think that you have escaped God? He was there before you showed up. He is there to lead you now. He is there to hold you up with His right hand. Will you look to Him? Will your loyalty be to God for everything? Everyday be aware of God's meticulous knowing of you, His caring about you, and His moral examination (searching) of you.

⁸ <http://www.learnthebible.org/thoughts-meditations/even-there.html>

<http://www.pitwm.net//pitwm-sundayschool.html>