

SEARCH ME, O GOD

TEXT: PSALM 139:23, 24

Introduction:

1. Our Lord said in John 16:8, “And when he (the Holy Spirit) is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”
2. The Holy Spirit convicts sinners, reveals to them their lost condition, and warns them of the inevitable judgment of God.
3. It is easy for spiritually minded believers to recognize and detest the sins of the wicked (Ps. 139:19-22).
4. But those of us who are saved by the grace of God must constantly ask the Lord to search our hearts (139:23, 24).
5. The Holy Spirit not only convicts sinners; He also works in the hearts of believers. That is why David said, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts...” (Psalm 139:23).
6. Spiritual growth for the Christian is dependent upon confession of sin, and keeping our hearts right with God. This starts with genuine, sincere soul-searching (Ps. 139:23, 24).

I. SEARCH ME

1. The Psalmist prayed, “Search me, O God, and know my heart” (139:23a).
2. J Edwin Orr wrote that great hymn, “Cleanse Me,” based upon these Scriptures. He wrote the song at a revival meeting in New Zealand, taking less than five minutes to put the words down on paper.

*Search me, O God,
And know my heart today;
Try me, O Savior,
Know my thoughts, I pray.*

*See if there be
Some wicked way in me;
Cleanse me from every sin
And set me free.*

*I praise Thee, Lord,
For cleansing me from sin;
Fulfill Thy Word,
And make me pure within.*

*Fill me with fire
Where once I burned with shame;
Grant my desire
To magnify Thy Name.*

*Lord, take my life,
And make it wholly Thine;
Fill my poor heart
With Thy great love divine.*

*Take all my will,
My passion, self and pride;
I now surrender, Lord
In me abide.*

*O Holy Ghost,
Revival comes from Thee;
Send a revival,
Start the work in me.*

*Thy Word declares
Thou wilt supply our need;
For blessings now,
O Lord, I humbly plead.*

3. Dr. Orr was preaching in Scandinavia, and heard Psalm 139:23 translated in the Scandinavian language. He said, “I never fully understood the significance of this prayer until I heard the verse translated into the Scandinavian tongues. There the word ‘search’ is rendered ‘ransack.’ It takes little imagination to picture the thoroughness of a job of ransacking as compared to mere searching. Ransacking turns things upside down and brings to light things that are hidden or forgotten. In times of backsliding, the Spirit is quenched, and, as life goes on, the natural tendency is for a convicted person to forget the unpleasant episode. In conviction of sin, the debris of ordinary living is swept aside and the offending thing is brought to attention. Hence, if believers are to avoid superficiality in confession, a thorough ransacking of heart is necessary” (*Full Surrender*).
4. In my opinion, the best commentary on the book of Psalms is the *Treasury of David* by Charles Haddon Spurgeon.

5. Spurgeon said, “David will have God himself search him, and search him thoroughly, till every point of his being is known, and read, and understood” (*Treasury of David*).
6. This is what the apostle Paul meant when he said, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” (II Cor. 13:5).
7. Again, I will quote Spurgeon. He said, “It is a solemn fact, that there is not an evil principle in the bosom of the devil himself which does not exist in ours, at the present moment, unless we are fully renewed by the power of the Holy Spirit. That these evil principles do not continually develop themselves, in all their hideous deformity, is entirely owing to the restraining and forbearing mercy of God.”

II. TRY ME

1. A true believer should not be afraid to be examined or tried by God. He should be willing to be tried by God because if his faith is genuine, it will surely endure a trial.
2. First Peter 1:6, 7 says, “Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”
3. That it “might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (I Peter 1:7). The Holy Spirit warns sinners that they face eternity in hell.
4. And the Holy Spirit reminds Christians that “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ” (II Cor. 5:10; cf. Rom 14:10).
5. Humble Christians like preaching which is searching and convicting. Worldly believers despise strong preaching. “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (II Timothy 4:3, 4).
6. David prayed, “And see if there be any wicked way in me” (139:24). We all have our blind spots, but the Lord can point them out to us if we are honest with Him.

7. Spurgeon said, “See whether there be in my heart, or in my life, any evil habit unknown to myself. If there be such an evil way, take me from it, take it from me. No matter how dear the wrong may have become, nor how deeply prejudiced I may have been in its favour, be pleased to deliver me there from altogether, effectually, and at once, that I may tolerate nothing which is contrary to thy mind. As I hate the wicked in their way, so would I hate every wicked way in myself.”
8. It is not very difficult to see the faults of others, but it is not always easy to recognize our own.

III. LEAD ME

1. This is what Spurgeon said about the conclusion of Psalm 139 – “And lead me in the way everlasting” (139:24b). “By thy providence, by thy word, by thy grace, and by thy Spirit, lead me evermore.”
2. David prayed, “Lead me in the way everlasting” (139:24b). What is “the way everlasting”?
 - Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).
 - Jeremiah 6:16 says, “Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.”
 - Our Lord said, “Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matt. 7:14).
3. This is what David wanted, when he prayed, “Lead me in the way everlasting” (139:24b).

CONCLUSION:

Let us pray and ask the Lord to search us, and to cleanse us, and to lead us as we head into the new year.