



Saint John United Methodist Church
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Message for October 27, 2019
“Life Songs: You Know Me”
Speaker: Pastor Tom Grieb
Scripture: Psalm 139:1-6

Cared for and Nourished

And so, during this sermon series based on selected Psalms we have said:

“Like a tree planted by water, we grow one day at a time, through the storms, the rain, and the wind.

“Psalms are one of God’s many ways of assuring us that when we are rooted in Him, we will be cared for and nourished.”

These Life Songs, as we have called them, have a way of speaking directly to our hearts, awakening us anew to the presence of the Lord.

They not only help us face who we are, but more importantly who God is.

With that in mind let’s hear this morning’s scripture lesson from Psalm 139, a Psalm that shares not only a word about us, but about God.

Read Psalm 139:1-6

The Need to Be Known

All of us have a need to be known, at least to varying degrees.

We all want our lives to matter and to a certain degree figure they matter only if we’re noticed.

Maybe that has something to do with the popularity of social media. We simply want to be noticed.

It’s the rare person who wants to live in total isolation.

God built us to be in relationship—with him and with one another—and whenever those relationships are interrupted or hard to come by, our lives suffer.

That’s why loneliness is so tough.

We need to always be on the lookout for those who are lonely and seek to be in relationship with them.

In this stuff of our need to be known, God is always ready to oblige.

God Knows Us Better Than We Know Ourselves

Jesus himself states that even *“the hairs on our heads are numbered.”* (Luke 12:7)

As it goes some of us have more hair than others.

My father in law, John Spaulding, who was a part of Saint John for many years and just about as bald as they come, used to say that *“some are bald because God just didn’t want to cover up perfection.”*

When it came to jokes dad had a million of them **and** I heard them all at least twice.

What Jesus is talking about when he talks about *“the hairs on our heads being numbered,”* is the fact that God knows us better than we know ourselves.

Socrates said that the greatest good is to *“know thyself.”*

We can all agree that we are on a lifelong journey of self-discovery. Some really take that seriously and others don’t.

Some are quite content never to look very deeply into what makes them tick and hence live very shallow lives.

Others muster the courage to look deep within and, by so doing, plumb the depths of what it is that makes them who they are.

I would contend that the more you dig, the more you will find God. After all, God is always present and at work in our lives. Again, he knows us better than we know ourselves and is already involved in that quest of self-discovery.

God Is Always Searching Us Out

Last week, if you remember, we quoted from Psalm 100, where it says, *“Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.”* Psalm 100:3

And upon quoting that passage from Psalm 100:3, we paused to consider how great it is that the God of all creation, the very One who has created all that is, bends our way and seeks to involve himself in our lives.

That is a big deal, so big, that it is almost incomprehensible.

Psalm 139:13-14 puts it this way when it comes to such things, *“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.”* Psalm 139:13-14

You have heard the statement, *“God created us and God doesn’t make any junk.”* That’s all the more reason to marvel at who God is creating us to be.

The fact of the matter is this, God knows us through and through. He is aware of the currents of our hearts and is ready to meet us right where we are.

God Is Always with Us

Our Psalm for today, Psalm 139 expresses an eloquent and profound word about God’s involvement in our lives.

“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.” Psalm 139:1-3

David, in writing this Psalm, is part philosopher, part theologian, and 100% in relationship with God.

He affirms without equivocation that God is always with us, always looking out for us.

David affirms, what I call, the three O’s—God is **o**mnipotent, **o**mniscient, and **o**mnipresent. God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and ever-present.

David would not have been at all bashful about singing that great Spiritual, *“He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands.”*

You know the words, *“He’s got the whole world in his hands. He’s got the whole world in his hands. He’s got you and me sister in his hands. He’s got you and me sister in his hands. He’s got the whole world in his hands.”*

The great Yogi Berra once made this observation, *“I have noticed that everywhere I go, there I am.”* There was nobody like Yogi Berra.

I’d put it this way, *“Everywhere I go, there is God.”*

I love this story told of the sign that was placed by some adult in front of the apples at a church potluck line, *“God is watching, take only one.”*

A bit later in that line, next to the chocolate chip cookies, a little boy had written a sign that said, *“Take as many as you like, God’s busy watching the apples.”*

The truth is, God is busy watching everyone and everything.

The other night Cheryl and I went to the Louisville Zoo with John and Lauren and all four of our grandchildren to what’s been billed as *The World’s Largest Halloween Party*.

There were people everywhere. You really had to keep your eye on the kids.

When we first got there, Owen was off doing his thing. I let him go, but I never was too far behind and my eye was always on him.

I figure that’s the way God is with us. He lets us go our way, but he is never far behind and always has his eye on us.

Psalm 139:5 talks about the Lord *“hemming”* us in *“behind and before.”*

In a direct reference to the Exodus, God is all about leading us forward through the Red Seas of our lives, all the while protecting us from the *“Egyptians”* of our lives who may be in hot pursuit behind.

You and I Matter to God

It comes to us all. In our most vulnerable moments, we wonder if we even matter to God, particularly when feelings like *“I’m not any good”* or *“I’m a failure”* or *“I can’t seem to do anything right”* begin to surface.

It is all too easy to wonder if we even matter to God, particularly when we consider the vastness of God’s creation and all he oversees.

In such moments, we figure we’re no more than some infinitesimally small speck in the grand scheme of things.

How could God even notice?

The fact of the matter is this: God does notice. We do matter. And God loves us dearly. He longs to be in relationship with each of us.

That’s so much the case, as Psalm 139 reminds us, that there is nowhere we can go apart from God’s Spirit. There is nowhere we can flee from his presence.

The fact that God sent his Son into the life of the world settles that reality. The fact that Jesus died on the cross on our behalf proves that we are not the infinitesimal speck we sometimes suppose ourselves to be, but people who in his grace receive his redemptive love.

I am thankful God cares enough to send his Son so we might have the opportunity to be in relationship with him—now and forevermore.

Moreover, I am doubly thankful that God is constantly searching us out to make that happen.

Let Us Pray

And so, let's make this our prayer:

“Search me, 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.” Psalm 139:23-24