

“WHAT DOES GOD KNOW AND WHEN DID HE KNOW IT?”

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First Christian Reformed Church

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Text for the Sermon: Psalm 139:1-6, 17-18, 23-24

Prayer

Introduction.

My sermons in September have focused on digging deeper into knowing God. I've pursued this for two reasons. First, because the times we are living in demand a solid foundation, a clearer understanding of the God who is sovereignly ruling over our world. And second, because of the false sense of being like God that has crept into our modern, technological world.

In our technological Tower of Babel Google is god, enabling us to be anywhere and everywhere. Google is all knowing. Enter any search and there over a billion results in less than one second. How can you help but not feel like God when you can know that much about anything?

When all the talking heads on TV take us all over the world, this false sense of omnipresence creates a false sense of omniscience. We expect them to know the truth about everything going on in our world. Then we post, blog, text and tweet our knowledge at lightning speed. And we end up angry, arguing, divided and stressing than ever.

This false sense of omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence creates burdens in our souls, stresses in our life, responsibilities we can't bear, knowledge we can't deal with. We are finite creatures, we need the comfort, hope and help only a truly infinite, all-knowing God can give.

And He has revealed Himself for His glory and for our blessing and benefit. So it is my continued prayer that our time spent seeking to understand God better is fruitful especially in these times, and especially over the course of the next 37 days and beyond.

Another reason for doing this is because the consequences of not knowing God are huge. When people stop believing in God, they don't believe in nothing—they believe in anything. Our culture no longer believes in God or fears God, so it will fall for anything and everything. We are calling good evil and evil good.

Brothers and sisters, in a world that doesn't know God, we must know God and be able to articulate as clearly as possible who He is and what He is like and what that means for us and our world.

So let's answer the question, what does God know and when did He know it?

What does God know and when did He know it?

Psalm 139 is a wonderful introduction to the truth about God's omniscience. It's not stated here as some cold doctrine, but as an intensely personal truth that leads us to deeper love for God.

God's knowledge is innate, meaning He simply knows all things. God never learns anything. God is not a student, He doesn't know the way we know by learning, observing, reasoning, deducting, comparing.

You cannot inform God of anything or tell Him something He doesn't know. God cannot acquire new knowledge or gain greater understanding. His knowledge neither increases nor decreases. He simply knows everything.

God's knowledge is simultaneous, instantaneous and complete. He knows everything at once and He thinks about everything at once. If you asked God how many stars are in the universe, He wouldn't say, "Let me get back to you on that while I go count them." Nor would He have to think about it to remember since He hadn't thought about it for a long time.

All the facts and figures and data and information in the universe are fully and completely and instantly present in the consciousness of God.

In one sense God doesn't know the future. With God there is no time, all things are present to His knowledge, He dwells in an eternal now.

David says that God knows when he sits down and when he rises up. He is saying poetically that God knows everything from one extreme to the other and everything in between.

It is no fun to play hide and seek with God, He knows where we will hide before we do.

God's knowledge is infallible, pure and perfect. He never has a bad thought, never makes an error in judgment, or a slip of the tongue, or has a senior moment. He never forgets.

Yes I know Scripture says He will not remember our sins (Isaiah 43:25). What that means is that God will not let the sins we repent of play any part in how He relates to us. The blood of Jesus removes the sting of sin, removes the power of sin, removes the effects of sin for us eternally. The bill is paid and the debt is cancelled.

God's knowledge is infinite, not partial like ours. David is not just being poetic, here. What he says is literally true. God knows every word before it is on our tongue, every thought before it enters our brain, every plan before it's conceived, every decision before it's decided, all our days before we were born and every election before the vote.

He knows the totality of all actions, events, places and things. He knows the totality of every emotion, feeling, idea, plan, purpose, motive, aim, doubt, fear and anxiety. He reads us like an open book. There is nothing hidden from His eye, it's vain to try to hid or keep something from Him. He knows the deep things in our subconscious that a trained psychiatrist would have trouble digging out.

God is infinite, He is incomprehensible, He is inexhaustible. God knows more than Google, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube combined. This is why I have said before heaven can never be boring. Every day in heaven will be a new adventure in discovering new things about God. God will delight in giving us new revelations of Himself and we will delight in learning new things.

Psalm 139:6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.
17 How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!
18 If I would count them, they are more than the sand.

Practical Implications and Applications.

God sees you and knows you intimately and completely. This knowledge carries with it the clear message that God cares about you. He cares about everything about you, your rising up and your lying down, your going out and your coming in, your obedience and your disobedience.

Moms, God sees you and knows you, your fears and concerns, and all you are doing. God sees you juggling car seats and looking for a lost shoe when you are already late. God sees you juggling finances and looking for ways to make ends meet. God sees you falling exhausted into bed when your husband has other ideas.

God sees your hidden, unappreciated or under-appreciated work, the endless repetition of laundry, diapers, dishes, and now homeschooling. God sees the extra mile you go every day.

You may be tempted to despise the work of moms in the home because our culture despises it and says it isn't as important as what is done out in the work place or in public view. God sees the reactions of others and their comments to you or about you. God sees and knows and cares.

Be free from what others may think or say, your mother in law, or other young mothers, be free from competition, from measuring up, from trying to please or impress someone else. God sees, God knows, God cares, God's love toward you is tender and compassionate.

Dads, God sees and knows you, your fears and concerns, and all you are doing.

God sees you worried about the future or getting out of debt.
God sees you controlling your anger or frustration at work.
God sees you looking over the fence at the greener grass.
God sees your concern over what the competition is doing.

God knows your lustful thoughts and your faithful thoughts.
God knows when you fall for a temptation and when you resist it.
God knows your desires for Him and what is true and good and right.

Kids, God sees you and knows your concerns and fears.
God knows when you are hurting over a friend who has turned into a bully.
God knows when you wrestle in your mind over peer pressures.
God knows when you are lonely or worried or upset with your parents or siblings.
God knows your questions and doubts. And because He knows He loves you and cares.
Kids remember, you can fool your parents, you can even fool yourself, but you can't fool God.

Senior saints, God sees and knows all you are going through.
God sees your tears over the deaths of loved ones.
God sees your thoughts of regrets over the past.
God sees your worries over the future, and the future of your children and grandchildren.
God sees your struggle with failing bodies and memories.
God sees your daily care of a spouse who can't care for themselves.
God sees your weariness.

Whatever our sufferings, past abuses, cancer, depression, God sees and knows and cares.
We are tempted to think if God doesn't remove it He must not care, but that's not true.

We can't know as God knows, so we trust His omniscience, His time, His thoughts, His ways. God uses our suffering to grow us, to produce a harvest of righteousness. God knows, God really knows, so let us draw near to Him through Jesus with confidence (Hebrews 4:12).

Let this truth about God's omniscience bear fruit in five ways in your life.

Let God's omniscience be an incentive to living a more godly and holy life. O how deceitful our hearts are when we fear the shame of man finding out our sin, but don't fear God knowing. He knows every idle thought and word, He knows every lustful desire and action, He knows the secret sins of our hearts. He knows our temptations and our weaknesses, He knows the corruptions of our hearts, He knows we are flesh, made of dust.

Be careful little eyes what you see, be careful little hands what you do, be careful little feet where you go, be careful little mouth what you say, there's a Father up above looking down in love.

Psalm 139:23-24 Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts!
24 And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

Beg God's help in this, for we are weak and foolish. Ask God to do this and He will.

When Joseph was being tempted to sin by Potiphar's wife he was helped by his awareness of God's omniscience. "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" (Gen. 39:9).

God knows our sin but there is a compassionate side to this knowledge.

"No unsuspected weakness in our characters can come to light to turn God away from us, since he knew us utterly before we knew him and called us to himself in the full knowledge of everything that was against us" (A.W. Tozer).

God knows the very worst about everyone one of us, He knows our worst sins but while we were yet sinners Christ came and died for us. God knows everything and He loves us.

Let God's omniscience be an incentive to prayer. Not because we are informing God of anything He doesn't already know. In fact if God didn't know and had to be informed by us, there would be no point in praying to such a weak and impotent God. We pray as an act of acknowledging our need and dependence and trust. Prayer is an act of worship toward an omniscient God, prayer glorifies God as the giver and blesses us as the receiver.

Let God's omniscience be cause for humility. Knowledge puffs up, knowledge makes us proud. The more educated we are, the more knowledgeable or experienced at something we are the more we boast or strut or drop hints and names. Knowledge makes us proud. But can you imagine a flashlight boasting to the sun? Can you imagine Fish Trap Creek boasting to the Pacific Ocean? Can you imagine a pocket calculator bragging to the NASA space computers?

Let the knowledge of God's infinite wisdom humble us when we don't understand what is happening to us or around us, and why. When something makes no sense to us, know that it makes complete sense to God.

Let God's omniscience be an incentive to faith, hope and trust.

Even Job in the bitterness and misery of his own seemingly out of control life was still able to speak truth to himself, God "knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold" (Job 23:10).

God shows particular care and interest in His own, “He knows them that are His” (II Timothy 2:19). He can’t be ignorant of us, He has known us from before the foundations of the earth, He knows the number of our days and the very hairs of our heads. Take great comfort in this. Without this attribute He could not be God and without this attribute He would be no help to us.

If God were forgetful, if God had Alzheimer’s or dementia what comfort or hope would we have? How could we trust Him and depend on Him if He was ignorant of our concerns and situation? We love and trust God because we know He has compassion on us, we know His power is able and His grace is sufficient and His promises are real, He will take care of His children. He has infinite knowledge and understanding to know our needs and what’s best for each one of us.

And that goes for our nation as well. God doesn’t owe us the future we want. Remember the cross. God will go to any length to secure the very best future He wants for those who love Him and trust Him.

God says, “I am over you, I am beside you, I am all around you, I am inside of you, I am under you. You don’t need to fear. You don’t need to be afraid.” The man who fears God need fear nothing else.

Let God’s omniscience be cause for great worship. Do we not honor people who are especially smart or knowledgeable or wise?

Then what do we owe to the One who knows the thoughts and intentions, the motives and actions, the good and evil in every person who has ever lived on this planet and all seven and a half billion people now swarming every corner of this globe, who knows every wish, desire, dream, hope and step of every soul? Isn’t that enough to cause you to bow in worship of the only great and wise and all-knowing God?

Romans 11:33-34, 36 Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

34 “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?”

36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

Prayer: Holy Father, as we leave here and step out into another week and month and year, whatever path each of us walks, you are there, you are with us, right beside us, before us, behind us, knowing every step and every thought. You really do know our every move from the beginning to the end. Make us more mindful of your presence and your knowledge, that in you alone we live and move and have our being. Make our knowledge of you fruitful and profitable, peace producing and even life changing. In the name of Jesus, Amen.