

God's knowledge of our lives

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Preacher: Paul Kayumba

[0 : 00] Yeah, I recently came across a story in a newspaper, a story about the daughter of one of the prominent African presidents.

She was having an extra-marital affair for a very long time with this gentleman within the country. And they, too, have been together to so many places, and they've shared many secrets together. And this gentleman has come to know a lot of sensitive issues about the life of this lady. And so he took advantage of that, and he began to demand a huge amount of money from the lady, threatening her to say, if you don't give me that amount of money, I'll go ahead and blackmail your name by putting certain of your sensitive issues on social media so that I can destroy your name and tarnish your reputation.

You can imagine how she became so frustrated, traumatized, and so sad. So to cut the long story short, the story went from bad to worse.

Often we become very frustrated, even us, whenever we hear that somebody has come across some of our sensitive realities of our lives.

[1 : 22] When somebody has come across certain information that are so sensitive to our lives, we become so traumatized, simply because we know that in most cases, they would use that knowledge to frustrate us, or maybe to confuse us, or maybe to destroy, or to stop loving and caring for us.

Because that's the human tendency. It's not to help. It's not to continue loving when you come across something which is so bad and so sensitive. But this is not the case with Psalm 139. Here we read, the God who knows us, He knows not only certain things or some of the things about our lives, but He knows every single thing of our life, and He's been present with us, not to some places, but at every single place we've ever been.

And the surprising thing is that what God does with that ability to know everything about our lives, what God does with that ability to be present everywhere we go, does God stop loving us?

Does God stop caring for us? And so we are yet to find that from Psalm 139. In fact, this Psalm 139, it's a prayer of a believer.

[2 : 45] Maybe David, maybe someone who prayed in the spirit of David, is asking God to search his heart so that he can be kept faithfully in the ways of the Lord.

Have a look at the two last verses. 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 of everlasting.

This is the prayer of a believer asking God to search his heart so that the Lord can keep him faithfully. And if you read verse 1, you will see that it is more like the answer to the prayer that the believer is asking in the last two verses.

Have a look at verse 1. O Lord, you have searched me, and you know me. This is exactly what the believer was asking from the Lord in the last two verses.

It's for the Lord to search his heart. And the Lord has just done that in verse 1. He has searched the believer's heart, and he knows him well. And the first thing that I want to point out from Psalm 139 is that God knows every aspect of the believer.

[4 : 06] God knows every aspect of the believer. There is no part of the believer's life that the Lord does not know. And the first six verses, they actually emphasize that theme of the knowledge of God, that God knows every single aspect of our lives.

And to emphasize that aspect and the fact that the Lord knows every single aspect of our lives, the writer goes on to use similar words or synonyms just to emphasize and to point out and to indicate that the Lord knows every single part of his life.

Have a look at verse 1. Verse 2, for example. 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's completely old. All those words like knowing when I sit, the word like perceiving my thoughts from afar, words like discerning my going up and my lying down, words like being familiar with all my ways, words like knowing any word before it is on my tongue.

All those similar words, he used them simply to emphasize the fact that there is nothing about his life that the Lord does not know. And when he's talking about the knowledge of God, I think you can notice in the psalm, he's not talking about a theory.

[5 : 43] He's not talking about head knowledge. He has not come to know that the Lord knows his life from a theoretical point of view. He's not trying to convey an idea that God is omniscient.

Of course he is. But he's talking about something more precise, something about his own life. It's something that comes from the personal experience of his life.

That's why he uses words like, you know when I sit and when I rise. You perceive my thoughts. This is something very personal. He's not talking about head knowledge.

He's talking about something that he has come to realize from his personal experience. He's talking about God who knows him as an individual. He's talking about that intimate knowledge of the Lord, knowing every single part of his life.

The Lord is familiar with all his ways. Everything about his life is actually known by the living God. And he goes on to explain what the Lord does with that knowledge.

[6 : 50] Does the Lord use the fact that he knows him to destroy his life or to intimidate him or to stop caring for him or loving him?

No. It's very amazing. When you look at verse 5, the reason why God knows every single part of the believer's life is to use that knowledge to protect the believer.

Look at verse 5. You have me in behind and before. You have laid your hand upon me. Amazing. Instead of using the knowledge, the full knowledge of our lives to intimidate, to frustrate, to blackmail us, but the Lord uses the knowledge to protect the believer.

And the way that he's using you have me in is the way of protection. It means that the Lord, you surround and restrict my space and all my movements.

It simply means that the Lord, you protect my life. You make sure that I don't fall away. You make all the limits possible to secure my life based on the fact that you know every single aspect of my life.

[8 : 07] This is amazing. This is how he responds to this kind of realization when he comes to realize that the Lord knows every single part of his life and that does not make him uncomfortable.

Like most of the time when we know that someone somewhere has come to know certain issues about our lives, we become uncomfortable because we know how human beings are.

They would use that to qualify us or to disqualify us. They would use that kind of knowledge probably even to destroy our lives. But the writer of the song is very much comfortable with the fact that the Lord knows every single part of his life because he uses that knowledge to protect him.

You surround me. You surround my space and my movement. You restrict all my movements so that I may not fall away. This is amazing. And when he understands the fact that the Lord uses the knowledge to protect his life, you see what he does?

He falls down in adoration. Look at verse 6. Such knowledge is too wonderful to me, for me, too lofty for me to attain.

[9 : 22] This is what always is the response of a believer when you come to know that the Lord knows you in a more special way. The Lord knows every single part of your life.

This is wonderful. It's something beyond our understanding. Something beyond our way of perceiving things because we know we are living in a fallen and broken world and we see how many people use the information about our lives to destroy us anyway.

But the Lord does not do that. And you know that people, they don't even know us the way the Lord does. And yet they use so badly the so-called knowledge of our lives to destroy us.

But the Lord who knows us very well every single part of our lives, he uses that knowledge to protect our lives. This is wonderful. He says, this is wonderful.

This is far beyond my understanding. And so dear brothers and sisters, you know that this is not something we are trying to convey just to increase your knowledge but also to change your

attitudes.

[10:34] That you may really know that this is not something you should get up there that God knows everything but he knows you as an individual. He knows all your circumstances.

This is what the book of Romans chapter 8 the apostle Paul is talking about all the circumstances of the believer. They are known by the Lord. Even our sufferings, even when we come to lose life, the Lord knows because we have eternal life.

This gives us a sense of comfort. As you move on next year, 2018, knowing that the Lord knows you as an individual in a very personal way, it must give you a sense of comfort, a sense of security, a sense of peace because the Lord is with you.

And the second thing that the believer goes on to highlight in Psalm 139 is not just the knowledge of God but also the presence of the living God. Have a look at verse 7 to 10.

Where can I go from your spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there. If I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

[11:54] If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I salt on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me. Your right hand will hold me fast. Now he moves on to talk about the presence of God.

God is everywhere the believer goes. There is no single place the believer would be where God's presence will never be. And again, he is not talking about a theological statement of the omnipresence of God which for sure is true.

But he is talking about something more personal and more experiential about his own life. The Lord has been with him at every single place. People, this is an attribute that only God has.

He cannot share with others. Of course, God shares with us many other aspects of his nature like love, like mercy. But God does not share his attributes of being present at every single place with human beings.

This is only God. God can be at every single place. And the believer does not talk about something in his head but he has gone through that kind of experience.

[13:08] He has actually felt God's presence at every single place. and to emphasize the fact that God is present at every place that he has ever been. He goes on now to talk about some extremes.

Look at how he puts it. It's so beautiful. It begins with the vertical elements of the presence of God. The highest place you can go.

He says, if I go up to the heavens, you are there. And he goes to the lowest part of the earth. Even when I set my bed at the depth, he's talking about the grave.

Down there, he's talking about the vertical element of the presence of God. Even there, your presence is with me. And then now, he changes, he goes to the horizontal elements of the presence of God.

Now, even when I rise on the wings of the dawn, he has gone to the east where sun rises. Even there, your presence is with me.

[14:07] And then he changes, now he goes to the other direction where the Mediterranean sea is. Even when I go as far as that sea, your presence, even there, your presence is with me.

So he's just trying to point out that there is no place he has ever been where God's presence can never be found. And then you should be very careful when you read the first line in verse 7 there. When can I go from your spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? So the words, where can I flee, is not trying to talk about the point that he's guilty or he's trying to run away or get away from God's presence.

No. This is his own way of expressing that there is no way, there is no place where the believer can go where the presence of God can never be.

And this is something from his own experience. So we are not just trying to inform you, but we want everybody to know, every single believer to know it from experience that the Lord is present with him in all circumstances.

[15:17] Wherever you go, at any place, whether good or bad, the Lord is with you. Even in the grave, the Lord is present there with you. This gives us comfort, especially when we are moving in a new year where we have no idea how the year will look like.

But the reason that should give us peace and comfort is because the Lord is with us. He's always with us because he promised us. You can see that in the book of Matthew, the last chapter, chapter 28, and verse 20, Jesus promised that I will always be with you.

He's always with us. That should not be something you just put in your head. You must see how much the Lord is always present. I remember the story of Polycap.

Polycap used to be a disciple of John, who was the disciple of Jesus. During the time of the destruction of the temple in AD 70, as everyone was running for their own lives, and he was apprehended by the Roman police and they wanted to kill him, and they asked him one thing, to say, all we want you, Polycap, to do is to recant, is to deny Jesus, and then we'll let you alive, and you'll go, safe.

You know what he said? He said, no, how can I deny someone who is just next to me here? I'm so shy. I can't say no to somebody who is present.

[16:54] He's here with me. He's been with me all along. He's a long-term friend of about 82 years, and now that you're asking me to deny him, he's just here with me.

The Lord is present with all of us. He was not talking about something theological, but something from his own experience. This is something that every believer should actually know, every single place you go, you must realize that the Lord is with you, is present, and his presence is not a passive presence.

He's an active presence. Look at what he says again in verse 10. Even there, your hand will guide me, and your right hand will hold me fast.

He's present, not passively, but to guide. There's an element of guidance there. It's not just protection like we have seen in the first point, but it's also an element of guidance.

The Lord will guide our steps. So, behind the scenes, there's a big God who's directing our steps. You may take your decisions for next year, you may take whatever right decision based on the knowledge of the Bible, so that you can move here and there, but be assured that even things that you don't know, there is God behind the scenes who is directing your steps.

[18:15] He will make sure that you reach your final destination. It gives us assurance, eternal assurance that we have God. His hand will hold us fast and is there to guide our steps.

This gives us peace in our hearts as we move on in the new year. As we walk in this broken world, we have God who is always present with us in any circumstance.

Can you see that human beings will take advantage of being present with you at some places and knowing certain issues about your life in order to qualify or disqualify you, in order to promote or to demote you, but this is not what the Lord does.

He's present with us simply because he wants to guide us. He provides guidance. He provides that kind of protection about our lives.

And as Christians, this morning, these words should give us peace and sense of security in our lives. He moves on again.

[19:22] Now he changes the theme. The last point of my sermon is now talking about the issue of darkness. Here now, the believer, he goes on to say, God is present with the believer even in the darkest places.

Even in darkest places, the Lord is present. Sometimes we think that darkness will obstruct God from seeing the believer and even helping the believer.

But it's not the case. Have a look at verse 11 and 12. If I say, surely darkness will hide me and the light become night around me, even the darkness will not be dark to you.

The night will shine like the day for darkness is light to you. There is no darkness. There is no place that is dark where the Lord can't shine with his light.

Now the believer is asking himself the question of saying, what if I know I believe for sure that God knows me in order to protect me and is ever present at every single place I've ever been in order to guide me?

[20:32] What about when I am in a dark place? Is God still present with me? And his presence is still active? And the answer is yes, indeed.

He goes on to give us a good example of a place that is secret and dark and the Lord is present there and is busy doing and involving himself in the life of the believer.

He goes on and that place is the mother's womb. Look at verse 13. You created my inmost being. You need me together in my mother's womb. The mother's womb here is more like a secret place, more like a dark place because nobody sees what is going on there.

It's so dark. It's more like the graveyard. It's more like the land of the dead and yet God is not only present in that place that is secret but is also active.

Look at what he's doing. He's creating the inmost being of the believer, knitting him together. This shows how much skills the Lord was putting together to get involved in the life of this.

[21 : 42] If you've noticed you can see about three things that the Lord is doing with the believer when the believer is in the mother's womb. About three things he's actually talking about. The first thing is creating my inmost being.

So he's talking about the innermost center of emotions and moral sensitivities. The Lord is busy knitting them together. He's involved with the believer's life.

This is amazing. It's not only the inner center of the emotions and moral sensitivities that the Lord is actually doing with the believer's life in the mother's womb.

But even the body. Look at verse 13. My frame was not hidden from you. When I was made in the sacred place, when I was woven together in the depth of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body.

That body that was not yet formed, not yet given any structure, the Lord was already involved. This is where we stand against abortion.

[22 : 46] people. Because we know how much God is involved even with the unborn baby. At that level where there's no structure at all. Where there's nothing showing that there's a human being coming.

The Lord is already involved with the body of the believer knitting together with all the knowledge and skills. The Lord saw the believer there in the dark place, presence.

But it's not a passive presence. Again, the Lord is involved by forming the body and knitting everything together. It's amazing because it's not all what the Lord is doing with the believer in the dark place.

Have a look at verse 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. Praise God.

This is amazing because the Lord is involved with the future of the believer even before the believer is out in that secret place. Can you see how much God cares for our lives?

[23 : 53] He cares for us. Even before we come alive on this planet, He has already ordained the days of our lives. He's already involved in the future of every single believer.

This should change the way you approach even the new year because your father knows you very well even before you were born. He knows you very well.

He has already ordained all the days of your life. He's fully involved in every single day of your life. All your future is in the hands of the Lord. Whether you are sick or not, whether you face difficulties or you go through up and downs, the Lord knew everything and is involved.

Your future is in the hands of the Lord. this is amazing. And then when it goes with this kind of experience, what is the response of the believer when you understand that even in dark places, the Lord was already involved with my life.

Even in my mother's womb, the Lord was already involved with me, forming my innermost center of emotions and sensitivities, forming my unformed body and creating me, knitting me together.

[25 : 05] when you come across that kind of knowledge and realization, what is your response?

Again, it's worship, it's adoration. Look at what he does in verse 14, I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

Your works are wonderful. I know that full well. When God was giving you that skin, that structure, whatever you have, he was making sure that when you come out, everything is full well, that should give you a sense of understanding the Lord was really caring for you.

You don't have to blame God for anything because in his wisdom, everything is perfect. You may not fully understand why you look the way you look today, but you will understand in eternity why the Lord has decided to give us such wonderful bodies as human beings.

We praise the Lord for that. And in verse 17, he goes again in adoration. How precious to me are your thoughts, O God.

How vast is the sum of them. Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sun. When I am awake, I am still with you. It is another way of failing what to do.

[26 : 25] I can't help it but just to worship this wonderful God who is even present in dark places in my mother's womb who is involved even in my future.

The Lord is a caring father. So this should give us a sense of worship. So we are stepping into a new year with a spirit of worship.

Worshipping this God who has always been with us even in dark places. And so this should also make every believer to make sure that you express that loyalty to God.

You become so loyal to this God. Verse 19 these are strong words coming from somebody who has come to know God from that kind of experience and he says I will always be on your side.

Whoever is going to be against you I will stand against him because of how much I love you more. If I only you would slay the wicked or God away from me you bloodthirsty men they speak of you with evil intent your adversaries misuse your name do I not hate those who hate you oh Lord and above those who rise up against you I have nothing but hatred for them I count them my enemies these are words of loyalty and they come as an expression of someone who has come to realize how much God has been involved in his life you have just to side with this God and so brothers and sisters Psalm 139 is actually increasing our knowledge and challenging our behavior even our attitude as we step in a new life we know for sure that we have a God who knows us very well every single part of our lives who is always present and he will always be present with us in any situation the Lord who knew you even when you were in that dark place busy forming your life and knitting you together let's pray

[28 : 41] Lord how wonderful you are we thank you so much we can only bow down in adoration and say you are worthy God forgive us because many times we don't really know the things from experience but help us as we move on into the new year that everyone will love a sense of peace and security and comfort because of you oh God who knows us very well who is ever present with us Amen