

“The Inescapable God”
Psalm 139
(Preached at Trinity, November 10, 2013)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. One of the terrible consequences of man’s fall into sin is the loss of the comprehension of God.
 - A. It isn’t that he denies the existence of God. He knows that God exists but he dismisses Him as being insignificant—not worthy of worship.
Theologians sometimes describe it as a “practical atheism.” The lost man lives as if God does not exist.
 - B. Paul describes the lost man’s condition:
Romans 1:18-19 NAU - "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹ because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them."
Romans 1:21-22 NAU - "For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools"
 - C. In other words although the lost man knows of a certainty that God exists he suppresses the truth. He hides his eyes from it and hardens his heart against it.
In the darkness of his sinful heart he lives his lives as if God is not there; as if God does not know; as if God does not see.
 1. The lost man lives each day covering his eyes from the truth. He suppresses the truth. What truth? The truth of God, and the truth of the wrath of God revealed.
 2. If he truly considered that God is watching every move he would tremble and cry out. But he denies the truth.
 3. This is why he finds it so easy to dismiss the Gospel. He doesn’t see it as the greatest gift ever given to man. The cross means nothing to him.
1 Corinthians 1:18 NAU - "For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."
2. Does this describe you? How is it you find it so easy to dismiss God? How is it you are not trembling in fear right now? Is it because you are pretending that this life is all there is? Is it because you have convinced yourself that God is detached from this world?
3. As we read **Psalm 139** we find an entirely different reality. David presents the truth that we cannot escape the ever present eye of God. He sees all, hears all, knows all. He is inescapable.
This is a basic reality about God – but most fail to comprehend it. We teach it to our children from birth, but they often fail to comprehend the weightiness of it.
Children’s Catechism:
Q. Can you see God?
A. No; I cannot see God but He always sees me.
Q Does God know all things?
A. Yes; nothing can be hid from God.
4. Tonight, as we look at **Psalm 139** I’ll divide it into three parts. May God stir our hearts with these truths.

- I. God's knowledge is infinite – **Verses 1-6**
 - II. God's presence is infinite – **Verses 7-12**
 - III. The sweet comfort of these truths for God's people – **Verses 13-24**
- I. God's knowledge is infinite – **Verses 1-6** – He is omniscient. He possesses all knowledge
- A. God knows every aspect of everything. He knows every aspect of our lives
 - 1. God knows what we are doing during every second of every day from the time we wake up to the time we return to bed and then while we sleep.
Verse 2 - "Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising"
Verse 3 - "Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted *with* all my ways."
 - a. God knows everything we do
 - b. Every sin is before the ever present eye of God
 - c. The lost man vainly pretends God does not see his sin
Psalm 94:5-7 KJV - "They break in pieces thy people, O LORD, and afflict thine heritage. ⁶ They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless. ⁷ Yet they say, The LORD shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard *it*."
 d. The Day of Judgment will be a terrible time of exposure.
Luke 12:2 KJV - "For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known."
 - 2. Not only does God know our actions, God even knows our thoughts
Verse 2 - "thou understandest my thought afar off."
 - a. He knows every lust, every covetous thought, every hateful thought, all envy and jealousy.
 - b. He knows our desires and appetites
 - 3. God knows every word we have ever spoken
Verse 4 - "For *there is* not a word in my tongue, *but*, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether."
 - 4. Such a God as this should be terrifying to the lost man. We don't like the idea that we are being watched. The recent disclosure that our government is conducting surveillance makes many uneasy. God makes their surveillance seem as nothing. God sees all! Knows all! Records all!
 - B. Every human being will give account to this God. He is inescapable.
Romans 14:10-12 NAS - "we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God. ¹¹ For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall give praise to God." ¹² So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God."
 - 1. The day is approaching quickly. It could be this very moment.
 - 2. All of us think the day will never come, or at least it is far into the future. The truth is it will come suddenly and unexpectedly
 - 3. No one will escape the judgment of God
 There will be no jury, no witness will be called. God knows—and He is inescapable.
Hebrews 2:3 NAS - "how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?"
- II. God's presence is infinite – **Verses 7-12** – He is omnipresent
- A. David ponders the all encompassing presence of God
Psalm 139:7 KJV - "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?"
 - 1. David covers every spectrum of consideration – as high as heaven or as low as hell – **Verse 8**

2. The sea seemed a vast expanse, yet God was there
 3. What about hiding in the darkness – surely no one will see then. Darkness appears to hide secrets. There are *nightclubs*. But God sees all.
Verse 11 - "If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me."
 4. What a comfort for the believer – **Verse 10** - " Even there Your hand will lead me, And Your right hand will lay hold of me."
 5. In our greatest trial, He is there. At the time of our greatest need, He is there.
 6. When Paul was in prison he felt all alone, deserted by all the brethren – but Paul knew that he was not alone.
2 Timothy 4:16-17 NAS - "At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them. ¹⁷ But the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me"
- B. There is no place you can go where God is not there
1. While this is a sweet comfort for the Christian, if you have not trusted Him it should be terrifying.
 2. It means you cannot escape from Him – He is inescapable
 3. Multitudes try to flee from death. Multitudes will try to flee at His return. But you cannot escape from God. He is inescapable.

III. The sweet comfort of these truths for God's people – **Verses 13-24**

As David continues his meditation he considers several other implications of God's all encompassing hand in the universe.

- A. God made us – **Verses 13-15**
1. Every aspect of your being came from the hand of God
Psalms 139:13 KJV - "thou hast possessed my reins"
 - a. The word for "reins" literally means kidneys. It refers to our inward parts which is how the NASB translates it: "You formed my inward parts"
 - b. Your body is exactly the way God ordained it
 - c. Notice how this verse gives absolute clarity to the abortion issue.
See Verse 15
 2. The lost person takes his body for granted.
 - a. Some abuse their bodies with too much food or unhealthy food. Some abuse their bodies with drugs or alcohol
 - b. Others, however, worship their bodies giving great attention to their appearance.
 - c. But they don't marvel at how amazing their bodies are. They don't marvel at their Creator
 - a. Just look at the human hand – the motion, the touch.
 - b. Your heart will beat 2.8 billion times over a 76 year life and move 45 million gallons of blood
 - c. Your liver performs over 500 different chemical functions.
 - d. Who can understand the human brain? How do we have memories? How is it that we think, have joy, sorrow, love
 3. As David considered these things he could only conclude:
Psalms 139:14 KJV - " I will praise thee; for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made: marvellous *are* thy works; and *that* my soul knoweth right well."
- B. God has ordained our days – **Verse 16**
Psalms 139:16 NAU - "And in Your book were all written The days that were ordained *for me*, When as yet there was not one of them."
1. God's sovereignty sounds loudly here
God ordained our days before the world began

2. Your experiences tomorrow have already been planned by God according to His infinite wisdom.
 3. God's ways are high above our consideration
Romans 11:34 KJV - "For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?"
Isaiah 55:8-9 KJV - "For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. ⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."
 - a. Does all of this terrify you? Would it not be more terrifying if there was no order? What if things just happened by chance with no purpose?
 - b. Does it terrify you that you are under the absolute dominion of God? Why don't you submit your life to Him?
 4. God's mind towards us brings the Christian sweet comfort - **Verses 17-18**
 God's hand is always upon us –
Verse 4 - NAU - "You have enclosed me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me."
 C. The thought of God's all encompassing presence fills the Christian with all manner of praise – our hearts are amazed
Verse 6 - "*Such* knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is *too* high, I cannot attain to it."
 1. As David considered God's infinite design upon his life, His all encompassing rule over all things, he was overwhelmed.
 - a. The word for "wonderful" means incomprehensible, extraordinary – it is above human comprehension.
 - b. It causes our hearts to leap forth in praise.
 2. This is theology at its highest. It rises high above mere facts. It rises to what we call experimental Christianity or the experience of knowing God. This is personal theology.
 - a. It makes us want to experience more and more of His presence
 - b. It makes us want to know Him more and more
- D. Our knowledge of the infinite presence of God, His all encompassing rule, and His infinite perfections makes us zealous for His holiness – **Verses 19-24**
1. First of all, it gives us a holy hatred of all that is defiled – **Verse 19-22**
 - a. Too often Christians respond to sin in a self-righteous, censorious spirit. Too often our hearts are not enflamed with righteous indignation.
 - b. We don't hate the wickedness in this world because of its offense to us. We must hate sin because of its offense to God.
 - c. We pray for God's holiness to reign.
Psalms 139:21 KJV - "Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?"
 2. If we truly have a holy hatred of sin we will be zealous that our own lives would be pure – **Verses 23-24**
 - a. We must have a passion that every area of our life is Christ-centered. We must desire His reign over every aspect of our life.
 - b. We must desire that every last sin in our life be purged. In Paul's letters he continually focused on maintaining a radical departure from sin.
2 Corinthians 6:17 KJV - "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you"
1 Thessalonians 5:22 KJV - "Abstain from all appearance of evil."

Colossians 3:5-6 KJV - "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: ⁶ For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:"

Ephesians 5:11-12 KJV - " And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*. ¹² For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret."

- c. As we strive for lives that reflect the holy character of God we should seek that God inspect our hearts.

Psalms 139:23-24 KJV - "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: ²⁴ And see if *there be any* wicked way in me"

- d. We should pray that God would direct our way.

Psalms 139:24 KJV - "and lead me in the way everlasting."

Conclusion:

1. What a glorious psalm. It reminds us that our God reigns. There is nothing in this whole universe that is outside God's infinite reign.
His presence is universal and His dominion is universal. It humbles us beneath His sovereign dominion.
2. Nothing fills our heart with praise like meditating upon these things. David discovered the sheer joy of such considerations.
Psalms 139:6 KJV - "*Such* knowledge *is* too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot *attain* unto it."
3. May God grant that stand amazed in His presence. And may we marvel at this glorious God that we serve.