

Formed By God
Sanctity of Human Life Message
Psalm 139
Englewood Baptist Church
Sunday morning, January 9, 2011

Please open your Bible to Psalm 139.

For Christmas this year, I was given a book by George W. Bush *entitled Decision Points*. I'm sure you've seen it on display. Regardless of what you feel or think about the man, you must agree that he was serving as the leader of our nation when suddenly, the world was turned upside down. All of us watched him from a distance, trying to discern his thoughts and understand his strategy. What was going through his mind in the Situation Room when the war on terrorism was soon to begin? None of us know him personally, I don't think, so we were forced to piece together the puzzle of his character and use the soundbytes and statements provided. The information was often second-hand as the President had little time to write speeches. Others spoke for him.

Through this book of personal memoirs, however, George Bush speaks for himself and attempts to reveal his heart and his character. We can get to know the man, this person, because he has now taken the time to become personal.

Psalm 139, where you are now turned, is perhaps the most personal glimpse that we receive in the Old Testament about God. It is a doctrinal classic as it gives you and me a behind-the-scenes glimpse at the nature and character of God. As we look out a window of an airplane, we can see the vast beauty of God and His creation, and we can learn so much about Him. However, it is through these personal writings, inspired by the Holy Spirit, that we gain a glimpse at the character of God—who He is and who we are in relation to Him.

Read with me, Psalm 139:1-16.

Human beings are hard-wired in such a way that we want to be known. Anonymity may have its benefits at times, but for the most part, you like for people to know your name and to know what makes you tick. Church growth books all agree that people are not looking for a friendly church; they are looking for friends. They are looking for others who will be interested in knowing them personally.

In this Psalm, David's heart is moved by the notion that this enormous King of the world has special knowledge of little ol' him. He comes to the conclusion that he is significant to the Significant. And so David praises and worships God because God has three special powers that he himself does not possess. Each of these powers brings comfort to David's soul and helps to him to sleep like a baby at night. Let's look at them one by one.

Praise God For His Special Powers

1. Praise God for his Omniscience (vv.1-6)

V.1 says, *“Oh Lord you have searched me and you know me...”*

David is in awe of God’s knowledge of him. Nobody knew David better than the Lord. God knows everything about you, did you know that? He knows your special giftings, he knows your insecurities, he knows your endearing qualities, he knows your hidden moles, freckles, and warts. He knows it all. To say it in good Southern slang, “He’s got you figured.” This kind of special insider knowledge is comforting to the Christian.

When your car is broken, and you have it towed to the shop, and the mechanic comes out and pops the hood. He opens the lid to the engine, and he listens, touches a few things, and quickly says to you, “Awww, yeah. Mmmm hmm. I can tell you right now that this is one of three things: your fuel injector is leaking that’s why you’re smelling gas or your serpentine (teen) belt tensioner is broken, or coil pack has gone bad...or wait a minute, you know what? This could be nothing more than your intake plentum leaking.” “Give me an hour and I’ll have it figured.”

And when he talks to you like that, with all that insider language, be honest. You are encouraged by the fact that you are a moron but he is a master of everything auto. You don’t have a clue what he’s talking about it but your are encouraged by the fact that he does. He has all this knowledge that is not in your possession.

In the Psalm, David is humbled by the fact that God is a true “know-it-all.” We all know persons who THINK they know it all, but God isn’t pretending. That word for “search” in v.1, it carries the idea of a cross-examination. It presents God as master-detective who snoops into every detail of David’s existence, armed with x-ray cameras and laser probes.” Let me tell you something: God knows you inside and out. For the person here today who is living with hidden sin, this is frightening news. For the person living in relationship with God, this is warms the heart like a bonfire to the hands. Intimacy requires knowledge, and God has that market cornered.

Some time ago, I heard Beth Moore speak and she was talking very transparently about her marriage to her husband Keith. She was letting her humanity hang out a little as she said that she had been “married for several decades and it had just about killed them both.” Marriage hasn’t always been easy, she said, but then she added this, “But I know every line on that man’s face.” What a beautiful expression of intimate relationship. “I know every line on that man’s face.” He might not be perfect, but nobody knows him like I know him.

Let me tell you something: God not only knows every line on your face, every artery that cuts across the back of your hand, and every birthmark hidden under your sleeve...he knows more than that. He knows your thoughts before you ever make them audible. He sees your heart before its ever exposed. And not only that, he is familiar all your habits—the going out and the lying down—he is familiar with all your ways.

You should get to know Him because He has gotten to know all about you. V.5, is one of my favorite pictures. *“You hem me in—behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me.”* In the old days, people lived in fortified cities. The walls around the city were high and hard to penetrate. The wall was what kept others at a distance. However, an enemy could surround both sides of the city—the way going in and the way coming out—and in doing so, there was no means of escape. The people were trapped—hemmed in behind and before. They were painted into a corner.

What David says here is so telling about humanity. We can build walls around ourselves, and keep everybody out, hold people at a comfortable arms length, and let nobody see upclose the pain we carry or the thoughts we entertain. But let me tell you something: there is a God in heaven that has besieged you. You can't run from him. You might escape others, but there is one PERSON that you will never escape. He is behind you and before you...he knows your loftiest and lowest imaginations.

David, in some mysterious unexplainable way, found great comfort in knowing that there was somebody who had him pegged. God knew the lines on his face and the desires of his heart. And so David worshipped him for that—his all-knowingness.

The second special power of God was his omnipresence. David said I ...

2. Praise God for His Omnipresence (vv.7-12)

Look at v.7...David asks an important question...

If a person wanted to get rid of God, and have no further dealings with him, to be free from all accountability and to live in perfect anonymity, where would he need to move?

David lists three possibilities:

- Could I run up or down? Can I climb higher than God could climb so that He could not reach me? Or, better yet, could I dig so deep in the ground that I would live beneath his grasp like a mouse that avoids the sweeping paw of a cat through the hole? David concludes: this will not work. Up and down, God is there.
- Could I run east or west? V.9, “If I rise on the wings of the dawn?” When the sun arises early, the light flashes from east to west along the horizon. David wondered, could a person like Jonah sail so far in the sea that he was beyond the jurisdiction of God? V. 10 says, no... “even there your hand guides the ship.”
- Could I run under the cover of darkness? No, that won't work either because God has night vision goggles and he sees me perfectly under cover. My children love to play hide-and-seek, and they are just plain awful at it. They'll got on top of my bed, all of them, and pull the big comforter overtop their buddies. It looks like a camel is laying under the blankets. They think they are hidden; I laugh at their sorry attempt.

You can't hide from God. He sees you everywhere. He's tracking you, like GPS radar. It was the writer of Hebrews that echoed this thought when he said,

“Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account” (Heb. 4:13)

I remember as a child, once when my father instructed both me and my older brother, to go into the next room and to sit down and to wait for his presence. We would receive what “we had coming.” And so there we sat, knowing we had done wrong. As I looked at my downcast brother, I knew that he was no help to me now, and there was no escape hatch. Dad was coming through that door, and I could not flee.

The Earth is filled with people who are running in the opposite direction of God. Their conscience condemns them, their spirit testifies to them, the fruit of their lives bears witness against them. They are not running with God, but instead, they are fleeing from his presence. And...why does the Christian live in such a state of peace? Here's why: Because no matter how difficult our days might be on this planet, the Hound of Heaven has sniffed us out. He has found us, and he will not leave us. His presence is never interrupted or broken.

Good news for the saint; bad news for the sinner. It was a happy thought for David.

#3, David goes on...I...

3. Praise God for His Omnipotence. (vv.13-18)

V. 13...

God is so powerful that He can take what is formless and fashion a human creature. He is the divine “weaver” who knits together the most beautiful tapestry. I thank God for my four years of scientific training in college. Through the lens of Biology, I investigated the complexity of the human hand, the greatest tool that God ever put on a creature. I discovered the inner workings of the blood pump—the heart—and how it uses electrical current to keep a perfect pace and a steady flow of life juice. I studied the neurons in the brain and the chemical transmitters that produce thought and give birth to movement. I studied the camera of the eye and the lens and the pupil that naturally adjusts to the amount of light in the room.

I studied the miracle of life. Is there anything in the whole world that preaches the goodness of God more purely than the sight of a newborn baby...fearfully and wonderfully made? In the secret place, God put your frame together, says v.15. He built you and after He was finished, he broke the mold. He only makes originals.

David looked at the world of anatomy and physiology and He marveled at the power of God to put together such an extravagant piece of art.

January is the month when we celebrate the Sanctity of Human Life, I must pause here and draw attention to the obvious implications of this text. David is not writing about abortion. He is writing about the creative genius of God. However, we cannot read these verses without thinking about the contemporary application.

The main argument for decades, in the issue of abortion, concerns the identity of the fetus. When does a person become personal? When does a little boy become a little boy? When does a little girl become a little girl?

Those who argue for abortion insist that a woman has a right to her own body and can do with it as she sees fit. So, if she wants her gallbladder removed, she may exercise that right. As long as a fetus is not a person, then she can do as she pleases.

As the pro-choice movement has picked up speed, the vocabulary on this issue has been modified. A woman used to talk about her “baby”. She was pregnant with a “child.” Today, abortion advocates refer call it a “fetus” or better yet, the “embryo”, sometimes even the “tissue.” It’s impossible for a woman to conceive the idea of killing a little helpless baby. No thinking woman would ever push a toddler’s head beneath the water until he no longer kicked. However, as long as the toddler is still a tissue, then a person can dispose of something so impersonal.

And so the argument has raged on for millennia. This is not a new debate. It was the Greek philosopher Aristotle who said that a fetus becomes human when it quickens in the womb, that is, when the mother feels the jolt in her belly and says, “Whoa, something’s alive in there.” Aristotle was wrong though, for he had no ultrasound equipment which today reveals that the little baby is moving around for many weeks before Mommy can feel the tremors.

Beyond Aristotle, others have argued that a fetus becomes human only when it is old enough to survive outside the womb. One only has to visit the Neo-natal intensive care unit this afternoon, though, to realize that premature babies are much stronger than we think. They can survive with a little help.

So what is the answer? When is that clear defining point when the life switch is turned on? The answer is not one that pro-choice people want to hear. Scientific study reveals one thing: From the moment the seed of the father combines with the egg of the mother, the development of the child is uninterrupted and continues steadily unless it is killed like one kills the engine of a car. The switch was turned on at conception.

That life that exists in tiny form, is 100% unique. There will never be another one like it. At conception, when secret forces wind chromosomal strings, a personal person is produced by a Personal God...the highest form of art ever observed by human witness.

Being the father of four small people, I sometimes observe the injustice of one boy crushing the play-dough tower of a lesser boy. I sometimes see a little man tear up the

colorful construction of his older sister. It evokes great emotion when a person sees his or her handiwork destroyed and thrown away.

How do you think it resonates in heaven when the Weaver of the womb watches as others tear apart his work? David praises God for human individuality that begins in the secret place. From the first moments in the womb, God begins to work together all things for the good. God knew you, before you knew yourself. He knows you now better than you know yourself. And He is worthy to be praised. He is all-powerful and we would be wise to stay away from His art studios.

Let me ask you a few questions that you have probably never stopped to consider?

Questions That Are “Worth” Considering

- **How much would you pay for your right hand?** If you were told to put a pricetag on it, what would it read? Do you realize how much you use it? You ever cracked a hardboiled egg without your right hand? Try it once! God gave you hands to feel and to touch and to do good work. How good He was to supply them!
- **How much value would you assign to your eyes?** If God said, “Make me an offer on those eyes.” What would you say? What are they worth? To watch a little blonde haired boy rip off wrapping paper, to watch your wife pull back her hair into a pony tail, to see a sun sit down on the water? You didn’t buy or make those eyes. Somebody else made them, and loaned them to you. How much are they worth?
- **What amount of cash would cover the rental of your right leg?** If God said, from this point on, I’m gonna need some cash each day to cover the cost of your leg, what would be a reasonable agreement? What is it worth to walk?

Now, some of you think I’m being patronizing, that I’m badgering you with these child-like questions, but these are profound thoughts! Don’t tune me out yet. Now, take the sum of all of your parts, and itemize them, the head, the ears, the mouth, the tongue, the elbows, the knees, the toes...add up all their individual values and what is the net worth of a human being? Now add the soul which can know and feel God forever? Here is the question I want you to consider: What is one human being worth?

David concluded, after looking in the mirror, that he was wonderfully made by an all-powerful God. Thanks to the Holy Spirit, David had more than eyes, he had eyes that could see. He had more than ears; he had ears that could hear. He grasped the goodness of this God. God was and is, a personal all-knowing, always present, all-powerful God. A God who knows you by name.

Human beings are the crowning creation upon the earth. Every single one of them.

As we close today, I would like to introduce Chris Veteto, Director of Birth Choice Ministries, and she is going to share some information about the needs of the Center.

