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Psalm 139 – “God Knows”

O LORD, You have searched me and known *me*.

² You know my sitting down and my rising up;

You understand my thought afar off.

³ You comprehend my path and my lying down,

And are acquainted with all my ways.

⁴ For *there is* not a word on my tongue,

But behold, O LORD, You know it altogether.

⁵ You have hedged me behind and before,

And laid Your hand upon me.

⁶ *Such* knowledge *is* too wonderful for me;

It is high, I cannot *attain* it.

⁷ Where can I go from Your Spirit?

Or where can I flee from Your presence?

⁸ If I ascend into heaven, You *are* there;

If I make my bed in hell, behold, You *are there*.

⁹ *If* I take the wings of the morning,

And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,

¹⁰ Even there Your hand shall lead me,

And Your right hand shall hold me.

¹¹ If I say, “Surely the darkness shall fall on me,”

Even the night shall be light about me;

¹² Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You,

But the night shines as the day;

The darkness and the light *are* both alike *to You*.

¹³ For You formed my inward parts;

You covered me in my mother’s womb.

¹⁴ I will praise You, for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made;

Marvelous are Your works,

And *that* my soul knows very well.

¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from You,

When I was made in secret,

And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

¹⁶ Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed.

And in Your book they all were written,

The days fashioned for me,
When *as yet there were* none of them.

¹⁷ How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God!

How great is the sum of them!

¹⁸ *If* I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand;

When I awake, I am still with You.

¹⁹ Oh, that You would slay the wicked, O God!

Depart from me, therefore, you bloodthirsty men.

²⁰ For they speak against You wickedly;

Your enemies take *Your name* in vain.

²¹ Do I not hate them, O LORD, who hate You?

And do I not loathe those who rise up against You?

²² I hate them with perfect hatred;

I count them my enemies.

²³ Search me, O God, and know my heart;

Try me, and know my anxieties;

²⁴ And see if *there is any* wicked way in me,

And lead me in the way everlasting.

Introduction

Today is the 42nd Anniversary of Osaka International Church.

A few people here today know all about its history.

There have been good times and challenging times. Over the years many people have become Christians through the ministry of this Church.

Some people have been Baptized and many Christians have grown in their knowledge and understanding of God.

The founding Pastor Jack Marshall is still alive and serving Jesus. He is 87 years old. There have been lots of Pastors here for various periods of time in the plan and purpose of God.

Some of us have only been at OIC for a short time.

I have only been here for nearly 2 years. I only know personally a little of its history.

However I do know that God knows everything about the history of O.I.C.

He knows that He has supported this Church since it started.

He knows the hearts of everybody who has come and left this Church.

We can thank God today for his love and care of all the members of OIC through its 42 year history.

Although it is good to look back and say "Thank you" to God for all that He has done and provided for this fellowship, we must look forward to what God is going to do through His people for another year at O.I.C.

In order that we might be encouraged today, I have chosen Psalm 139 to preach and teach on the subject of

God knowing us and us knowing God.

In Daniel Chapter 11:v.32 it says;

“...but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.”

The knowledge that Daniel is talking about is not an academic knowledge of the theology of God, although that is important, it is a personal experience of working as God’s servant and knowing God through the challenges of life.

Psalms 139 is one of the most important of the Psalms of David.

The key word in the Psalm is the word **“know”**. It is mentioned 5 times in this Psalm in connection with what God knows and once in the connection of what David knows.

I hope that by the end of my message we will know a little more about what God knows and be excited to get to **“Know”** God better in the future.

I am going to divide the Psalm into 4 sections.

The first section is verses 1-6.

1. Knowing and understanding that God knows everything – v. 1-6

David starts the Psalm with the word “O Lord”. He does this to express adoration towards God. David was very respectful towards God and he wanted to start the song with the right heart attitude. David had a “Holy Fear” of God.

In Proverbs 1 :v.7 it says “ The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge..”

David’s knowledge of God came about because of his healthy fear of God.

The life of David in the Old Testament tells us that although David made many mistakes, he had a “Fear of the Lord”. We also learn that God was determined to fulfill His purposes through David, in spite of His mistakes.

Turn with me to 1 Samuel Chapter 24 v. 10

¹⁰ Look, this day your eyes have seen that the LORD delivered you today into my hand in the cave, and *someone* urged *me* to kill you. But *my eye* spared you, and I said, ‘I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he *is* the LORD’s anointed.’

Even though Saul sought to kill David, David would not kill Saul because God had at one point anointed Saul to be King over Israel.

Yes Saul failed and God replaced him with David, nevertheless David still respected God’s choice of Saul. We too need to have a healthy fear of God if we are going to gain the knowledge and understand of Him.

In v. 1-6 David is acknowledging how much God knows about Him.

David acknowledges that God knows what he is thinking, where he is going and what he is doing and saying. In fact God knows everything that is going on in David’s life.

David says that this knowledge is too wonderful for him. It was beyond David’s comprehension.

I would like to focus on verse 5 for a moment.

David says "**You have hedged me behind and before and laid your hand upon me**" (N.K.J.)

In the N. I. V. Bible it says "**you hem me in...**"

David is acknowledging that God's protecting hand is upon him.

In 1 Samuel Chapter 23 v. 14 it says "And David stayed in strongholds in the wilderness, and remained in the mountains in the wilderness of Zip. Saul sought him every day but God did not deliver him into his hand."

God's protecting hand was upon David because God had chosen him to fulfill His purposes for Israel.

David was chosen for his "heart relationship" with God.

(1 Samuel 16:7, 13)

What was important to God was David's heart.

David had a heart for God and His purposes. He was willing to serve Him, even as a King in exile.

Most of his life his conditions were not favorable, but he was still willing to serve God.

How about us?

Do we have a heart for God and His work?

Do we acknowledge God's hand upon our lives, even in the very difficult challenges of life?

We may not think that God's hand is upon our lives in a very special way, but it is.

God sent His Son Jesus Christ into this world to die for our sin. He did this to secure a personal relationship with US.

Surely you can trust the person who has done that for you?

I certainly can.

Real Life story - Example

Frederick Nolan was fleeing from his enemies during a time of persecution in North Africa. They chased him over a hill and through a valley until he had nowhere to hide. He was exhausted. Suddenly he found a cave and went inside. He expected his enemies to find him but he could not walk any further. While he awaited his death he saw a large spider weaving a web across the entrance to the cave.

The enemy arrived some time later and wondered if Nolan was hiding in the cave.

However they noticed the unbroken spider's web across the mouth of the cave. The attackers thought that it would be impossible for Nolan to enter the cave without breaking up the spider's web. They decided not to enter the cave and ran off in pursuit of Nolan.

Nolan waited for a short time and then burst out in praise to God with these words.

Where God IS, a spider's web is like a wall,

Where God is NOT, a wall is like a spider's web.

If God can protect Fredrick Nolan, He can also protect us.

Our times and the life of O.I.C. are in God's hands.

Hallelujah, praise God for that.

We now come to the second section of the Psalm v. 7-12.

2. Knowing and believing that God is present everywhere – v. 7-12.

David having given testimony to God's perfect knowledge of all of his life now moves to testify that

God's presence is everywhere, wherever he goes.

David is aware that there is nowhere in the universe that he can escape God's presence.

To David and to us these facts are both encouraging and challenging.

We live in a dimension that can only be in one place at a time.

I can't be in Ikoma and Osaka at the same time, but God can be in Ikoma, Osaka and England and everywhere in the world at the same time.

This is impossible for our minds to understand. However it is true.

Although we can't see God, there are times in our lives that we can definitely feel a tangible presence of God's Holy Spirit.

John 14: v. 21 (N.K.J.).

²¹ He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

So obedience to God can often result in a manifestation of God's presence.

The Psalmist says in Psalm 16 v. 11 "**In your presence is fullness of joy..**"

There is no other joy or experience compared to experiencing the presence of God.

Jesus knew that being in His presence was a wonderful thing.

Luke10: v.38-42 in N.K.J.

³⁸ Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. ³⁹ And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." ⁴¹ And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. ⁴² But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

Jesus valued spending time with Him more than serving Him.

Yes we do need to serve Jesus, but it is more important to spend time with Him in prayer and reading His word the Bible.

However, whether we feel God's presence or not, he is there.

This is also challenging, because if we are going in the wrong direction or doing things that offend God, then He is by our sides.

The Bible says that we can grieve the Holy Spirit..

Ephesians 4: v. 30.

³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

God is like us in some aspects, He can be hurt too. Nobody likes to be hurt or grieved and therefore we should do our best not to grieve God, knowing that He is present in all of our situations.

We now move on to the third part of the Psalm.

This is very exciting for me at present because I am praying for lots of babies in their Mother's wombs at present.

I haven't done this for a very long time.

3. Knowing and believing that God is all powerful.(He can do anything)

When we think about God being all powerful we often think of miracles like the parting of the Red Sea in Exodus, or the 10 plagues of Egypt or the feeding of 3 million people in a desert for 40 years.

However David doesn't mention these miracles, he concentrates upon the miracle of the human body.

He says " I am fearfully and wonderfully made.."

The fact that we start life with a seed that can't be seen by the human eye and end up like we are now, is the most amazing miracle of all time.

As you know my daughter Charis is expecting twins next February and I am praying every day for these two babies. There are also other babies being formed in wombs connected with OIC, but I don't have those pictures, however I am praying for these babies too.

(Show picture of the twin babies in Charis's womb after 3 months)

Even at 3 months all the internal organs are determined. Although not mature at this stage, nevertheless they are all there. The sex is determined but not yet known. They can determine the sex after 4 months or so.

We don't have time to discover all the stages of a babies growth in the womb but what we can do is to praise God that He knew us when we were in our Mother's womb and He has guided and provided for us ever since.

What is even more awesome in these verses is that David says;

" Your eyes saw my substance being yet unformed.."

David is telling us that even before we were formed in the womb God knew what we were like.

The "Foreknowledge" of God is an amazing thing.

Isaiah 46: v.9- 10.

⁹ Remember the former things of old,

For I *am* God, and *there is* no other;

I *am* God, and *there is* none like Me,

¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning,

And from ancient times *things* that are not *yet* done,

Saying, 'My counsel shall stand,

And I will do all My pleasure,'

Acts 2: v. 22-23.

²² “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know— ²³ Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;

Exodus 3: v. 19.

¹⁹ But I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not even by a mighty hand.

It is a wonderful thing to know that in spite of God’s foreknowledge about us, He can still love us because of Jesus.

This makes the death of Jesus for our sins the most wonderful message in all the world.

Osaka International Church is kept by the power of God because it seeks to proclaim the most wonderful message of all time.

The message is that in spite of our sins and our failures, we can say sorry to God and asked for His forgiveness. This is based upon the fact that Jesus Christ has already taken the punishment for all of our sins

We don’t have to do anything, because Jesus has done everything.

However we need to live in the light of all that God has done for us in Jesus Christ.

Paul says in Romans 12: v. 1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

The only reasonable response to what God has done for us is to give our lives to Him..

In v. 17-18 David reflects upon the thoughts of God towards him.

David says if he tried to count them it would be impossible

Today at the 42nd Anniversary we can reflect upon God’s love to Osaka International Church.

I know God loves OIC because He brought me here at considerable personal cost.

However I am happy to be here.

In v. v. 19-22 David, knowing the all powerfulness of God turns towards his enemies and towards God’s enemies.

David had plenty of enemies, and as such they were against God’s anointed, David.

David said “ I hate them with “perfect hatred – v. 22.

The Hebrew word means “Complete”

We are told in the Old Testament and the New Testament that God will repay our enemies.

God did this in the life of David and God will ultimately do this in our lives, even though we may not be

around to see this.

Ultimately God will judge sin and nobody will escape.

The final part of the Psalm ends where it begins. It ends with David wanting God to search his heart and give him a spiritual check up.

Is David still loving God from his heart?

Are we still loving God from our HEART.

If we are still loving God from our heart, then there is a great year ahead for the 43rd year of Osaka International Church.

Let God lead us forward as a Church to greater things and greater blessings from God.

1 Corinthians 15: v. 58. (N.K.J.).

⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.