

## **Introduction**

Nothing about you is more important than what comes to your mind when you think of God. Everything in your life will be impacted by how you conceive of God. Daniel 11 indicates that the better you know God the stronger you will be for God. He talks about a time when an invader would come among God's people and draw away the unfaithful. In contrast, however, he states that "the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action."

Troubled times are certainly times when our knowledge of God is crucial for peace and stability and faithful obedience. But our knowledge of God is just as important for every day living. What we know and affirm of God will greatly impact every aspect of our living and our thinking. Starting this morning we are going to spend several weeks in Psalm 139. It profoundly sets before us three of God's amazing qualities. We will take them one at a time. Today we set our sights on the first 6 verses of the psalm. They set forth for us the omniscience of God.

[Read Scripture and Pray]

In this Psalm David is praising God for who he is. His focus is on three of the mind-boggling attributes of God which point out his infinity. They are his omniscience, his omnipresence, and his omnipotence. But David is not simply giving us a lesson in theology. He is also giving us a lesson in doxology. In other words, he is not simply stating hard, cold facts about God, but rather directs us to grasp them in a way that leads us to praise God. He recounts the greatness of God but in a way that personally extols the Lord and glorifies him. These attributes underscore the transcendence and infinity of God, that his ways are past finding out. Yet David presents these attributes in a way that brings God very near. He speaks of them in relationship to himself. He helps us see that though God is truly amazing and past our finding out, he is also close to those who will draw near to God. His infinity has a personal aspect in our relationship to him.

This morning we focus on the wonder of God's knowledge. He is omniscient. The word omniscient means all-knowing. It comes from combining omni with scient. Omni means "without limits" and scient refers to knowledge, from which we get the word science which refers to a body of knowledge.

To say God is omniscient, then, is to say that God possesses knowledge without limits. He knows all. There is nothing that can be known that God does not know. David sets forth God's omniscience in seven ways in Psalm 139:1-6.

### **I. He knows who I am.**

God knows me internally. Verse 1 says, "O Lord, you have searched me and known me!" A search is a thorough investigation. There is a difference between looking and searching. I am just going to confess to you this morning that I am not very good at either one. I really do not like looking for things. That is probably the main reason I do not like to golf. For me golf is a perpetual exercise of trying to find the little white ball. You may think you know where it went, but usually it is not obvious. You can't merely look for the thing, you must SEARCH for it. And as I said, I don't do either of those things well.

The Lord on the other hand is infinitely gifted in the act of searching. And when it comes to God's knowledge of us, it is as though he has searched us. He knows every aspect of who we are. He sees deeper than our appearance into the deepest folds and most remote corners. He has gone into the hard-to-reach areas. He knows our motives. He knows our attitudes. He knows our every emotion, feeling, conception, and every doubt. People may have to ask each other how we are doing, but not God, he knows. He knows us better than we know ourselves. He knows who we are and what we are. Having searched us, he knows us. He knows my internal battles and conflicts, my anxieties and my joys. And he knows yours too. He possesses a precise appraisal and an accurate grasp. He is not mistaken or fooled.

After his resurrection, Jesus spoke to Peter. Three times he asked, "Do you love me?" The firsts two times Peter replied, "Yes Lord, you know that I love you." The third time he said to Jesus, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus knew Peter loved him, but he wanted Peter to know what he already knew him. You cannot hide who you are from God. He sees through all the veneer to the heart. And he knows every detail.

## **II. He knows what I do.**

In verse 2 the psalmist states, "you know when I sit down and when I rise up." There are aspects of my daily life that completely escape my own notice that do not escape the notice of God. I spend most of my days in a chair at a desk in front of my computer. When I get up from there I hardly even think about it. Now these days people wear a fitbit or carry their phones that track how many steps they take in a day, how many flights of stairs they climb. At the end of an average day you may look at your fitbit and go, "Wow! Did I walk that much?" Here is the thing. Before a fitbit ever came on the scene, there is one who could tell how many times in a day you sat down, how many times every day you rose up, how many steps you took, when you did it, and what the distance amounted to, and a whole lot more.

As insignificant as these things seem, God knows them. He knows even the littlest things you do. What does that then indicate about the biggest and worst of those things? He knows every single one. But he also know when you obey. He knows what you do for his glory and to please him. Everything I do is known to God and he cares about what he knows.

## **III. He knows what I think.**

Again, verse 2 says, "you discern my thoughts from afar." The point is that distance is no matter for God in terms of what he knows. Written by David these words reflect the sense that the Lord located himself in the tabernacle. It is not like he has to leave where he is or where he manifests his presence in order to know me or even in this case, to know my thoughts. He just knows them. Wherever I am God knows my thoughts. Wow! That is knowledge! I don't even know my own thoughts sometimes. But God does! Those immaterial musings, those abstract and momentary meditations, those invading thoughts that relentlessly press at the door of my conscience. He knows them all. They come and they go with every spit second. No one sees all of them but me and God. He sees them all and knows them. He just does.

And he cares what he sees. He cares what he sees when he looks into our thoughts. We sin with our thoughts as surely as we can sin anywhere else. And certainly we sin more in our thoughts than anywhere else. Sin starts in the heart and in our thoughts before it comes out in our actions and deeds. This is why it is so critical to take every thought captive to obey Christ.

It really is staggering when you realize that God knows your thoughts. If you will visualize your thoughts as a giant movie screen with God as its audience, you would not be far off reality. And it will have a helpful impact on what you allow to stay on that screen for any amount of time. The Apostle Paul tells Christians to take every thought captive to obey Christ. He knows our thoughts and every one of them matters to him.

#### **IV. He knows where I go.**

In verse 3 we read, "You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways." My path is what I travel in the day and my lying down is where I go at night. My path is the public life I lead while my lying down is what I do in private. But thinking poetically, one's path is the life one lives. It is the way one travels. One's lying down is what he does in time of idleness or rest. The Lord knows well all of my ways. I can't escape his knowledge no matter where I go. Everywhere I go his mindfulness of me goes as well. If my way is in the valley of distress and affliction, he knows it. If I am perplexed and uncertain, he knows. If my way is down the street of temptation, he knows that. If my course is along the way of obedience and holiness, he knows that as well.

You can't send God off in another direction. You can't fake him out at the corner. And you can't be so far into the hands of your enemy that he won't be able to find you.

#### **V. He knows what I say.**

Look down to verse 4: "even before there is a word on my tongue; behold O Lord, you know it altogether. This point is remarkable in part because Jesus taught that we would be justified or condemned by our words. That is possible because the Lord knows our words even the words we have thought about saying. Every single one of them is known to the Lord.

Yet it is striking in this verse that the stress is not only on the knowing of our words but also on WHEN he knows them. "Even BEFORE a word is on my tongue." The Lord's knowledge is not just of what I say. He does not have to listen to know my words because he knows them even before I speak them. He knows what I am going to say before I say it. How can this be? God's knowledge does not depend on observation. It depends on God. He just knows. He does not learn. He does not discover. He is not surprised. Out of his very being comes knowledge. And it is a full knowledge. "Behold, Lord, you know it altogether." Jesus tells us that the hairs of our head are all numbered. That does not mean that God sits down and counts them to find out. It means that God simply knows. He just knows the number because he is omniscient, and he values even the hairs of our head.

#### **VI. He knows me fully.**

Verse 5 is intriguing because it changes a pattern that was clearly evident up to this point. Prior to this verse we were hearing, "You know," "You know," "You know." But here it is "You hem me in." It stresses that God's knowledge has him hemmed in on every corner. He cannot escape God's knowledge of him. It goes before him, comes behind him, and even covers him. This is a knowledge that sees him through and through but also sees his need. There simply is nothing about God's knowledge that is not full and complete. If it can be known, God knows it. And he knows it about me personally.

And what is more is that David seems to take refuge in this knowledge. "You hem me in and lay your hand upon me." This is wonderful knowledge; it is a comfort to David. It is assuring to him. I

can't go anywhere without your knowledge affecting and governing the details of my life. God's knowledge is not a threat to David but an assuring fact.

That can only be true if he is assured of the mercy and grace of God. I mean, think about it. If God knows everything about you, he above everyone else, knows your sins. He knows your sinful attitudes. He knows the motives that corrupt even the best-looking things you have done. You are laid bare before God. Your open book is a horror story. The evidence is all there. When you stand before him as judge, there will be no mistrial. There will be no lack of evidence. He will have witnessed first-hand every count against you.

With the advent of cell phones and video cameras, you can be caught on camera just about anywhere you go. In China the government is moving rapidly to intensify comprehensive tabs on its citizens through the monitoring of social media posts, purchase records, and facial recognition software with the use of video cameras everywhere. As fearful and comprehensive as that might sound, however, God knows even more. He knows everything that can be known about everyone in the world for all of history.

If the Chinese government catches a person disagreeing with government policy, they might lower their "citizen score." If they catch them committing a crime, they are done. But the fact is no matter what country you live in, from the beginning God knows everything about everyone on the deepest level. James Boice made this point: "For the unsaved person this powerful, pervasive knowledge [of God] seems intrusive and frightening, and with good reason. God is the end-time judge with whom we must reckon." When people stand before God, their entire life of sin will incriminate each and every one and call for eternal judgment.

In 1 Corinthians 4:5, Paul points out that when the Lord comes, he will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart.

A person's only hope will be the saving work of Jesus Christ. On the cross he who never sinned became sin in behalf of those who only sinned, so that they may become the righteousness of God in him. You can only receive the gift of his righteousness by trusting in Christ. Such trust will turn from sin to seek to submit oneself to him.

If you have repented of sin and trusted in Christ, however, God's omniscience should be to you what it is to David here—not a threat but a comfort. Sure, it can be a deterrent against participating in sin, but it is also a shelter for peace and a refuge of security and a marvel for worship.

## **VII. God's knowledge boggles my mind.**

David declares that he is overcome by such knowledge. In verse 6 he declares "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it." Certainly David would say that he cannot know like God knows, but it seems by the emphasis in these words that he is stupefied; he is overcome with awe. To grasp what it is like to have the knowledge God has is not possible; he cannot attain it. It supercedes his mental capacity to lay hold of the knowledge of God. It literally thrills him with the sheer delight of being unable to fathom omniscience.

It should do the same for us. I am going to cite a couple quotes here to help us meditate on the kind of knowledge which has David enthralled here.

First, A. W. Pink writes:

"God . . . knows everything; everything possible, everything actual; all events, all creatures, of the past, the present, and the future. He is perfectly acquainted with every detail in the life of every being in heaven, in earth, and in hell. . . . Nothing escapes his notice, nothing can be hidden from him, nothing is forgotten by him. . . . he never errs, never changes, never overlooks anything." (Gleanings in the Godhead, 19)

A. W. Tozer writes:

God has never learned from anyone. God cannot learn. Could God at any time or in any manner receive into his mind knowledge that he did not possess and had not possessed from eternity, he would be imperfect and less than himself. To think of a god who must sit at the feet of a teacher, even though the teacher be an archangel or a seraph, is to think of someone other than the most High God, maker of heaven and earth.

God knows instantly and effortlessly all matter and all matters, all mind and every mind, all spirit and all spirits, all being and every being, all creaturehood and all creatures, every plurality and all pluralities, all law and every law, all relations, all causes, all thoughts, all mysteries, all enigmas, all feeling, all desires, every unuttered secret, all thrones and dominions, all personalities, all things visible and invisible in heaven and in earth, motion, space, time, life, death, good, evil, heaven, and hell. . . .

Because God knows all things perfectly, he knows no thing better than any other thing, but all things equally well. He never discovers anything, he is never surprised, never amazed. He never wonders about anything, nor (except when drawing men out for their own good) does he seek information or ask questions."

## **Conclusion**

The omniscience of God is the omniscience of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. It is a wonder of the infinite God. And yet he knows us each one personally. He searches us each one deeply. He knows our thoughts and words even before they exist, and yet he knows when they come into existence. He is worthy of amazement and praise. We should say to the Lord with David, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it." God, You boggle my mind. You amaze me. You surpass me. You delight me with your greatness!

The fact that Jesus knows all things was recognized by his disciples. We already mentioned Peter's confession when he was responding to Jesus. Another instance is located in John 16:30. The disciples said to Jesus, "Now we know that you know all things and do not need anyone to question you; this is why we believe that you came from God."

Jesus exhibited omniscience on earth and validated his claim. No more questions, just believe, trust, follow, obey. But also worship. Worship him that he is the infinite God who is all-knowing. And worship him that knowing all there is to know about us, he yet loves us to the point that he went to the cross and died for us. And not only worship him, live in hope and confidence. He knows what you need. I mean he knows what YOU need. He knows YOUR differences from others. He knows your situation, your circumstances, your greatest weaknesses, your potential, and what you need most. And that knowledge guides his determination and promise to withhold nothing that is good from those that walk uprightly, and to cause all things to work together for good to those who love him and are called according to his purpose.