

If you remember, the last time I was here I shared a Psalm with you -
because sometimes we read the psalms in worship,
but we don't always stop to really study them
and hear that they have to say to us today.

This Sunday, I'm sharing Psalm 139 with you,
which I admit to you, is my favourite Psalm.
This was read at my ordination
and has had a special place in my heart for many, many years.

Another Psalm of David.
David wrote 73 of the 150 psalms -
more than any other writer who contributed to this book.

That gives us some insight into David's life,
and into the variance and experience of David's faith.

Last time we saw David at probably the worst moment of his life -
the moment when the prophet Nathan confronted him about being with Bathsheba
while she was still married to Urriah,
and then arranging for Urriah to be killed in battle
so that David could marry Bathsheba.

(As an aside -
I find it fascinating that people always ask
how the Bible can be relevant to today's world,
but that whole episode from David's life reminds me
of story lines on Scandal, or other tv shows or movies,
that are just so current.)

This week we see David in a completely different place.

David writes,

- 1 You have searched me, Lord,
and you know me.
- 2 You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.
- 3 You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.

- 4 Before a word is on my tongue
you, Lord, know it completely.
- 5 You hem me in behind and before,
and you lay your hand upon me.

6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.

David understands that God knows him completely.

And yet he doesn't seem intimidated by this reality or put-off by it.
He seems completely at-ease with God being THAT close.

I admit, I'm amazed by that.

Because I know that there are times that I sit when I should be rising,
there are thoughts in my head that do not honour God,
there are words that I should not speak,
and that I hope no one has heard.

There are times I am not a good person.

Many times.

And I don't say this to beat myself up, or to belittle myself.
I say it to be honest with you -
because I am aware of my own failings.

I am aware that I get it wrong a fair amount of the time.

That there are moments - every day -
when I just kinda hope God was looking the other way.
Do you know that feeling?

Have you ever caught yourself in the middle of a conversation,
or an action,

and just thought - wow, I really hope God wasn't looking right then.

I hate to break it to you - but God was looking.

He saw it.

He heard it.

He didn't miss a thing.

And God loves you, anyway.

David writes,

7 Where can I go from your Spirit?

Where can I flee from your presence?

8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there;

if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn,

if I settle on the far side of the sea,

10 even there your hand will guide me,

your right hand will hold me fast.

11 If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me

and the light become night around me,”
12 even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you.

David says there is nowhere - absolutely no place in heaven or on earth -
where one can get away from God.

The impulse to hide is a futile one because God is everywhere. **(FIRST SLIDE)**

Even the darkness is as light to God.
There is nowhere to go!
Nowhere to hide.

And David doesn't seem bothered at all by this.
From what we heard last time,
you would think that he would be the MOST bothered by it.
He had some big things to hide,
some big secrets to keep,
some big mistakes to want to run away from.

And yet, in his description of God in this Psalm,
all I hear is awe, and wonder, and astonishment, and reverence.
This sense of warmth and affection and joy about God's presence.

What is it that David knows that allows him to not be afraid of God-who-is-everywhere?
Especially after the things David has done!

I think David knows that God IS everywhere.
And I think David knows that God LOVES him.

David writes,
13 For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.

15 My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place,
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.
16 Your eyes saw my unformed body;
all the days ordained for me were written in your book
before one of them came to be.

I love to knit.
I'm knitting a poncho for someone right now .

I've knit a a cape-let for my friend Shelagh.
In the queue of future projects at the moment
are matching scarves for my friends Luke and Naiel
My Mother has a number of shawls and blankets
I've knit for her.

I always think I'm going to get around to knitting something for myself,
but usually I find myself knitting something for another persons.

Because I kind of show love through knitting.
Knitting takes time and intention and perseverance.
It takes knowing what the person you're knitting for needs and wants.

So when David says that God knit him together in his mother's womb,
that speaks deep volumes to me about David's knowledge of God's love for him.
David knows that God's love isn't a theory or an idea -
it isn't something that exists far away -
it isn't abstract or distant.

God's love, in David's own words - is hands-on,
because knitting is a hands-on activity.
God's love comes close - even infiltrating our inmost parts.

There is nowhere -
nowhere inside of us, nowhere on earth, nowhere in the heavens -
that we can go to get away from God's love.

And God's love was not satisfied with just THAT.
Even with words like David's to show us
how close and how deep and how beautifully constant God's love is,
it wasn't enough.

And so, in the fullness of time,
God sent Jesus.
Who took on flesh and moved into the neighbourhood. **(SECOND SLIDE)**
Because that's what love does - love comes close.
Love moves in.
Love walks a mile in your shoes,
so that you cannot say
"you don't know what it's like."

That's why Jesus' coming is so important.
Because it is God's act of ultimate love -
to become one of us,
to know our pain and our suffering
and our loneliness and all the other things that plague us.

To step out of heaven...
I don't know that you get this -
because I don't know that I get this, because it's not an easy thing to get.

Jesus was God.

Omniscient - knowing everything.

Omnipresent - everywhere at once.

Omnipotent - powerful beyond our imagining.

All of that.

Unlimited,

infinite,

outside of time.

And he chose to take on flesh.

To be human.

To be humbled.

To be limited - restricted to knowing what the human mind can know,

restricted to one place and one time,

restricted to the weak human frame -

he came as a baby - not even able to feed himself,

or care for himself.

He lowered himself like that.

For you.

For me.

Because he loves us THAT much.

And love....

Well, love makes your soul crawl out from its hiding place. **(THIRD SLIDE)**

David isn't worried or uncomfortable about having God present everywhere

because though he doesn't know Jesus the way you and I do -

he understands the heart of God.

He understands the love of God.

Maybe because he fell so far and did such unspeakable things,

and found that God had not abandoned him.

He knew he could not do that which would make God stop loving him.

And love is powerful.

Love makes your soul crawl out of its hiding place.

You see, sometimes when I have those moments when I want to hide from God,

I think it's not that I've done such horrible things or I'm such a horrible person.

It's that - I fail to grasp the depth of God's love for me.

I fail to grasp the truth that there is nothing I can do to make God love me more,

and there is nothing I can do to make God love me less.

His love for us is constant and unfailing.

His love doesn't shy away or need us to be perfect.

As Paul would write hundreds and hundreds of years later:

“38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, 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 am convinced of that, too.
I am.

But sometimes I'm human
and sometimes I'm hurting
and sometimes I just lose sight of that fact.
And maybe, sometimes, you do, too.

So we come here each week.
To be reminded ourselves, and to remind each other.

Nothing, nothing, nothing at all,
can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus.

Let us pray.