

GOD, THE OMNIPOTENT AND THE COMPASSIONATE

Psalm 139:13-24

Intro: As most of you know, last Sunday morning we considered the first part of Psalm 139. I am dealing with this Psalm on two Sunday mornings because there is too much in the Psalm for just one message. To do justice to the Psalm would probably take a series of messages as I am sure that many before me have done.

I have in my library the full set of Spurgeon's sermons which he preached during his lifetime. He spoke three times on verses from Psalm 139, and mainly those messages were on only three of the 24 verses. But you can tell when Spurgeon spoke on a verse or two out of a chapter, that he had in his mind the message of the whole chapter.

While some Bible scholars are inclined to say that King David did not write this Psalm, I see no reason for questioning that he was the writer. He certainly could have written it if he didn't.

It is a very personal Psalm. In every part of it (with one exception) the Psalmist is speaking directly to God. One commentator has pointed out that God's Names appear six times. With pronouns like Thou, Thy, and Thee the Lord is referred to thirty times. And the Psalmist refers to himself fifty times with words like I, me, and mine. The one exception where the Psalmist brings others into the Psalm, is in the last part of verse 19 where we read that he said, "Depart from me therefore, ye bloody men."

It is relatively easy to see that in the first six verses the Psalmist was speaking about **the omniscience of the Lord**. In verses 7 through 12 his emphasis is upon **the omnipresence of the Lord**. In the first part of the verses I want to consider with you this morning where the Psalmist got into creation, we have **the omnipotence of the Lord**. You have this in verses 13 through 18. And in the last six verses I am going to borrow a term that one expositor has used, one which I have never heard before. I doubt if it is in any dictionary. It is the word "omnirighteousness," **the omnirighteousness of the Lord**.

Now all of these attributes of God go beyond the scope of Psalm 139. By that I mean that there is more to each of these characteristics of God than we have in this Psalm. But the Spirit of God has given us what we might call a doctrinal primer, simple doctrine which the most immature of

God's children are able to understand, but which give us a solid foundation upon which we can become strong in our faith in God, unshakeable in the knowledge of these simple, but very profound truths of God – His omniscience, His omnipresence, His omnipotence, and His omnirighteousness! All of them are packed with comfort and blessing for every child of God.

So this is a Psalm with four stanzas: God's omniscience in verses 1 through 6; God's omnipresence in verses 6 through 12; God's omnipotence in verses 13 through 18; and God's omnirighteousness in verses 19 through 24. We have had the first two; now let us go on to the third stanza.

III. The Omnipotence of God (Psa. 139:13-18).

Creation itself is proof of the omnipotence of God. This is the way the Bible begins. I am just coming to the end of reading through the Psalms again, and on Friday, I think it was, that I was reading Psalm 148 and this is what I came upon in verses 1 through 6:

1 Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord from the heavens: praise him in the heights.

2 Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts.

3 Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light.

4 Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens.

5 Let them praise the name of the Lord: for he commanded, and they were created.

6 He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass.

Now that is omnipotence! Not only did God create the whole universe and all that is in it, but He has kept it all going!!!! The evidence of God's omnipotence is everywhere. But that is not what the Psalmist was talking about here in Psalm 139, verses 13 through 18. What was King David's example of the omnipotence of God? He said in these verses of stanza 3 (and now I will paraphrase), "Lord, I am evidence, I am proof, of your omnipotence."

And when David said what he did in these six verses, he wanted us to know that we could say the same thing. You and I are all evidences of the omnipotence of God. There is much more evidence in creation, and in the operation of the universe in which we live, but King David said that God

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showed His omnipotence not only in the creation of the first man and the first woman, but he showed it again every time a human being is born. It does not mean that we are omnipotent, but that He is! King David came into this world the same way that you and I did. Did you ever get a birth announcement that said, “Rejoice with us because God has demonstrated His omnipotence again, and look at what we have!”

And as you read down from verse 13 especially through verse 16, you can see how David said that the Lord had supervised the whole event. He began with, “For Thou has possessed my reins.” What did David mean by that? This has to do with the inner parts of the body, often used of the kidneys, and even of the mind. So it speaks of the making of the vital organs of the body. And “covered me in my mother’s womb.” This means more than the protection given to the baby, but the way in which the inward parts of the body were related to each other as a weaver does in weaving a web. It speaks of how the various parts of the body were related to each other to function properly

So when David considered the various parts of the body, and how they were “woven together” so to speak, so as to function properly, David found this a subject for praise to God. And so in verse 14 he said that he was “fearfully and wonderfully made.” “Fearfully” means that when he considered what God had done in making him, it caused him to worship the Lord for His handiwork. And “wonderfully” mean that he recognized that God in making him had done something very unique in all of His works of creation. It cause the King to marvel at what God had done in his body. This may be a reference to man being made in the image of God. But King David was not thinking of Adam here, but he was thinking of himself. His words, “marvelous are Thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well, means that he was thoroughly convinced that he could never have had the body he had if it had not been made by God.

In verse 15 we see that David was convinced that there was not a moment from his conception to his birth but what God was in charge, and from that we can deduct that the birth of every child is under the personal direction of God Himself. David was not dealing with difficulties which sometimes arise in the conception and growth of the baby before birth, but he wanted the Lord to know that He knew Who was responsible for the body that he had. All of this was going on hidden from the eyes of men, but under the direct observation and supervision of the Lord. “Curiously wrought” is another expression that describes the work of an

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embroiderer, that there was some special and unique about the work of God in all of our bodies before birth. This is not an assembly line, but while we all have similar bodies, yet no two of us are exactly alike. It has a certain parallel in the fact that no two snow flakes are exactly alike. And it is all made even more wonderful because we were made “in the lowest parts of the earth.” Most expositors take this to mean that God made us out of the dust of the earth into creatures that reflect His glory.

In verse 16 we see that the Deists were totally wrong when they taught that God got everything going, and then left creation to function by itself. So that the birth of children was just an order which God set in motion, but that He no long has anything to do with it. David said that God’s eyes were on his conception and growth all the while the body was growing, which the Bible here calls “continuance.” All the time the body is growing God had His eye on everything, and this started before there was anything at all. This is a reference to the foreordaining that God has done of all people. We were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world.

So in the plan and purpose of God was all in His book before creation itself, and God planned it before there was any creation, and He has continued to supervise and perfect it all from the very beginning.

I am sure that much more could be said about verses 13 through 16 as David told the Lord what he had learned about the relationship that God had with him, and which He continued to have. One important aspect of the power of God is that it is sovereign power.

Now how did David learn all of this? God had revealed it unto him. See verse 17. David had learned what we need to learn that we are never out of God’s thoughts. Regardless of how many we are, He never forgets any of us. Let me read a verse to you concerning God’s thoughts that we find in Jeremiah 29:11:

11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

We may, and do, often forget the Lord. But He never has, and never will, forget us. There are two verses I would like to read to you which were given to the prophet for our comfort and blessing. They are found in Isaiah 49:15-16:

15 Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet

will I not forget thee.

16 Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.

In our Trinity Hymnal is a hymn, #433, that I want to read to you – just the first verse, which supports what we have been seeing in our text this morning. Here are the words:

I've found a Friend, O such a Friend!
He loved me ere I knew Him;
He drew me with the cords of love,
And thus He bound me to Him:
And round my heart still closely twine
Those ties which naught can sever;
For I am His, and He is mine,
For ever and for ever.

Out of all of the verses in this Psalm, Spurgeon was attracted most by verses 17 and 18. He was absorbed with the idea that God's thought have been on us from eternity past, up to and through our salvation, and then for all eternity. And he could only count the number of God's thoughts toward him by comparing it with sand. Who can count grains of sand? Only God can. But God's thoughts toward David, and toward each one of us, are more than the sand. That is, for each one of us! Even when we sleep and are not thinking, God's thoughts toward us continue. They never stop. There is comfort enough in verses 17 and 18 for all of us, for all eternity. Let us all pray that the Lord will enable us to lay hold of what this Psalm teaches us.

But I must hurry on to the last stanza of our Psalm found in verses 19-24. This is a totally different stanza from the first three. Here we see that our God is omnirighteous. But having been enjoying the Lord in the first three stanzas, David has become more than ever aware that he was living in a wicked world where everything is in total contrast with where David has been in stanzas 1, 2, and 3. He knows by this time that something has to be done about the wicked in the world, and in verse 19 we see what it is. It is very clear that the wicked cannot continue to dwell where God is. Read verses 19-22.

But I know that many of you are thinking that we are to love our enemies. We are to do good to those who hate us. We are even to pray for them. If they are hungry, we are to give them something to eat. If they are thirsty, we are to give them something to drink. How can we reconcile those

words with what David had to say here?

I am indebted to Spurgeon for the answer to these questions. Notice how David spoke of them. He said in the first part of verse 20 that “they speak against Thee wickedly. And then he called them in the latter part of the verse, “thine enemies.” In verse 21 he said, “Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate Thee?” And David followed those words with these: “Am I not grieved with those that rise up against Thee?” And then in verse 22 he said two important things:

- 1) “I hate them with perfect hatred,” and then he followed it with
- 2) “I count them my enemies.”

David did not mean that he was going to call his armies out to kill those who were saying wicked things about the Lord, and taking His Name in vain. But he did mean that there was no room for compromise when wicked men say wicked things about his God and his Savior.

But then the Psalm ends with David talking to the Lord again about himself.

Concl: In the first 18 verses of this Psalm, King David had been dwelling in the heavenlies (to use a NT expression) as his mind and heart had been filled with thoughts of God and God’s love for him, a love which went back long before David knew the Lord. His heart was overwhelmed with the blessings that he had experienced from the Lord which had come to him in pure grace. But we can’t be where David was in the earlier part of the chapter without seeing the terrible contrast that there is between a holy, loving omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent God without seeing the stark contrast that there is between God and the wicked world. But that, in turn, made him think that there might have been some traces of the world remaining in his own heart of the wickedness that had influenced him in the past, and so he presented his case before the Lord. It is always relatively easy to see the faults in the lives of other people, and to be over-looking the sins and failures in our own lives. The closeness of our relationship with the Lord, will be evident by our desire to be all that the Lord wants us to be living, as we all do, in a wicked, fallen world. May our fellowship with the Lord be such that the world will take knowledge of us that we love the Lord and are living to please Him.