

**Palm Harbor United Methodist Church**  
**Dangerous Prayers: Search Me**  
**Rev. Cathy Hart**  
**February 16, 2020**

*Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life. (Psalm 139:23-24)*

**Hide and Seek**

- The goal of the game is not to be found
- We play hide and seek with God, but He knows where we are!
- Psalm 139:7 *I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence!*
- Who are we really hiding from? We hide from ourselves – denial

**SEARCH ME**

- *Search me, O God, and know my heart*
- This prayer is an invitation to God to search our hearts
- He knows us!
- Psalm 139:1 *O Lord you have examined my heart and know everything about me.*
- He wants us to stop hiding from ourselves and from Him

**TEST ME**

- *Test me and know my anxious thoughts*
- Psalm 139:2,4 – *You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away. You know what I am going to say even before I say it, Lord.*
- Anxiety is attached to fear
- Fear is a powerful motivator – a negative motivator
- What do we fear?
  - God won't love us
  - We are unworthy
  - Failure
  - People won't like us
  - We are not good enough
- "What we fear the most is where we trust God the least" Craig Groeschel
- Fear is what prevents us from responding Send Me
- Counter fear with the renewal of our minds: "Perfect love casts out fear." (1 John 4:18)

**SHOW ME**

- *Point out anything in me that offends you*
- This is what we are hiding from; those parts of ourselves that we hide from the world and think we are hiding from God – the shadows
- He already knows
- Step 4 of a 12 Step Recovery program is a searching, fearless moral inventory
  - Facing our denial, resentments, fears, anger, hurts, brokenness, sinfulness
  - Matthew 5:21-22a *"You have heard that our ancestors were told, 'You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.' But I say, if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to the judgment."*

- Matthew 5:27-28 *“You have heard the commandment that says, ‘You must not commit adultery.’ But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”*
- He wants to shine his light into the darkness of our hearts
- “You cannot heal what you do not acknowledge” Richard Rohr

## LEAD ME

- *Lead me along the path of everlasting life*
- Once we have surrendered our sins and brokenness, allowing God to shine his light into our darkness, His grace washes over us, freeing us from our sins, resentments, and wounds
- We are free to follow Jesus more closely
- Psalm 139:5 *You go before me and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head.*

## Diagnostic Testing

- Cancer has impacted everyone in this room in some way
- Cancer, like sin, grows undetected and becomes a problem if not treated
- Scans, probes, tests, procedures are used to diagnosis the cancer. They are uncomfortable, painful, and invasive – but necessary
- Treatment is long, exhausting, painful, and humbling, but necessary to restore the body to health.
- Early screenings help see it before it starts to effect the body
- A search me prayer, or prayer of self-examine, is a diagnostic plan to restore our souls to health.
- It is uncomfortable, painful, invasive, but necessary.
- We cannot do this on our own. Two problems arise when we try:
  - Rationalization, justification, exoneration, excessive praise
  - Self-deprecation, excessive blame and self-hatred
- But when we pray Search Me, the Great Physician performs the procedure and truth is balanced with grace and forgiveness

## Dangerous prayers

- Break me
- Send me
- Search me