

# THINGS GOD KNOWS ABOUT US

Psa.139:1-6

Intro: For four Sunday nights I want to consider with you Psalm 139. It is a Psalm worth memorizing. It would be a good Psalm to begin and end the day with. At least one Jewish commentator believed that this was the greatest of all the Psalms. It is a Psalm which deals with theology--the knowledge of God. In fact, it seems right to say that there is no Psalm which deals more majestically with the three prominent characteristics of God which are the source of such blessing to the people of God: His omniscience, His omnipresence, and His omnipotence.

This Psalm serves many purposes.

It is clearly a song of Israel. It is a prayer. It is a lesson concerning God. It is a testimony. There are many things that can be said about it.

The Psalm has been ascribed to David, but there is such an Aramaic flavor about the words that are used that many who have studied it feel that it must have been written after the Babylonian captivity. LET US PUT IT IN THAT SETTING DURING THIS SERIES OF STUDIES. We have the testimony of what one learned about God during the time of the captivity. Perhaps it is the testimony of the remnant that returned.

It shows how God can work, and does work, even when our hearts have been turned away from Him.

It shows also that the most important knowledge that we possess is what we know about God. He will work in our hearts until He becomes more than just a doctrine; HE BECOMES TO US A REAL PERSON, HAVING THE CHARACTERISTICS WHICH ARE HERE EXTOLLED.

The Psalm has five parts:

- (1) God's omniscience--that fact that He knows all (vv. 1-6).
- (2) God's omnipresence (vv. 7-12).
- (3) God's omnipotence (vv. 13-18).
- (4) The Psalmist's prayer (vv. 19-24)--in two parts:
  - (a) For the overthrow of God-less men (vv. 19-22).
  - (b) For the searching and leading of God in his own life (vv. 23, 24).

Try to approach this Psalm as though you knew nothing about God. What does the Psalmist want to teach us? First of all, he wants us to learn what God knows about us!

## I. GOD'S KNOWLEDGE OF US IS PERSONAL (v. 1).

In other parts of the Word we learn of the knowledge of God in other things, but here the Psalmist is talking about himself. "Thou hast searched me, and known."

"Searched" is a mining term. It describes how the miner will dig underground to find gold, or silver, or coal, or whatever he may be looking for. Thus, we are not concerned here about what God can learn about us by looking at our outward behavior alone, but <sup>of</sup> by what He learns by penetrating the deepest recesses <sup>of</sup> our hearts!

And the Psalmist wants us to know that, as Maclaren has said, "He knows us each, altogether; whether we like it or not, whether we try to hinder it or not, whether we remember it or not" (Vol. 3, p. 360).

We have both the process, and the result, in this one verse.

## II. GOD'S KNOWLEDGE OF US IS COMPREHENSIVE (vv. 2-4).

It concerns our thoughts, our ways, and our words.

## A. Our thoughts (v. 2).

The fact that God is in heaven sometimes makes us feel secure. Eliphaz falsely charged Job with saying that God could not see him on a cloudy day. Cf. Job 22:12-14. Cf. Psa. 138:6.

BUT HE KNOWS OUR THOUGHTS IN CONNECTION WITH OUR "downsitting" AND OUR "uprising." He is talking about the end of the day, and the beginning of the day--expressed in Hebrew fashion with the evening first.

He knows what fills our minds at the close of the day, and He knows what motivates us at the beginning.

## B. Our ways (v. 3).

Here the figure of speech changes to that of the farmer winnowing, sifting.

"My path" is the way I take during the day; "my lying down" is the rest that I take during the night. Cf. v. 12. "The darkness and the light are both alike to thee."

## C. Our words (v. 4).

Have you ever stopped to listen to your words? God has. This fourth verse indicates that "before a word is in my tongue," even before I speak it, He knows it altogether.

And here for the second time in the verse he addresses God as Jehovah.

Remember that all of this is personal. He has taken the time to know all of this about you and me!

But this could only lead to confusion, fear, and dismay on the part of the Psalmist if it were not for the truth expressed in v. 5. What is it?

Here the Psalmist brings together the omniscience of God with His omnipresence and His omnipotence, developing these latter two attributes in the rest of the Psalm.

## III. GOD'S KNOWLEDGE DOES NOT STAND ALONE (v. 5).

- A. They are a "beset," a besieged people--like a city surrounded by an enemy. Only here their conqueror is Jehovah!

He has hemmed them in on every side, protecting, guiding, supervising their lives even when they turn in rebellion against Him.

- B. The hand of God is upon them--His power keeping them from doing what they otherwise would do.

Now we see why he writes as he does in v. 6.

## IV. GOD'S KNOWLEDGE CAN NEVER BE UNDERSTOOD (v. 6).

It is "too wonderful"--hard to understand.

"It is high"--inaccessible apart from divine revelation. If we were to try to determine how God would deal with us, we would never come up with this!

Concl: Is it any wonder that the Psalm ends with the same truth as which it began? The NT counterpart is in Rom. 11:33.

When we begin to see in ourselves what God sees, the most amazing thing to us is His grace. And instead of striking fear to our hearts, it brings forth our praise.