



August 19 & 20, 2018
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Knowing God: Being Known Psalm 139:1-6

I woke up this morning having a dream about Larry and I going with my sister, our two year old son, Reed, and his little friend, Henry, to Disney World. Disney World, mind you, not Disney Land, I'm from the South, and we can discuss the merits of the two later. In this dream we tried to take pictures with the Ewoks in the Star Wars place but the line was too long so we thought about Space Mountain but couldn't do that with a 2 and 3 year old. My sister took off to see a friend in Toon Town and while we were thinking about where to go next we realized, we've lost Reed. He's not with us! And we've lost Henry, too! Absolute panic ensued. I'm trying to get a picture of Reed and Henry pulled up on my phone to show this woman I'm trying to talk to in front of me who only speaks German when – bam! – I wake up. And you better believe, no going back to sleep after that. It's hardly a realistic dream. I'm not crazy. I would not go to Disney World with a 2 and 3 year old whatever the adult ratio. But that panic of losing a child *and* a friends' child, was just a scenario I just couldn't go to sleep after. Where is my son?? And can I describe him well enough for *you* to help me find him?

Perhaps only a preacher would do this, but the very next thought I had, even before getting up, was that this Psalm we've been studying has something to say to my panic-stricken heart today. We who follow Jesus call God our Father. The Bible tells us that the God of the whole world has a family-like relationship with us. He calls us son and daughter because he intentionally made us and loves us. He's our adopted Father who brought us into his family. He chose us. There's no, chance, that God is going to have one of these Disney World-style-freak out dreams where he loses us.

The last two weeks we have been resting in Psalm 139. At least, that's how it has felt for me as someone who knows God and believes already that he loves me. We've been resting in first realizing that God knows us, intimately. We believe God is all-knowing. He knows when we come and go. He knows our thoughts, so we can even talk to him silently because this Psalm says that even before a word is on our tongue, he knows it completely. He knows all that internal dialogue, all those motivations, and still, he lays his hand on me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, he says!

Then Pastor Jeremy, visiting us last week, helped us to rest in realizing we can't go anywhere that God isn't going with us. We believe God is ever-present, He is always there no matter where we go. Jeremy asked us to consider how we feel about that – how do you feel considering a God who knows all your thoughts and is always there?

I can understand how if you don't know God, that could be intimidating or overwhelming. I could imagine you thinking – just give me a break! I'll come check you out on a weekend or when I think about it, but that's a bit too much for me. I could totally understand that—just keep getting to know God at your own pace, and let him show you who he is.

As someone who has spent most of her life seeking out God, these last 3 weeks in Psalm 139 have let me settle in to a more resting place with God. God's never the parent who has lost track of me and lost words for describing me. Our God is all-knowing; he is ever-present. And today we will see that God is all-powerful. And God is not all these things in an abstract way, out there, in a theological book. When David, who wrote this Psalm, describes these attributes of God they are incredibly *personal*. He knows that God is all-knowing

as it relates to himself, to David. When he describes God as ever-present, he's doing so in relation to himself and where *he* goes. And today, in talking to God about his power, it's all in language of "me" and "I."

So I invite you to consider today, does it matter to *you* that God is all-powerful for *you*? I even invite you to write on your bulletin or open up a new note in your phone and just write, "Me?" Because I want to invite you to really consider yourself and your life with God.

Let's read Psalm 139, beginning with verse 13. I'm going to read this Scripture a bit differently today. I'm going to read one line at a time and then pause. I invite you to silently speak each line in prayer to God yourself.

For you formed my inward parts;
You knitted me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.
My frame was not hidden from you,
When I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes saw my unformed substance;
In your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, as yet there was none of them.

God is all-knowing. He is ever-present. And he is all-powerful. When David sits down to write a song to praise God for all that, he writes an incredibly personal prayer of praise, inviting everyone who would sing this song after him to recognize that he is all-knowing, ever-present, and all-powerful for *them*, too.

Maybe that doesn't strike you as radical, but think about it this way—when I want to praise God for who he is, when I want to talk to him and just tell him how amazing I think he is – which, by the way, is not a crazy, egotistical thing to do. When we have healthy relationships with one another, we love to tell one another how amazing they are! I tell my husband all the time how much I love him. I remind Tina, our administrative assistant, how glad I am that she applied for the job because I could not accomplish my work without her. We love to praise one another! And when we're in a good relationship with God, we tell him how awesome he is!

I just tend to praise God for how great he is "out there, for those people." God, you know what's happening in Turkey! God, you're present with Diana and Paul in the hospital. God, you could heal my little friend Wyatt's legs. But here David wants us all to learn and practice telling God just how beautiful he is to *YOU*! And to me! He praises God for who he is as it regards this tiny little perimeter around *himself*. Do you praise God for being all-knowing in *your* life? Do you tell him how you feel about him being all-present in everywhere you've gone this week? Do you know just how powerful he is as it regards *you*?

Look at this verse 13. God's power is displayed in how he made *you*. God, you formed my inward parts—my kidneys, the Psalmist says. The kidneys were thought to be the very center of human emotions and being. And they certainly are where we process a whole lot of things. God you formed me from the inside-out.

You knitted me together in my mother's womb. Does anyone like watching those scientific beginning of life videos? I started watching called "The 9 months that made you" on Netflix when I was pregnant. I only made it 30 minutes because their outline for the show is they show you, incredibly, using who knows what technology, what is happening in the womb a week at a time. But then they flash from that week in utero and would should be developing to what happens if that week doesn't come together in utero as expected. It humbled me at just how miniscule any deviation can be in a completely hidden process that I, as a pregnant mom, had no control over. It's possible, though, that if you live with what's considered a physical

abnormality, hear today that God was right there in that moment when that gene did something different. He knitted you, *you*, together in your mother's womb.

Then, David has to pause and he says, "I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well." When I want to pause and thank my God for his power to create, the wonder of his works, I am never at a loss here in the Pacific Northwest. We were just in the San Juan's this week and even though there was a load of smoke and our friend was telling us, imagine Mt. Baker, right there! And just through that smoke there are the Olympic Mountains, they're incredible. Even without getting to see all that, there was still, whoa—your world is beautiful, God. The ocean, the currents, the orcas, the berries, the islands. Wonderful are your works!

But David doesn't let us just look out there. He's looking at the way God has knitted him together and says, "*I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works.*" We catalog our faults and our insecurities way too quickly! Can you see how wonderful it is that you exist?! That you're here? That you can hear or read these words? That you can think? That you can breathe? Wonderful is the work of our all-powerful, creator God, evident in your—that's *you*—your very existence, my very existence, elicits praise to the all-powerful God!

David says, "my soul knows it very well." Pastor Mark taught us about the intimate word for God knowing us back in Psalm 139:1. This is the same word. My soul knows deeply, intimately, God's power displayed in my very creation. And my soul knows this very well, deeply, exceedingly. Is that true for you? Your Father loves you and invites you to see that his power is on display in your very existence. Oh please, treat that precious life of yours, that precious body of yours, with the honor of being created by a holy God who loves you and values you. Give God the opportunity to speak deeply to your soul of just how valuable you are to him.

I've seen that people can value very irrational things based on who has made it for them. Think about what kinds of things are the most valuable to you. That have made or will make every move with you. Here's one of my dad's most valuable treasures. I know it doesn't look like much but it's lasted 30 years and a move and still has the place of honor as the pencil cup on his bathroom counter. Why? Because one of us kids made it for him in Sunday School. We picked out some blue construction paper. We glued some pompoms on it that we called sheep, and we learned this truth that "Jesus is the Good Shepherd." He values it because of who made it. Those imperfections are probably all the more endearing to him because he loves us.

You are incredibly valuable. *You* were hand-made by a loving Father. Your value is not built up based on what you can accomplish or how perfect your body is or what you're capable of learning. In fact, those places of imperfection or weakness that you are likely to dismiss your entire value based on – God says that his power is made perfect in your weakness. God's power continues in your life now when you're weak because it's in those places that you and I learn to rely on God more, and the all-present God moves into those weaknesses with his power and then makes us perfect with him! You are valuable because the all-powerful God fearfully and wonderfully made you and his power continues to be displayed as he works in you still. May your soul know that very well.

After that insert of praise David returns to that moment when God created you. Hear this in more modern language, "You know me inside and out, you know every bone in my body; You know exactly how I was made, bit by bit, how I was sculpted from nothing into something. Like an open book, you watched me grow from conception to birth." Can we keep those words on the screen a moment? Does that cause you rest? Does it terrify you? Do you have a lot of questions about struggles you have with your body, with your person? The all-powerful God knows exactly how you were made, and he loves you. He sculpted you from nothing into something. Intentionally.

Then this, verse 16, “in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.”

This was the verse I struggled with the most. Because I was thinking about a lot of you, actually. And I was thinking—God, why did you form some of their days to be so hard? Why did you form so few days for some of them? But who did I ask you to think about today? [Me] This Psalm is a very personal Psalm, and when I allowed myself to think about whether or not this was comforting for me—that the all-powerful God has numbered *my* days. He knows every one of them. They were formed for me before I ever came to be—Well, then, I sat in it differently.

Somehow, while the thought of my own days being numbered significantly less than 100 isn't terrifying for me. Maybe you feel differently about your own length of life. But for me, I believe I'll be embracing our all-knowing, ever-present, all-powerful God the moment I take my final breath, and that embrace is quite a draw for me. Nancy Jorgenson shared this picture with me last Sunday between services. She said it looked like me. And I've been lost in that beautiful picture. God has written my days, every one of them, in his book in their entirety before even one of them came to be. I sit back into that and rest in that.

Now this isn't logical, but I feel very differently about losing my mom or Larry or my son before I'm ready. That thought it terrifying to me! And I already told you that when I think about all of you and the circumstances I know some of you are in, that that stirring of all the questions rises up really loudly! In which case, I turn to one of the final pictures that we are given from a man named John who God gave a unique vision to of the end of days. In this vision we have that image of the book come back. That book—I don't know if it's real in heaven, that it's made from parchment and a gazillion pages long or whatever—but what it represents is all of human history. God has written the number of your days, of my days, of everyone you love's days, into the parchment of all of human history.

There's a moment in this vision when that record is brought out to be read and to be interpreted. So there's a moment promised in eternity when all of human history gets made sense of. We'll all get to understand why someone was born with a certain birth defect when we so strongly affirm that the all-powerful God knit that baby together. We'll all get to understand why your mom's days ended on your fourth birthday. We'll all get to make sense of the abuse you endured in that household. At the end of days, that book comes forward to be interpreted and made sense of. But hear what happens in this moment, from Revelation 5:2 “I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, ‘Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?’ And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. And one of the elders said to me, ‘Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David [that's Jesus!], [Jesus] has conquered [He has conquered sin and death and our enemy], so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals... And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne...” and then all heaven breaks out into this new song, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation...”

God *knows* we need a day when every one of these days that we are living gets interpreted and made sense of. So God came in the person of Jesus to conquer death, to conquer that greatest fear we have of the end of our days, and to buy back you and you and every tribe and language and people and nation into this adopted family. He has done it. He has done it! God is all-knowing, all-present, all-powerful, in *your* life. Will you confess that he is worthy to make sense of all of this life that he has given you? Will you receive the truth that you are fearfully and wonderfully made by *the* all-powerful God who loves you and has written the days of your life?