

GOD IS THERE

Psalm 139

Some months ago when the Russians made their first space flights one of the comments printed in the newspaper was, we did not find God there.

In Psalm 139 we deal with God's all seeing providence. It has to do with the eyesight of God. And if we were going to classify it as a doctrine, we would deal with omni presence of God.

This doctrine of God means that God is everywhere, present in space, in time, and there is no point of space and no moment of time where God is not present.

Closely associated with this is God's knowledge. He is not limited to any time. And that he is not limited to either space - neither of these interfere with God. He knows the three acts of men. God knows the events of this world's order. Not simply as isolated or detached events - but he knows them in relationship to the world which he created.

Do you know that God is eminently acquainted with you. Would it frighten you to know that his eye is upon you morning, noon, and night.

Suppose at this hour, we could see the eye of God peering down through the ceiling at you. And you could feel his hand literally upon your hand. What would such knowledge do for you. I think this is what we have tonight in this Psalm. Here is a man who vividly, consciously, actually felt the presence of God every moment of his life.

I think this experience has come to many people. As we had testimonies of such. For example, Frederick W. Robertson of England. Although he died in the prime of his life - a young man. He was truly one of the great preachers of the English speaking world. He lived a lonely life. He once wrote of himself, "I shall be alone as my Master was. I am hated by some friends who loved me once. For what I do and what I think. I know that God is with me. I am not afraid to be alone. I am alone now and shall be until I die. But I am not afraid to be alone in the majesty of darkness. With his presence, crowds in a sublime feeling of presence comes about me."

This preacher in the privacy of his own room was talking about the presence of God. As all preachers - his preaching had not brought about a 100% of friendship.

You might think about Sir Ernest Shackleton and his men who were once caught in the antarctic. Their ship was destroyed. They were marooned. Shackleton took two of his men and set out in search of help. Their way was haunted with a thousand slippery hazards. The storms they fought seemed certain to overwhelm them in icy death. Still they staggered on until mere exhaustion and freezing. They reached the haven for which they had desperately prayed. Later talking it over, one of the men said to Shackleton, boss, I had a curious feeling that there was another person with us.) To which Shackleton replied, so had I. Here was an explorer - in fact, it was two of them talking about the presence of God.

Perhaps you have read poetry about the footprints of God. Like the preacher, like the explorer. Like the Psalmist. A great host of witnesses in every generation. They have found more than the footprints of God - they have found God. For he has been with them.

Many years ago in a Christian Journal called the rams horn, edited by Elijah Brown - this description of God was there. God, that being, whose throne is justice, whose atmosphere is love, to whom all time is now, all space is here, and whose only inability is to sin. The presence of God in his world and in human experience is a tremendous and inescapable fact. This got ahold of the psalmist that day and set him on fire. And that's why we have this amazing psalm 139.

I wish to discuss with you this Psalm under three heads. First, things God knows. V. 1-6. Second, the reasons why God knows. V. 7-18. Third, the presence of God stimulates some requests. V. 19-24.

I. THINGS GOD KNOWS. - V. 1-6.)

First, as a person. V. 1. David is occupied with the realism of the presence of God. Oh Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. This thought of God's complete and all searching knowledge is developed in the following verses.

God's knowledge of us - we sometimes say we know a certain person. We can distinguish him. We know his occupation. We know something about his principles but we really do not know his spirit. We do not really know his character. We do not really know what he is in public or in private. But here is a verse that tells us that God has searched out his person. That is God has examined his feelings. And God knows his spiritual condition. Nothing is concealed from God in this.

Psalm 119 - it says thou art my hiding place. Also in Psalm 32, in Psalm 32:17-8 - it says hide me under the shadow of thy wing. So God knows the Psalmist as a person. And he goes on to unfold some things that God knows.

Second, my home, V. (2). All that I do from one end of the day to another. He observes all of my ways. Thou knowest me. Sittings, arisings, I am scanned by thee and all my life to thee lies open. God says that he knows when you come into the house, when you walk into the house, when you go abroad, when you are out on an errand. He knows that. He knows all of this.

*Hall where lights is set
front Room
Pory*

Third, my travels, V. (3). The time of my activity and the time of my rest is known to him.

Fourth, my speech. Every utterance and unuttered thought comes under the viewpoint of God. He knows this.

Fifth, my life's span, V. (5). You know what is behind me. You know what is before me. And he has a feeling that God sees his entire life.

V. (6) - He is simply over-whelmed, with this vision. It is too wonderful to believe. All knowing God. David bows in self-confession. He starts off in the grandest contemplations of the omni presence of God. Or that's the way preachers would talk about it. And perhaps it is right because it means simply all knowledge or all knowing. And David put this into some (practical ways and words).

When he said all my life - to thee lies open. Every corner of his life. We can see that God is searching his life as an individual. And God is looking in upon him as a human creature. And as Isaiah said, he calls even the stars by name. And we know that God has numbered the hairs of our head. God's presence in this world means that to you my dear man, woman, boy, or girl. You are neither too little for his notice, nor too unworthy for his care. You are under his eye. Never for one moment are you anywhere else but under his eye. If that eye may be there to judge and condemn your sins - but it is always there to bring forgiveness and cleansing to your soul.

The Old Testament says thou hast searched me and known me. In the New Testament in Gal. 2:20 we read, he loved me and gave himself for me.

In the unexplored, unknown, and unexplained world into which we are plunged and we live -- to know the realisms that God knows perfectly all of my weaknesses, my strength, my thoughts, my fears, my secrets, my needs, my lacks -- his perfect knowledge of my life and of my thoughts is the truth that lights my soul as David. It is too wonderful to believe, he said.

Everything with your life is opened as a book to God. How often do you conceive to yourself that no one knows some ugly thing in your life, or some ugly thought in your mind. It becomes a nightmare, to think of the shame or distaste. We would literally dread the hour that God would make our secrets known.

How much do we hide our make-up or veneer over. We try to keep things in the deep dark secrets. We take a cloak of silence and cover up the stains.

That the Father in Heaven knows all about you. We need to reclaim this realism

of the things that God knows. He knows just how it all happened. He knows how we failed in the hour of testing. And there is no way, even your forgetfulness, or sweet perfume that will kill the odor and take it away.

He knows the places you have been and he knows your aims. He knows how hard you have tried - some of you. He knows the heavy burdens that some of you have been forced to carry. He knows the waste of time that some people have thrown away. He knows the many deeds of kindness which you have scattered along life's highway. His blueprint of your life and records are all there. He knows it all.

His divine fluoroscope has looked through all the veneer, the tinsel, and the lace make-up of Christians in the church. He knows whether you are genuine and it hurts to know that our God is like this. And I know here in this doctrine, that we cannot overlook it. That David said first, he knows all of my motions, my up-risings, my down-sittings. Second, he knows all of my imaginations. All the thoughts that go through my mind. Third, he knows all of my undertakings. He knows what I have done good, and he knows also when I have done evil. He knows that. He knows your retirements. He knows your reflections, he knows your conversations. He knows what you speak and he knows what you set forth through the power of your tongue.

He has what we call true knowledge. Therefore it is impossible for us to escape God's presence and God's sight. His eye-sight is good. And God is able to see that it is impossible to conceal anything from him. There are lots of people who think they conceal something but if we only used our common sense, we would know that many things people think are concealed. Even folks around them know about it.

So these are some things that God knows. In the first six verses.

II. REASONS WHY GOD KNOWS - V. 7-18

David in these verses helps us to understand the reasons why God knows and why God is there in his presence and witness.

First, God's presence goes with me. V. 7. We read that the Psalmist questioned himself. He really felt that probably he could get away from God.

First, never lost from his (spirit) - V. 7. In this verse we see that God's presence reaches out. And David proceeds now to the second division of the psalm. And he answered the question whether to flee from thy presence. And God's spirit is always there with him.

V. 8 - Second, not limited by (place.) He says that he might go to Heaven, go to Hell, or go to some place, or go to the place of the bed - and yet, he says that the presence of God is going to be there.

Third, not limited by (space) - V. 9-10. He might take a long trip, start out at day break and follow the crack of dawn, around this world. He said he would discover God looking on and observing all the time. Space and distance would not screen out or conceal him from God's presence.

Amos 9:3 ¹¹ And though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence. And though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, ¹¹ thence when I command the serpent and it shall bite them.

The prophet Jonah sought to flee from God. He thought that the trip on the ship

would get him away, in the darkness of the night, and truly lead him away from God's eyesight, and God's vision. But he found that it was not true.

Fourth not limited by (conditions) V. 11-12. The darkness will cover me. But he discovered that the darkness turned out to be light. A man may hide from other men in darkness - but there is no such thing as doing this in God's sight. But actually the darkness brought light about him he says. Light is the thing that God uses to light up the Milky Way in the sky and the glories of Heaven.

Immanuel Kant, a philosopher said, two of the grandest things in nature - one, the star in the Heavens at midnight. And the conscience from the human breast.

Victor Hugo wrote the three grandest things - the ocean, the sky, and the interior of the human soul.

Napoleon once said that finding the stars gave proof of the existence of God.

No doubt in the thinking of David, the darkness, limitations and conditions - he thought of Sisera. Judges 5:20. When the stars in their course fought against him.

A Mother told me this week - the Egyptian Death of Graduel to grandchild - # was a Librarian - had needed him heaven - stars need fixing - sat thinking - working on - help her stars shining

Even the three hours of darkness on the cross when Jesus was forsaken. God was still in control. And his presence was still felt.

John Milton, in the dark room of blindness was one of the world's great thinkers.

Fanny Crosby in her dark room of blindness developed many wonderful pictures -

over 8,000 songs that have been used around the world.

Helen Keller in her blindness knew that the Lord dwelt even in the thick darkness. 2 Chron. 6:1. We cannot escape God's vision though the Heavens be black with clouds.

Did not the pillar of cloud provide light for the children of Isreal in their journeys toward the promised land.

So it is not good for us to say that the darkness shall cover me. As Moffett said, if I say the darkness will screen me, night will hide me in its curtains, yet darkness is not dark to thee.

There is a story of an atheist father, who sought to impress his little son, of the non-existence of God. He wrote on the blackboard, "God is no where." But he got the w in the where a bit close to the o in no. So when he said son, you read it, the little fellow read, "God is now here."

Whether shall I flee from thy presence.

The Psalmist here catches his breath, with the realization that he cannot get away from God. He is over-whelmed with the nearness of God. The everywhere-ness of God is a challenging thought. That he goes personally with him.

In hours like these in which we live it should help us to become aware of the presence of God. He comes to give us courage and assurance and confidence for every difficult journey.

In the night watches, mothers, fathers, and wives may reach out and grasp the hand of the one who is always near.

How much easier it is when we know that he is there to help us.

What a powerful force this is to help us live, clean and strong, and victorious lives. To know that he is walking beside us in this close presence. Our loneliness loses its power.

There is no wasting of time, no loss of opportunity. No profane hurtful words, can escape our lips. No unworthy thoughts can find praise in our minds. It makes all the difference in our thoughts, in our attitudes, in our deeds, when we realize this.

Adam tried to hid from God. Down through the ages there have been men and women who have tried to do the same thing.

David declares on no uncertain terms that it is utterly impossible - you can sail around the world and you will be shocked to find that God has been present all the time. Have you ever gone places that you hoped God would not find you.

Here is a great God who will lead you - God not only knows but he holds your hand in the dark hours of life - he is ready to direct your life and guide it. This is a soul stirring thought. It is to know that we are upheld and undergirded by the hand of the eternal God.

What does tomorrow hold for us. What is out there beyond in the future.

Young people ask this question - where, what, how, and when. Some beautiful valley, some high mountain, some rolling sea, some hidden rock, some howling storm. The Psalmist said God is there.

In middle life we wonder what is ahead - what will be the danger. Will it be bad health, will it be illness, will it be success, will it be frustration. And with a certainty God is there.

You may ask what is beyond in the future. What will I find. When I turn the next curve or climb over the hill - you may be sure the eternal presence of God is there.

2 Second, God created or made me. V. 13-18.

First, created me. V. 13-15. God had the reigns. He was present when I was being made. We are challenged by the thought that we are mysteriously made. That God formed me, created me.

V. 13-He said, for thou didst weave me in my mother's womb. And where upon he praises God for his wonderful birth.

It is wonderful how God created you. When you think about your heart, what you have fenced in by muscle, ribs, - it is not very large. It is a pump. How much does it pump every 24 hours. 50 Gal, 100, or 500. Well, someone has said that it pumps about 5000 gallons. It is possible they tell us for the heart to pump 50 tons of blood between one sunrise and the next. If we live to the age of 70, this amazing heart which weighs little more than half a pound will pump no less than 150 million gallons of blood. How can it do it. Well, that is the part of the wonder of it. It is so constructed - it can rest between stops. Thanks to the law of rhythm on which it operates, resting. It is not made by

chance or by accident - but the Psalmist said, that God created this.

Second, thank God for his marvelous workmanship - V. 14. It is too amazing, too wonderful and yet he has thanks for God.

Third, God scheduled every day before I began to breathe, V. 16-18.
V. 17 - This is most precious that his presence is constantly with me. V. 18 - I cannot count the times when I have felt that thy presence was real. When I am awake, I am with thee.

III. THE PRESENCE OF GOD STIMULATES SOME REQUESTS - V. 19-24.

First, separation from the wicked - V. 19-22.

The Lord will slay those who blaspheme his name. I am grieved with them, he says, I dislike their ways. Therefore, his request is that he might be separated from the wicked. Now in these verses, this is his way of calculating and estimating what God is going to do with the wicked. Now some people may be terribly worried about what the Psalmist has to say here. But when we think of the sins of this world and God smiting them down. David had a chance to take to personal vengeance on Saul. But he spared the evil king's life.

But in these solemn verses we think of what God is going to do in dealing with the wicked individual - no veil can hide them. They might go to the remotest part of the earth like Jonah - but God's judgement descends.

A college student once walked in the garden with a grand old preacher of the South. He said to him, I don't understand how a man of your intelligence and learning can be a Christian. The preacher replied that I think it is perfectly

intelligent to be a Christian. And when the student replied, how can you believe the Bible. Why not, said the preacher. Well, it is full of contradictions. Oh said the preacher, I wasn't aware of that. I've been reading it for years. What for example. Well, said the young man, doesn't the Bible say that God is love. Yes, and doesn't it say that God is a consuming fire. Yes. How do you reconcile the two. He stopped for a moment in the garden. The day was hot. Someone had torn off a lovely flower. And it layed there wilting, fading, etc. The preacher pointed to the flower and then to the flowers that were blooming beautifully. And said, aren't they beautiful. And they owe their beauty to the sun don't they. Yes, acknowledged the young man. But said the preacher, look at this poor flower, lying here all wilted and curled up. What caused it to wither. Why the sun, sir, said the young man. So said the preacher - it is the same sun that feeds and nourishes one - on the other hand, and the same sun that withers and kills the other flower. That is the way with God. As long as the flower was in right relationship to the sun, it flourished. Broken off from the relationship, it perished.

Then when you and I are rightly related to God, his love is our life, our joy. When we break away and refuse his love, we shut him out of our life and we pass by under his judgement. And if we insist on remaining there, we perish.

The young man got an insight into the character of God, that destroyed his doubts.

// Lo, I am with thee unto the end of the earth - is the promise of God.

Second, separation from the world V. 23-24. So the presence of God stimulates him to request separation from the wicked. And then in the final test, separation from the world. As we conclude this Psalm we conclude it by pointing you to a same request - as to the presence of God.

And David does this by saying two or three things.

First, he says, search me - search my heart. And know my heart.

As Moffett says, see if I am taking a wrong course. And lead me into the path of the everlasting.

Second, try me. Try my thoughts, he says.

Third, prove me. Prove my conduct, my thoughts. Discover if there is any wicked way in me.

The three Hebrew children had the presence of God with them in the furnace.

Lead me - this is my reward. The way of life to the eternal life. The way everlasting means to Heaven.

Exodus 33:14-15 - And he said my presence shall go with thee and I shall give thee rest. And he said unto him if thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. This was Moses request.

Isaiah 63:9 - In all of their affliction - he was afflicted. And the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and in his pity he redeemed them. Speaking of God's favor to Israel.

Acts 3:19 - Repent ye therefore and be converted. That your sins may be blotted out. When the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. Peter had visited the temple at the hour of prayer. The lame man had been healed at the gate beautiful. At the presence of God, it had been felt.

Is the presence of God real or unreal to you? Is the assurance of God's forgiveness and favor upon you? Is the claim that your life can be God controlled and guided?

Then let us remember this - we don't have to struggle and strain to find him. All we need to do is to put ourselves in the way of his Glory. God is there.

It is like a dusty mirror. So it can be with your soul. You can take this mirror and clean the dust off, and it will reflect the image and the sunlight. And this is the illustration that the Psalmist is saying, search me, oh God. And my heart, and see if there be any wicked way in me. That carries with it a plea to take away everything in his life that displeases God. To take away the soiled part from the mirror so it would reflect the proper image. This is a prayer that has meaning and has an earnest invitation.

God knows all about you. God is present, God is there. Your thoughts, your yearnings, your secret imaginations, your rebellions, your sins, your noble hopes, your aims, and your purposes. He knows the hills, he knows the valleys, he knows the springs. He knows your business in life. He knows your social engagements. He knows your home experiences. The lonely hours. The heavy laden days. These are open to him. Nothing is hid from him. You will not be able to slip or hide away from his presence.

This leaves us with the challenge what manner of person ought we to be.

*Boy Grocery Store - Brown told take handful of candy - Boy
hesitated - so man took handful put in Boy's pocket -
mother rebuked him for shyness -
boy "I wanted him to do it because his hand was bigger"
Lesson - God provides Better & bigger things than we can do for ourselves*