

Psalm 139: 1-18; “Covered in My Mother’s Womb”, A Mother’s Day Sermon
delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on May 8th, 2022,
In the Morning Worship Service.

The Psalms were for the most part written by king David. And in them he sets forth his spiritual experience in relation to God’s providential care over his life. In many of the Psalms we find him praying to God, and we know that many times God answered his prayers and delivered his life from all distress. In this Psalm he is speaking conversationally with God in prayer and he is praising Him concerning all that God knows about him, and how precious the knowledge of God was to him. It ought to be precious to us as well. In reading this Psalm we have a wonderful tribute to God’s sovereign and creative power, and His perfect understanding of us, in regard to both our soul and our body.

On this Mother’s Day, I want to honor God by speaking of His Handiwork in our creation. For according to His wisdom, He has given each one of us a mother. And in our mother’s womb we were covered there, while He did His blessed work. So when we know God as David did, we should realize, 1st of all – That we have been covered by His Perfect Omniscient Care. 2nd – We have been covered by His Perfect Omnipresent Care. I pray that you will be comforted by these truths, and that today, you will honor the God who has given you your mother, and who also has given us the knowledge of His Son, so that we might be saved.

1st of all – We have been covered by His Perfect Omniscient Care.

Verses 13-15 say – For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother’s womb.” “I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made, marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well.” “My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.” David could say these things because he personally knew God. He personally believed that it was God who had made him, and not he himself. He personally believed that He was fearfully and wonderfully made. He considered the work of God in creating him to be fearful, because God’s work was so great and so awesome and so perfect, that he knew that he ought to stand in awe of it, and all that God does. And so he was fearful lest he should disregard God’s greatness in any way.

To fear God is to regard God’s word with a faith and awe of Him. It is to receive God’s word with a view to learning do what God commands, because you stand in awe of the greatness and the glory of His Being. To fear God is to have regard for the fact that He is all knowing. And, then, as you think upon this Attribute of His Omniscience, and you pray in relation to understanding His great knowledge of you, and what He expects of you, you learn to walk with Him in godly fear. David considered himself to be wonderfully made because he knew that God paid close attention to all the details of his formation in the womb.

God was skillful in his making of him. It was a marvelous work, and that, his soul knew right well. He believed that God was infinitely wise, and He knew that God’s work was perfect in his own physical formation, even though we live in a fallen world. I wonder if this is something that you have sufficiently considered? People are born into the world every day, and all of them are creations of God, but they are fallen in Adam. Every aspect of our created being, our mind, our heart, our will, and even our conscience has been affected by Adam’s sin. Because of Adam’s sin, all of God’s creation has been affected by it, because when sin entered the world it brought a slow corruption to everything that God has created.

So we live in a fallen world, and we are fallen creatures. But even though this is true, it does not mean that God’s work is not perfect in an imperfect world, or in regard to his creation of

people, or the way that He makes them. His work is always perfect. He upholds His whole fallen creation by the word of His power. God's work is perfect in the formation of every person in the womb, even though Adam's sin is passed on to them in their nature. This is sometimes hard for us to understand. Why would God permit this? Does God create people with disabilities? Yes, obviously He does. Because every one of us was born into the world in Adam's likeness, each one of us has the defect and disability of the effects of Adam's sin, which he passed on to us. God did not create sin. God is not the author of sin. He creates all men knowing the effects of Adam's fall in His infinitely wise and holy mind.

Man whom He created is fully responsible for his sins. We are responsible to live uprightly before Him, even though it is a spiritual battle to do so. We can only fight the good fight of faith with Christ, the right Man, on our side. The Spirit and the gifts are ours, through Him who with us sideth, as the hymnwriter, Martin Luther says. All people that God creates are skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth; that is, in their mother's womb. The Christian believes that God's eyes saw his unformed substance in the womb. They know that God's work is secret in many respects.

But they also know that He is the One who considers exactly what He wants to do in the formation of every child. He has all the knowledge that He needs to be able to form and fashion a person in the womb exactly according to the purpose He has for their particular life. His purpose is an eternal purpose, but it begins to come to fruition in the creation of that person in the womb. In Jeremiah chapter 1, verse 5, God comes to Jeremiah and says to him – "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations."

If we go back to Exodus chapter 5, verse 10, we would find that Moses was reluctant to receive his call from God to be the man who would go and confront Pharaoh, and tell him to let God's people go. He told God that he did not want to do it. He told God that he was not a man who was eloquent. He told him that he was a man who was slow of speech and slow of tongue. So the Lord said to him – Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Is it not I the Lord? And so we see that it is God who makes every man according to His purpose, whether they are great or small, whether they are strong or weak, whether they have great natural gifts and abilities, or whether they don't.

And all of us must work with the way that God has made us. His greatness and His Attributes are constant and fixed. He is wise and holy and perfectly discerning in everything that He has purposed and everything that He leads us into. In verse 4 of our text David says – For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O Lord, You know it altogether. You have hedged me behind and before, and laid Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is high, I cannot attain it. So God hedges us in to His Divine Purpose, but He does so out of love for us, the one whom He has made.

Therefore, the mother who bore you was the woman whom God chose to be your mother. And today you should honor her because God did His good work in making you, in her womb. Even if she does not know the Lord, yet you should honor God's work in her, for this is how you came into being, humanly speaking. It is amazing that we do not even know the name of king David's mother. We are not given any information about her, and yet David mentions her numerous times in the Psalms. This is because God wants every man to honor their mother, but He wants you to glorify Him in relation to the work that He has done, in His weaving you in your mother's womb.

I am trying to show you that none of us can bring forth the argument that we live in a fallen world, to excuse ourselves from taking everything that we have been given, in terms of our natural

abilities and talents, and use it to glorify God. Listen to how much God is involved in each of our lives. Our text says in verse 6 – You have hedged me behind and before. It can be translated – You have enclosed me behind and before. You have so kept me in your sight, he says to God, that I cannot escape from what You would have me to be and to do, at any point, if I love You and am sensitive to Your will. If we know God, we will embrace this truth. John Calvin says – God by His hand, laid as it were upon a person, holds them strictly under His inspection, so that they cannot move a hair's breadth.

To God's dear people, this is a comfort to them if they will live by faith in Him. They are not worried about God's watch care being that close over them. They love this about Him. To realize that God searches you and knows you is a very blessed thing. God knows when you sit down and when you rise up, and He understands your thought afar off. He knows what is on your mind and your heart at every moment. He knows you better than you know yourself, because He made you. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, David says. I cannot attain to it.

Dear listener, do you see and understand that God is this great, this glorious in His Omniscience? That He is acquainted with all of your ways. That He knows that you are fallen in Adam. And yet in Christ, He still loves you for His sake, for the sake of His perfect work on your behalf, and in your heart once that You know Him. Therefore, if you are trusting in Him, He will keep you in all your ways.

2nd – We have been covered by His Perfect Omnipresent care.

Verse 7 says – Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall fall on me, even the night shall be light about me; 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. These words speak to us of God's perfect Omnipresent care; that His Perfect Presence is in every place. They speak to us of His ability to lead us and guide us into all the truth of what He is able to do for us in every situation. This is always with Him.

As you think about what is being said here, you can see that God sees you clearly every situation that you face in life. He knows your heart and your mind perfectly. The things which are dark and difficult for you to understand, He sees them with perfect clarity. As our text says, we cannot flee from His Spirit, neither should we want to, unless we are in sin. You remember that Jonah tried to flee from the Presence of the Lord, from having to go and preach to the sinful Ninevites? And God sent a great storm upon the sea for because of Jonah's disobedience. The storm was great enough that it caused even the heathen men on the ship to cry out to their gods.

But when they woke Jonah up, and they asked him who his God was, and why he didn't cry out to him in prayer, Jonah answered that he worshiped the God who made the land and the sea. He had to persuade them to throw him overboard so the sea would become calm for them. God was in the midst of this storm, and He was dealing with Jonah's disobedience. Eventually the sailors were convinced by Jonah himself that they needed to throw Jonah overboard. They realized that God was dealing with him in particular. But God had already appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and to take him down to the bottom of the sea for 3 days and 3 nights.

All the while God always there with him. He was waiting, and He was listening, for Jonah's prayer. When he prayed and confessed his sins, then God caused the fish to come up from the bottom and spit Jonah up on the dry ground so that he could go and preach to Nineveh. God's eyes are in every place, beholding the evil and the good, it says in Proverbs 15: 3. This applies to

each of us in relation to the mother that God gave us. If God gave us a mother who understands this truth and has taught us that God sees us in everything we do, everything that we need, and everything that we can become in a good sense, then we should thank God for her.

We should think together about the Lord Jesus in this regard. Often when David wrote a Psalm, he was not only writing for himself, but he was writing prophetically of our Lord Jesus Christ, and what His thoughts were, and what they would be during the time of His earthly ministry, and at the time of His sufferings and death. Verse 13 refers not only to David's mother and his thoughts concerning being in her womb. It refers also to the Virgin Mary, Jesus' mother, and what took place in that time of His being in her womb. "For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb." "I am fearfully and wonderfully made, marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well." If we turn to Psalm 22, verse 9, we will find words of the Lord Jesus which complement these here in Psalm 139.

In the context of these verses, our Lord is hanging on the cross, and what is He thinking of? It says – "But you are He who took Me out of the womb; You made me trust while on My mother's breasts." "I was cast upon You from birth." "From My mother's womb You have been My God." "Be not far from Me, for trouble is near; for there is none to help." He is thinking about how it was that His Father God took Him out of the womb. He is thinking about how His Father who loved Him as God the Son through all eternity past, sent Him into the world through the womb of Mary; to take upon Himself human flesh, so that He could become a Man, and fulfill His good purpose to save a multitude of sinful human beings from their sins.

While He was there on the cross, suffering the worst of torture and pain, Jesus was thinking about how God His Father made Him trust while on His mother's breasts. The Father was working in the heart of the infant Lord Jesus to convince Him by His mother's love to Him while He was yet helpless as a Man, that it was a very good thing to rest in His Father's loving care through Mary His mother. He actually could remember this because He was the God-Man. Faith is built by trusting and resting in the loving provision of the Father. In the Man Christ Jesus, He learned how to trust by receiving what His mother would give to Him in loving nourishment to His body.

He learned how to trust in God's providential ordering of things because His mother had held Him to her breast, and showed Him such Personal love. Let me tell you now, that this is how a child grows up to trust in God, because they have known the tender mercies and love of a mother. From a godly mother this will especially be learned. Who is it, who comforted us when we were young when we had hurt ourself, or when we were disappointed by the cruel treatment we received from other children who had never learned to love? It was our mother. What was it that sustained Jesus, humanly speaking, in the years when He was growing up, and faced various trials from people who really did not care for Him. It was the love of His mother, coupled with the Presence of His Father in heaven with Him. The two went hand in hand. This was His Father's wise bestowment.

You probably remember that wonderful hymn – Day by Day and with each passing moment? "Day by Day and with each passing moment, strength I find to meet my trials here; trusting in my Father's wise bestowment, I've no cause for worry or for fear. He whose heart is kind beyond all measure gives unto each day what He deems best, lovingly its part of pain and pleasure, mingling toil with peace and rest. Every day the Lord Himself is near me with a special mercy for each hour; all my cares He fain would bear and cheer me, He whose name is Counsellor and Power. The protection of His child and treasure is a charge that on Himself He laid; as thy days, thy strength shall be in measure, This the pledge to me He made. Help me then in every tribulation so to trust Thy promises, O lord, that I lose not faith's sweet consolation offered me within Thy holy word.

Help me, Lord, when toil and trouble meeting; e'er to take, as from a father's hand, one by one, the days the moments fleeting, till I reach the promised land."

Perhaps you have never heard about the lady who wrote this hymn, Lina Sandell. She was a Lutheran pastor's daughter. She was born in 1832 in Froderyd, Sweden. She was a daddy's girl and very close to her father. As a child she enjoyed playing quietly in her father's study as he worked. As she grew older, she became more like a personal secretary to him. She began writing hymns at an early age. Over the course of her life she wrote about 2,000 hymns. But, when she was 26 years old, a great tragedy struck her life. She and her father were passengers in a boat crossing Lake Vattern when the boat lurched and her father fell overboard. And as Lina watched in horror, her father drowned before anyone could rescue him.

This affected her very much. But it did not stop her from looking to God to be strengthened and sustained by Him, in her faith. She wrote that hymn that I just read to you, in 1856, several years after her father died. She lost her earthly father, but she grew strong in faith by the grace of her Heavenly Father. Let me ask you now, are you thankful for your mother who bore you? It was God the Father's handiwork that designed you in her womb. Are you thankful for your Heavenly Father's wise bestowment, day by day in your life? Because if you trust in your Father's wise bestowment, even as Lina wrote, you'll have no cause for worry or for fear. Why is this? Because of the promises of Christ's help and grace to you, day by day.

Do you see the Father's kind heart toward you as this dear lady did? Do you know that as a Christian, that the Lord Himself is near you, and that He has a special mercy for you each hour? The Lord Jesus suffered for you so that You could have those mercies and those blessings, every hour. This is why we sing – I need Thee, every hour. Well, the Lord Jesus says that He was cast upon the Father from His birth. This means that He saw the utmost need for Himself to depend upon the Father's wise ordering of all things in His life. Even though He was helpless to change them as a Man, He knew that it was the best possible thing that He could do, to be trusting His Father for the strength to do His will. And this He did.