

Jan 6th 2013: Our Wonderful God : Psalm 139: Omniscience

Psalm 139 is a psalm of David that begins with an amazing statement about God: "O Lord, you have searched me and you know me"

That such a statement is indeed amazing becomes apparent as we read further, for what David had come to understand is that because God is all knowing—God knows everything about Him.

This is the attribute of God that Theologians call Omniscience. That God knows absolutely everything. And therefore when David says, "O Lord, you have searched me and known me", he is not suggesting that he was unique in being searched in such a way by God— one of a select group.

That's not the message here.

David is saying that God being all knowing means, that automatically He searches every living creature and every part of our universe because He has total knowledge of everything.

In fact the implication of God being Omniscient is that He does not need to search because He already knows all things, but also that He has already searched all things and all people, because He has total and complete knowledge.

Now what David does in this Psalm is that he looks at this remarkable attribute of God---this omniscience---this absolute knowledge....and considers what it means for him personally.

So he says to God, because you have searched me, you know me inside out. Everything there is to be known about me, both good and bad, You know.

Now that could well be a terrifying thought for anyone. I know there are secrets hidden away in my heart that I hope no one will ever find out about. They may not be big and evil compared to some, but I'm not ready, and never will be, for anyone else to find out about them.

But when it comes to God I have no option. Nothing. Absolutely nothing about my life is hidden from Him. And David knew that so well.

Look what David goes on to say in verses 2-4

***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 know it completely, O LORD.***

Yet for David this was not a terrifying thing because he believed that his God who knew him so well loved him. And because David had responded to God's love by giving to God his own meager love in return; his own meager life as an offering---David knew that God had poured into David's life mercy and forgiveness.

And for myself, even though there may be thoughts and acts and words that I would hate others to know about, I have no problem with God knowing them. Because I know that He has chosen to blot them out of His knowledge bank because of what Jesus did for me in His glorious battle against evil on the cross.

Isaiah 43:25 has God promising

***"I, even I, am he who blots out
your transgressions, for my own sake,
and remembers your sins no more.***

This is an astounding opportunity for every person.

And if you commit yourself to believing on Jesus as your Lord, and chose to accept the forgiveness that almighty God offers, then God chooses to forget all the knowledge He has of your failings, mistakes, sins, forever.

Somehow David had grasped this for himself and consequently he is not terrified when he contemplates the omniscience of God, but excited. He knows that God uses this attribute of knowing all things for David's advantage. Look at verse 5

***You hem me in—behind and before;
you have laid your hand upon me.***

God has the knowledge of what lies behind David and also what lays ahead of him. That knowledge is like a safety fence that hems him in. It doesn't mean that David will never face bad or testing experiences, but God who knows the big picture has already laid His hand upon David's life. God has a

glorious future ahead for David and although evil will attack him from without and within, the all seeing, all knowing God will never let it destroy Him.

It's no surprise then to find David in v6 declaring about God as the all knowing One(CEV)

***I can't understand all of this!
Such wonderful knowledge
is far above me.***

Yet although David may not fully understand God's omniscience, he definitely wants to continue benefitting from it. So when he nears the end of this Psalm, he cries out to God and says:

***Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.***

David knows that God has already searched and known him. He said that in v1. But, out of his desire to be all he can for the God he serves, he wants God to continue searching him and knowing him.

He wants God to test his motives and intentions and the anxious thoughts that so often creep into the believers minds. He wants God to point out any offensive ways he may have. And especially he wants to be open to God leading as he pursues his journey for God to that place which is everlasting.

Surely such a desire needs to be ours as we come on this first Sunday of the new year into this place. We know we come to worship one who knows us so well and yet loves us, and we renew our dependency upon Him for our salvation.

And we also open our lives to His searching...His correction....His leading. So that whatever 2013 may hold for us we will be confident that we live it fully for God, by His direct guidance, and in His strength.

