

The LORD Knows Me and Still Chooses Me

Psalm 139 (NIV)

For the director of music. Of David. A psalm. ¹ You have searched me, LORD, and you know me. ² You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. ³ You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. ⁴ Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely. ⁵ You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me. ⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. ⁷ Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? ⁸ If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. ⁹ If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, ¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. ¹¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," ¹² even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. ¹³ For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. ¹⁴ I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. ¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. ¹⁶ Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. ¹⁷ How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them! ¹⁸ Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand— when I awake, I am still with you. ¹⁹ If only you, God, would slay the wicked! Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty! ²⁰ They speak of you with evil intent; your adversaries misuse your name. ²¹ Do I not hate those who hate you, LORD, and abhor those who are in rebellion against you? ²² I have nothing but hatred for them; I count them my enemies. ²³ Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. ²⁴ See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

What goes through your head when you read the words of Psalm 139? "You have searched me, LORD, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely." (verses 1-4)

The LORD knows all of your and my most intimate thoughts. Let that sink in for a minute. He knows about that lustful thought I quickly dismissed because I knew it wasn't right, but he still knows that I had it, saw it himself. He knows the lie I told, the lie that no one else has figured out, the one that I'm still trying to convince myself is true. He knows the hateful thoughts that I have let fester in my heart. He knows the low self esteem that I have, that I don't consider myself attractive or desirable. He knows the depression and the anxiety that I have. He knows the doubts that I seemingly can't ever overcome. He knows when I'm just going through the motions of being here for church. Get out of my head, God! I don't want you to see all my thoughts!

"Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there... If I say, 'Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,' even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you." (verses 7-8, 11-12) You pursue me, God. You're always there. I don't get a moment alone. I don't get any privacy, no sanctuary, no space of my own. I want to hide myself from you. Can't you just leave me alone?

"My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be." (verses 15-16) And now you are telling me that I basically don't have control over my life. You already planned out all my days. I can't thwart you. I don't have free will. What's the point of living life if I have no control. Am I just going through the motions every day as you are like a puppet master pulling all my strings?

Then David prays, "If only you, God, would slay the wicked! Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty!" (verse 19) Like you're one to talk, David. I know some of your stories. I know how you lusted over and then slept with another man's wife. I know what you did to cover it up. You're a murderer, David! You're one of these wicked that you are asking God to slay. If God comes, he's going to get you, David. And, honestly, he's going to get me because he knows the wickedness I try to convince myself doesn't exist in me.

How can David pray this prayer so confidently that God wouldn't slay him? God did indeed know all of David's thoughts and failings and sins, just as he said at the beginning of the psalm. Yet, God still wanted to be with David. This is why the LORD promised to David that the ruler of all nations would come through David's family line. This is the same person that was promised through Abraham, that this descendant would be a blessing to all nations. This is the same one who was promised to Adam and Eve that this male offspring would crush the devil's head and live perfection for us so that no person would remain separated from God. It was

through the Messiah, the Christ, that God removes from all of our offensive ways, all of our wickedness, and lead us in the way everlasting.

The LORD has done the same for us. He knows all the thoughts we have ever had. He has seen us at our best. He has also seen us at our worst. He doesn't turn a blind eye to any of it. Yet, he still chose us, chooses to be with us, like he did with David. All our offensive ways did not stop him from loving us. He does not simply tolerate us or put up with us. No, he did everything for us so that he could be with us. He desires us. He wants us.

Because he desires us, he made a promise and kept it. The same Messiah that was promised to David was promised to you and me. Jesus has come into our world. He did this to take on Satan for us. He himself paid the price for all our sins and faults and failures. He lived the perfection we could never attain. As we heard last week, through baptism God washes away all our offensive ways and gives us life everlasting with him because God adopts us as his child, made beautiful and right with him as he covered us with Jesus' perfection, his righteousness.

You came here today to hear a voice. Not mine, not your own in your head, but God's. God is speaking to you today. He wants his voice to form who you are. So, hear God's voice that says: I know you. I know every little detail about you. I know all the sins. I know all the failures. I know all the shortcomings. I know all the ways that you view yourself as a burden, as a hindrance, as a downer. I know all the ways that you want to rebel against me. I know all your doubts and questions. I know all this, and I want you to know that I love you. I chose to love you. No one makes me love you. Nothing you did makes me love you. See how much I love you by all that I give you. I give you everything that I have, which is everything, since I made it all, and everything that I am, which is nothing less than perfection. I give you all this to make you new so that you are perfect right now. This is who you are. You are loved. You are beautiful. You are valued. You are perfect.

This is why David can pray this prayer in Psalm 139 with confidence and comfort. This is why David can tell God to test him and know his heart and see that there is nothing offensive in him. This is why David is confident that God will be with him throughout his life, and that he has and will live everlasting life with the God who knows him, loves him, chooses him, wants to be with him.

Knowing what David knows, the entirety of Psalm 139 becomes beautiful expression of God's choice of us even while knowing us. You know all my thoughts? Well, great! Then I don't have to worry about whether or not you get me, whether or not you know what I am feeling or what I am going through, my doubts, my insecurities, my low self-esteem, my depression, my anxiety. I don't need to put on a show for you. I don't have to worry about my bumbling words of prayers. You already know the worst of me, and you still want me.

"You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me." (verse 5) I can never get away from you? Good. So many people leave me when they find all the ways that I am lacking. It's why I feel undesirable. But you desire to be with me. You are not with me out of some obligation or that you want to get something out of me. No, you genuinely want to be with me. And only you are the person who actually is with me at all times so that I am never alone. I always have your protection. I always have your love.

So you actually know all my days and how all this will turn out, all that I will do wrong, and all that I will suffer? Even better, because you tell me that I have a happily ever after with you. No matter what comes, I have you, I have your desire, I have your affection.

God knows you through and through and still chooses to love you, chooses to be with you. Since you have that great comfort, share it. Share it with those who think that they are unlovable, who are terrified of a God who knows everything about them, who can't escape him. Show a God who knows them through and through and still chooses to love them and be with them. Amen.