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Known
Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18

*O Lord, you have **searched me and known me**.*

² *You know when I **sit** down and when I rise up;
you discern my **thoughts** from far away.*

³ *You search out my **path and my lying down**
and are acquainted with all my ways.*

⁴ *Even before a **word** is on my tongue,
O Lord, you know it completely.*

⁵ *You **hem** me in, behind and before,
and lay your **hand** upon me.*

⁶ ***Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;**
it is so high that I cannot attain it.*

*For it was **you who formed my inward parts;**
you knit me together in my mother's womb.*

¹⁴ *I praise you, for I am **fearfully and wonderfully made**.
Wonderful are your works;*

that I know very well.

¹⁵ *My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.*

¹⁶ *Your **eyes beheld** my unformed substance.*

*In your book were written
all the days that were formed for me,
when none of them as yet existed.^[b]*

¹⁷ *How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!*

¹⁸ *I try to count them—they are more than the sand;
I come to the end^[c]—**I am still with you.***

In the Tom Cruise movie *The Firm*,

Mitch McDeere is a new hot shot attorney
hired by a prestigious law firm that showers him and his wife Abby
with a house and lavish gifts.

But it soon becomes apparent that “The Firm”

is engaged in some shady legal business,
and that they have bugged Mitch and Abby's home.

When he goes home and whispers to his wife what he's learned,
she comes undone and runs outside to get away from it all.

She runs away—just like any of us would do!

Because it's a *creepy thought---*

an employer knowing every sound and detail of your private home and life!
It's creepy to think about *ANYONE with that kind of knowledge* of us!

But that's what *God knows about us—everything.*

Too much personal knowledge by other people is creepy,

Even though we all want to be truly known,
and loved and accepted for who we are.

We often *long for* another person in our lives to truly know and love us.

But we don't necessarily want them to bug our homes,

Or know every detail of our lives, right?

Who are the people who truly know you?

Do you truly *know them*?

Do you *ever long for other people* to truly know you?

And understand you?

How do you know *how much to share, and with whom?*

I think this is where people can easily get into trouble in *relationships*,

or on *social media*—by sharing too much with people you don't know,

By sharing body images inappropriately,

Or just too many personal details.

And that's just *not the way* to be truly known and loved.

There is *a BETTER way.*

There is a way to *build trust, and build relationship.*

There is a way to *connect* with others who follow Jesus Christ.

And, there is *a time and a place for privacy*, to protect ourselves from the world.

Paul reminds us in *1 Corinthians 6:12-20*
 that our ***bodies are temples*** of the Holy Spirit
 and we are best, when we treat them as such.
 We are best, when all of our relationships are grounded in ***love and respect***,
 Not any kind of immoral or abusive behavior.

Why is this so IMPORTANT for us as Christians?
 It's so foundational because ***we are NOT OUR OWN***.
 We were made by God, in love and care,
 And we ***ultimately belong to God***---body, soul, and spirit.

That's ***not the kind of thing that Americans take lightly***—
 Not being our own.
 But in scripture it's very clear that we are ***beloved children*** of God,
 in relationship with God, because we are ***God's own***.

We are not our own.
 Our bodies are actually ***a gift from God***, entrusted to our care.
 They are known as ***temples of the Holy Spirit***.
 And our bodies are ***part of the larger body*** of Christ, which also is not our own.

Knowing and believing that can bring a kind of ***freedom*** to us.
 The freedom to ***follow God***,
 The freedom to ***love one another***.
 Just as we are ***fully loved*** by God.

But we Americans ***tend to emphasize our RIGHTS***.
 And yet, as Christians, those rights are within a ***framework of belonging and love***.

We are God's.
 We are ***created by and for God***, for God's work in the world.

As followers of Jesus,
 we ***don't have the right to be immoral*** with our bodies, or our lives,
 and we don't need to be.
 That kind of behavior hurts us, and it hurts the larger body of Christ.

But I wonder, do you ever think of your life as not being your own?
 Do you ever think of your body, mind and spirit as ***belonging to God?***
 And part of the ***greater body*** of Christ?

It's a wild thought.
 It's actually pretty revolutionary.
 But also very *powerful, and freeing*.

*Psalm 139 could sound a bit unsettling, or comforting.
 All depends on how you look at it.*

In the Psalm, God knows
when I sit down and when I rise up;
 you discern my thoughts from far away.
³ You search out my path and my lying down
 and are acquainted with all my ways.
⁴ Even before a word is on my tongue,
 O Lord, you know it completely.

God knows **EVERYTHING** about us.
 God knows us **completely**.

Which begs the question: *Do we WANT God to know all about us?*
 But what if all of that *personal knowledge that God has,*
 Comes from a place of **LOVE**?

What if we can **completely trust** the God who *knows us completely*?
 Wouldn't that be great?
 Comforting?
 Reassuring?

Because *what kind of God do we have?*
 We have a God who calls us **beloved children** at our baptism,
 Just as we heard in Mark 1, last week.
 We are not who other people say we are.
 The one who knows and loves us completely determines who we are!

So, our identity is first and foremost: **Christian**.
 And our name is: **Beloved Child of God**.

We are not anyone else's labels or names,
 we are **not defined** by our achievements or possessions,
 we are **simply defined by our relationship** as beloved children of God.

We have a God who is *all-knowing, all-powerful, All-compassionate, and all-forgiving.*

THAT'S the God who knows us completely.

So can't we trust such an awesome God?

Can't we find *hope and peace and strength,*

Knowing that we are fully known?

Our living, loving God says that *we are never alone, especially when we walk through the waters and fires of life,*

In all times, we are called by name,

And honored and precious and God loves us.

(Isaiah 43:1-5).

Our living God is the *Good Shepherd,*

So we shall not want,

For he makes us lie down in green pastures,

And leads us beside still waters.

He restores our soul.

Even when we walk through the *valley of the shadow* of death,

He is with us, his rod and staff protect us,

He prepares a table before us in the presence of our enemies,

He anoints us with oil, our cup overflows,

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives....

(Psalm 23).

Our Savior Jesus says to us,

Come to me, all who are weary and heavy burdened and I will give you rest,

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me,

For I am gentle and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

(Matthew 11:28-30).

Jesus says: *I bring peace,*

Because in this world you will have trouble, but take heart,

I have overcome the world. (John 16:33).

Our God loves us so much because our God made us,

And knows everything about us.

That's the great message of Psalm 139:

For it was you who formed my inward parts;

you knit me together in my mother's womb.

¹⁴ I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

Wonderful are your works;

that I know very well.

¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you,

when I was being made in secret,

intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

¹⁶ Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.

In your book were written

all the days that were formed for me,

when none of them as yet existed.^[b]

So much in our world ***devalues our bodies, hearts and minds.***

So many people ***try to define us.***

So, how can we ***find the love and acceptance*** we long for?

How can we be ***truly known and loved?***

We can find that ***only in God.***

In our ***relationship with Jesus Christ.***

1 Corinthians 13:12 says this:

¹² For now we see only a reflection, as in a mirror, but then we will see face to face.

Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.

Think about that.

One day ***we will know as much about God*** as God knows about us!

Isn't that a ***beautiful*** promise?

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a German Lutheran Pastor and Theologian who defied the Nazis by participating in an assassination plot against Hitler in 1944.

In 1945, he was ***arrested and put to death*** in a concentration camp.

But just before his execution, he wrote—letters, and papers, and a poem called ***“Who Am I?”***

In that poem, he contrasted what others said about him,

With what he knew of himself.

The poem ends by him saying to God,
“Whoever I am, thou knowest, I am thine.”

Bonhoeffer knew the thing that is most important about our identity as Christians.

We are God’s.

We are ***fully known and fully loved.***

God ***DOES know every detail*** of our lives,

And God is the one full of ***complete LOVE AND GRACE*** for us.

God is all-knowing, all-loving, all-forgiving.

So we can ***completely trust*** the one who ***knows us completely.***

Psalm 139 might be creepy if it was all about a human being knowing every detail of our lives.

But it’s not about anyone else, it’s just about ***us and God.***

So it is a Psalm of ***comfort, peace, and strength.***

If you want to know ***who you are, and whose you are,***

Look no further than our living, loving God.

Hear the ***Good News of the Gospel*** today:

We can ***completely trust*** the God who ***knows us completely.***

And for that Good News, all God’s people can say together, Amen.