



*feeding...gathering...carrying...leading. (Isiah 40:11)*

Dear Church Family,

It was such a joy to dive into Psalm 139 with you this past Sunday.

Psalm 139 is situated in the 5th of five books or sections of Psalms. This particular section contains psalms that, among other elements, particularly proclaim the sovereignty of God. As a meditative psalm of prayer that is very personal as the author, King David, meditates on God's intimate involvement in his life. A general outline or breakdown of the psalm into sections is as follows:

Outline for Psalm 139:

### **Prayer to God who Knows, Sees, and Cares for His People**

Psalm 139:1-6 You Have Searched and Known Me

139:7-12 You Are With Me Wherever I Go

139:13-18 You Have Made Me and Numbered My Days

### **Petition for God for Deliverance from Enemies**

Psalm 139:19-22 Appeal to God to Destroy the Wicked

Psalm 139:23-24 Invitation to Be Seen and Known by God

**In the first section**, we discussed God's **omniscience** - how He sees and knows everything. Is God's perfect knowledge of us threatening or comforting? We broke into groups and I asked this question for reflection: How comfortable do you feel allowing your true self to be seen and known by God? By others? Are there particular groups of people you are more likely to hide your true self from?

**In the second section**, I shared how David discusses God's **omnipresence**, that there is no place we can go where God isn't there. We took a look at how humans, throughout history, have tried with futility to hide from this all-seeing, all-knowing God. I asked this question: **So why would we want to try to hide from God?** Shame, guilt, disobedience, and fear are all reasons we might want to hide from God. **Do you want to be seen and found by God?** If we are honest, the answer is yes and no. There are parts of us that would rather live without God. Our flesh doesn't want to have a relationship with God. And that is why we must keep the truth of who God is ever before us: This all seeing, all knowing, ever present God who fills heaven and earth sees you in your most vulnerable moments and dark places and longs to embrace you with compassion and love, bringing light to the darkness and healing to the brokenness in your life.

**In section 3**, I shared how God is also the **author of life**. David uses cloth making verbs such as "knit together" and "woven" which suggests divine design. David is in awe when he sees how each moment of his life from conception until death has been carefully woven by God.

I shared the story of my daughter Grace's birth, and how a word from the Lord about her weight as a premature baby gave me confidence that she would be healthy. It was a profound reminder to me of how intimately God is involved in our lives and I asked this question: **When you look back over the course of your life, from the very beginning, do you have eyes to see the Master Weaver's handiwork? The uniqueness of your frame, your laugh, your smile? As you look**

**back upon the years you have thus traveled in your life, do you have eyes to see the continuity of the threads of his grace woven into every step?**

In **section 4**, I shared about the Imprecatory Psalms, which are psalms that invoke judgment, calamity, or curses, upon one's enemies or those perceived as the enemies of God. I asked the question, "How should we as Christians who are called to love our enemies, turn the other cheek and do good to those who harm us respond to these passages in the psalms?"

Walter Brueggemann's video on the "Psalms of Vengeance" discusses how we have several choices in what we will do with feelings of anger, injustice, and vengeance. Brueggeman suggests that it is not in denying our feelings that we will find relief, but in entrusting just judgment to the Lord: <https://youtu.be/rDfzzJD8lpI>

In **Section 5** David moves from a reflection: "Oh Lord you have searched me and known me" to an open-hearted, soul-bared invitation to be searched. "Search me, God! And know my heart!"

David doesn't flee from the probing light of God's love. He invites it. He knows that he is a broken and sinful man, and that he is unable to adequately search his own heart. And so he cries out to the all-knowing, all-seeing one that he might enter into an intimacy yet unknown and be "led in the way everlasting".

**And how is this intimacy possible?** So how can we (a sinful people) walk in relationship with a holy God? **How can we know this God who knows us?** God knew that we could never approach him on our own merits and so he provided a means to himself through the death and resurrection of His only Son, Jesus Christ. As Romans 5:6-8 says, "*You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*"

The depths of God's love for us is unfathomable.

Intimacy is risky business. It is a scary thing to be vulnerable with other human beings and yet the greatest relationships we have on this earth are with those whom we have not feared to bare the depths of our souls; rather, we have given them the invitation to see and to know us as we really are.

What a great joy it is to walk in these relationships! And yet even these few people we may walk in vulnerability with cannot compare to the intimacy we experience with God as he is the only one with whom we can have unbroken intimacy, held by perfect love forever:

Romans 8:38-39: "*For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, [k]neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*"

I'm praying for us all this week, that we will walk in the light of God's presence, allowing Him to see and know the depths of our hearts. I pray that we will give thanks that the veil between us and our Father has been torn and the blood of Christ Jesus has made a way for us to come boldly to our father and walk in unbroken intimacy with Him. Finally, I pray that we would allow our true selves to be seen and known by others, living lives of vulnerability and authenticity that will produce rich relational fruit.

Many blessings,

Laura Thomas

P.S. If you want to join me and my girls in memorizing Psalm 139, check out their video! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZYbfOIRf8aI> <https://youtu.be/ZYbfOIRf8aI>