

WELCOME TO

Contemplative Sunday

LAST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

YOU ARE INVITED TO QUIET YOUR HEART,
REST YOUR SOUL, AND PREPARE IN SILENCE.

Psalm 139

Genre: Poetry/Song. Look for vivid word pictures that evoke memories or feelings within us

Purpose: This Psalm was both a personal meditation for David and an invitation for others to let his words resonate with our own hearts.

Backstory: Unknown. Some possibilities: being falsely accused, hiding from Saul, conflict with his family, personal failure, or a combination of all of these.

Psalm 139:

Lord, you have examined me. You know me. You know when I sit down and when I stand up. Even from far away, you comprehend my plans. You study my traveling and resting. You are thoroughly familiar with all my ways. There isn't a word on my tongue, Lord, that you don't already know completely. You surround me—front and back. You put your hand on me. That kind of knowledge is too much for me; it's so high above me that I can't reach it.

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Questions to consider:

What must be true about God for God to know you that thoroughly?

How do you feel about God knowing you so completely?

Perhaps it makes you uncomfortable. As you sit with those feelings, consider what may be behind them, or fueling them.

Where could I go to get away from your spirit? Where could I go to escape your presence? If I went up to heaven, you would be there. If I went down to the grave, you would be there too! If I could fly on the wings of dawn, stopping to rest only on the far side of the ocean - even there your hand would guide me; even there your strong hand would hold me tight! If I said, "The darkness will definitely hide me; the light will become night around me," even then the darkness isn't too dark for you! Nighttime would shine bright as day, because darkness is the same as light to you!

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Questions to consider:

Do you find these verses comforting or disconcerting?

Consider a time you may have wanted to escape God's presence. What was that like for you?

Perhaps you have had the opposite issue - and longed for God's presence, but couldn't feel it. How do these verses sit with you considering those feelings?

You are the one who created my innermost parts; You knit me together while I was still in my mother's womb.

I give thanks to you that I was marvelously set apart. Your works are wonderful - I know that very well. My bones weren't hidden from you when I was being put together in a secret place, when I was being woven together in the deep parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my embryo, and on your scroll every day was written that was being formed for me, before any one of them had yet happened.

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Questions to consider:

This beautiful section tells of God intimately and lovingly forming you. When you think of yourself, can you imagine God's fingerprints on you?

Most of us struggle with body image of some sort, perhaps because of our cultural norms or things we have been told about how we should look or act. How do these verses speak to that?

God, your plans are incomprehensible to me! Their total number is countless! If I tried to count them - they outnumber grains of sand! If I came to the very end - I'd still be with you. If only, God, you would kill the wicked. If only murderers would get away from me - the people who talk about you, but only for wicked schemes; the people who are your enemies, who use your name as if it were of no significance. Don't I hate everyone who hates you? Don't I despise those who attack you? Yes, I hate them - through and through. They've become my enemies too.

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Questions to consider:

How does David attempt to justify the righteousness of his hatred towards his adversaries?

Can you think of a time when you have done something like that?

How do you think God reacts to you when you are in that place?

And how do you think God reacts to your enemy?

Examine me, God!

Look at my heart!

Put me to the test!

Know my anxious thoughts!

Look to see if there is any idolatrous [*painful, hurtful, wicked*]
way in *me*, and then lead me on the eternal path.

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Questions to consider:

When you read these lines, consider the beginning of the Psalm. What parallels do you see?

Imagine that you are the author of this Psalm - what do you think may have taken place between the last paragraph and this one?

Is this a prayer you would feel comfortable praying? Why or why not?

Communion Sunday

ALL ARE INVITED AND WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE