

## Knowing and Trusting God Psalm 139 (5/15)

I want to invite you to join us as we read and preach through the Bible together. We want to see the **overarching story of God's activity** with people as well as what he is saying in a **particular passage** from the Bible. This past week we've been reading mostly in the **book of Psalms**. Here's a **little overview** of what kind of writing this is. [Video](#)

**Last week we looked at all the feelings** and emotions that come from David in the Psalms he wrote. I highly **recommend that you watch** that sermon because God **spoke in a powerful** way to many of us.

**We are entering into the place of worship**, the temple, the **presence of God for those who were exiles, caught in the in-between time**.

With that in mind, let's dive into another one of the most quoted Psalms. If you have a Chronological Bible, this scripture is the reading for May 15.

**O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. <sup>2</sup> You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away. <sup>3</sup> You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. <sup>4</sup> You know what I am going to say even before I say it, Lord. <sup>5</sup> You go before me and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head. <sup>6</sup> Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand! Psalm 139:1-6**

**What do you notice is repeated** over and over in this section? It's the word, "know" or "knowledge." To be precise there are **five different verbs** that are used to describe God's knowledge of the writer. This speaks of a **depth of knowledge**.

**What does he know?** Everything about me, **my mundane life**, my thoughts, everything I do, what I'm going to say, things that are **too much for me to understand**.

**For God to speak to us through this Psalm, the first thing we must consider is that...God knows you better.** But doesn't there **need to be a "than"** at the end of that? **Someone to put up against God** when it comes to knowing you. **Shouldn't it be, my mom, my dad, my spouse, my kids, or even me.** Don't need any of that. It's better than anyone, including me.

**Does God know the future, which hasn't happened yet**, and one could say, doesn't yet exist. **Or is it that God knows us so well that he knows what we will do.** He calls the shot.

His knowledge about me is too wonderful, **beyond my understanding**. He knows us so well that **once he considers all the variables**, he knows how we will act.

**If we can't establish this one first, then there is no chance for us to hear anything from God through this. If you think you know better than your teacher, your parents, your spouse, or God, then your voice is the voice you are going to hear. You will hear your own voice saying what you want to hear. If you think you know you better than God, then there really isn't any point in reading the Bible. You are going to hear your own voice, not God's. And we all love that sound.**

Let's read the next section. **I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence!** <sup>8</sup> If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the grave, you are there. <sup>9</sup> If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans, <sup>10</sup> even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me. <sup>11</sup> I could ask the darkness to hide me and the light around me to become night—<sup>12</sup> but even in darkness I cannot hide from you. To you the night shines as bright as day. Darkness and light are the same to you. 7-12

**Sounds like a stalker, invading his privacy, not giving him any space. You smother me, I 'm suffocating, I can't breathe. Well, that's one way to look at it, particularly if you don't want his input or his boundaries.**

Is there some part of you that wants to "escape from God" once you see how well he knows you? **We don't like to use the word escape** because it sounds cowardly. **Well, then let's say you are creating space** between you and God. **You don't want to hear him say that what you are doing is wrong, its sin.** For that reason, **we avoid his presence and the places** where he might speak words of direction or command. **"Nobody is the boss of me except for me."**

**I know that Jesus demands everything,** and I don't want to give up my right to self-determination. **That's not in the constitution or Bill of Rights, but it is in Psalm 139.** I want to do my own thing. **I want to get away from him to some sort of freedom.** But it really isn't.

**"Escaping" from the invasive presence of God is another way of, "Running from God."**

**The original language gives the picture of how God "hems in" David.** He wants us to view that as protection that **helps me get there safely** or I can view it as someone **turning on the autopilot, taking control of the vessel** from me.

Vertically can't get away from him. V. 8

Horizontally can't get away from him. V. 9

Look at verse 10 "...even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me. The NIV says, "Right hand" will hold or grasp you. **That's a picture of being hemmed in by God on all sides and him holding David in his hand giving loving direction.**

The bottom line is that **God guides you**. He holds you in the palm of his hand. **This means that you cannot go so far away that he is not there to guide you if I will allow him to.** Or I can try to escape.

**A guide is different from the information desk.** At the info desk they describe, **point give you directions** and landmarks. **A guide takes the trip with you.** It's the difference between a **travel agent and a tour guide.** On our safari we needed a guide who went with us, not **someone who showed us pictures and set up all the tickets** to fly there and to get into the preserve.

**Sounds kind of like a shepherd.** This is the picture later we have of Jesus as the good shepherd. <sup>11</sup> "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup> A hired hand will run when he sees a wolf coming. He will abandon the sheep because they don't belong to him and he isn't their shepherd. And so the wolf attacks them and scatters the flock. <sup>13</sup> The hired hand runs away because he's working only for the money and doesn't really care about the sheep. <sup>14</sup> "I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me, <sup>15</sup> just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So I sacrifice my life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup> I have other sheep, too, that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock with one shepherd. John 10:11-16

**The guide provides**, someone willing to **sacrifice for** the ones he's guiding, **consistent presence, protection, help that won't run away in fear, who knows those he guides, would take a bullet for them and someone who will go looking for me if I turn up missing.**

**Because David lived in a broken sinful world, and we live in a broken sinful world doesn't mean that being held by God or hemmed in by God that bad things aren't going to happen. But he is with us through that stuff.**

**For God to meet you in Psalm 139 you must accept that God knows you better and that he is your guide through this life.** But there's more. Let's pick up at verse 13...**You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. <sup>14</sup> Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. <sup>15</sup> You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. <sup>16</sup> You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed. <sup>17</sup> How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! <sup>18</sup> I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up, you are still with me! 13-19**

Why does God know you better and is supposed to be your guide? Because... **God designed you.** That's what is all through this section is design. It's **from the very beginning.** Verse 15 speaks of design **in the womb.** You knew me as an **embryo.**

**Nothing is a mistake in how I was made.** How you can know me so well that you are **never surprised or scandalized by what I do.** My design is **mysterious to me** but not to God.

This takes us back to the beginning of the Bible, Genesis 1. **So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:27**

That design has a touch of the divine in it. It's **baked into the bread.** There is a **similarity in our design and who God is.** It's not just physical, it's **our emotions and our desires to find something bigger than ourselves.**

That design is a **"one of a kind."** <sup>10</sup> **For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. Ephesians 2:10**

**God created us from the dust and then recreated in Christ or "made new."** Now all of what he made us to be is **possible.** This is why we have used the term, **"Born again."** Jesus said, **"Behold I make all things new."**

**But did you notice in that last phrase?** He didn't make us new so that he would have something nice to enjoy, he would have his **tarnished creation restored.** He did it because he planned for us to do **"good things,"** things that are **part of his purpose, to make "all things new."** We were made new to be a part of the **family business.** We are to **make the kingdom of God visible to others** so that they can **see that he is good** and that his is about good things. And a big part of that is **helping people learn how to follow Jesus.** That is called **"making disciples."** Which we were commanded to do.

So, what do we have thus far?

- God knows us better.
- He guides us. Rather, he wants to guide us if we will let him.
- He designed us.

**Then life happens. Do I still believe what I said earlier?** How does that **belief help me** in this trying situation? **O God, if only you would destroy the wicked! Get out of my life, you murderers!** <sup>20</sup> **They blaspheme you; your enemies misuse your name.** <sup>21</sup> **O Lord, shouldn't I hate those who hate you? Shouldn't I despise those who oppose you?** <sup>22</sup> **Yes, I hate them with total hatred, for your enemies are my enemies.**

**How can you allow this evil to continue?** If all of this is true, then why does he allow my enemies, people who do wicked things, prosper. **That's a complicated question**, but for David's purposes he knows that people are born separated from God into a broken world. **And then they get to choose if they want to live for themselves or to follow God.**

**But that doesn't really change what he has said about God.** People being broken and doing terrible things doesn't nullify these three things about God. **He still knows us better. He still is our guide** and those are true because he designed us. **Living in the messy broken world means we must choose to believe this reality.**

**There are plenty of reasons why we can despair, give up, or stop trying to go against the flow of culture and just give in.**

**But these aren't just historical facts** written on a page so we can nod our heads in agreement to them. If God knows me better than I know myself, and he is prepared to guide me if I will follow, and this is all because he designed me, **then this is either good news or terrifying news. To know God this way will cause one of two responses, run or rest.**

**If I want to do what I want to do and make sure I'm the one who decides what is right and wrong and what I'm to do with my life, then this is frightening news.** There's a God who is the **only one with the right to and the skill set to guide me** and direct me in this life where people hurt me and do terrible things. **If I live in the delusion that there is no God who has a claim on my life, then I can believe that I am in control of what is happening and feel quite content.** I'm the captain of my own ship. **But when something happens, maybe really bad or really good, that tells me that this isn't true and I don't know myself very well, and I don't know how to live in this world, and I don't really feel like a masterpiece that God includes in what he is doing, then I am at the point of decision.**

**Is this good news or is this bad news?** I will either **run from this God** because I don't want to give up control or **I will rest in this new reality** because I don't know myself and I don't know where I'm going because **I didn't make me, God did.** **"At last someone qualified has come to save me from myself and this confusing world."**

Now we get to **see how David responds.** Does he run or does he rest? <sup>23</sup> **Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.** <sup>24</sup> **Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.** 19-24



That first phrase should sound familiar. It's how David started this Psalm. He said, "you have examined (searched) my heart." Those are the same word in the Hebrew it was originally written in.

What God has already done in the beginning David asks him to do again. Because he intends to listen to what God has to say. He intends to relinquish the role of captain, or guide, to the one who is qualified to do it. He asks God to search him, examine him and test...

- **Anxious thoughts.** Put me to the test and **see what makes me anxious or begin to doubt** that you do know me and can guide me through this scary, confusing world.

Point out...Anything in me that offends.

No one who thinks they are best suited to run their own life likes someone to point things out in their life that is offensive. This is particularly true if we know the person is right, they know me well enough to hit the nail on the head. To invite this type of scrutiny means I must trust the one who is examining and pointing out what is wrong in me. This takes us back to those three things about God.

Remember if we really believe these three things about God then we will either run or rest.

Resting in God means asking him to...

- **Examine your motives.**

This is what it means to test our hearts. This is what is behind our behavior. What is my motivation, is it selfish or is it obedient to God and loving of neighbor?

- **Test what makes you anxious instead of trusting.**

Push me so that I can know where my trust starts to falter. Is it when bad things happen or is it when things are too good, and I start to believe my own press. Is it my kids? Is that what will cause me not to trust you? It's ok with letting God run my life, but I should still try to pull all the strings in my kids' life.

- **Reveal anything that could damage your relationship with Him.**

What am I doing right now that is starting to damage or weaken my relationship with God? Eventually this will cause some big compromise.

Resting in God is trust that is proven by submission. David says, "lead me along the path of everlasting life." There's only one way to prove trust and that is to submit to what the one in whom I have put my trust says to do. This is not done in a lab, this is done amid the garbage David described earlier. This submission

must happen when the bullets are flying, when I'm scared, when I feel like I need to grab the reins. Amid being punched in the face by life, I still say, "God tell me what to do and I'll do it." You know me, you are the one to guide me because you designed me." That is how trust is proven to be real.

Example...

This is a return to the top where God is already searching for him. Now he asks him to search his heart for the above purposes.

This is David saying whatever you find, do your worst. I might not like it, but you are the one who knows me and holds me and designed me. Do whatever painful surgery you need on my character, my attitudes, and my behavior.

Let's add it all together.

- God knows you better than you know yourself.
- And he guides me.
- Why does he know you and is best qualified to guide you? Because he designed you for his purposes.
- To truly know Him this way is to either cause you to run or rest
- But if you trust him and submit to him, he will make you new (heart & thoughts) and lead you through this world into the next.

Here's a way to remember this.

1. Point up and then to my head
2. Hands traveling parallel
3. Knitting or stitching
4. Point to heart

### Steps of Obedience

1. Pray David's words as your own.

<sup>23</sup> Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.

<sup>24</sup> Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life. 19-24

1. Listen to what the Holy Spirit says.
2. Obey what the Holy Spirit says.

This is the path, the only path to what Jesus calls "life that is full or abundant." Hearing God's voice, and aligning your life to what he says.