

All-knowing and All-wise

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[0 : 00] Thanks, well actually well good evening everyone. If you don't know me my name is Alistair. I have the privilege of being the assistant here and tonight of taking us through that wonderful Psalm 139. It'd be great if you have that passage open in front of you as we go through.

Now I recently had a friend who was self-isolating and one of the things that she did to keep herself busy and to keep her mind going was doing a puzzle.

Now a puzzle piece, if you think about it, in isolation may look beautiful. It may give you a glimpse of beautiful scenery, a little snapshot of a famous painting or picture that is very dear to you.

But that individual piece only really takes on its significance when you take a step back and you view the whole picture. Only then can you see the beauty of that one piece in all of its fullness.

And over the last six weeks we have looked at a number of different puzzle pieces, if you will.

Separate topics or characteristics that when put together give us a grand, a magnificent, phenomenal picture of who our God is.

[1 : 17] God is beyond our comprehension. We will never fully grasp who he is and how big he is. But I hope that this series has helped us ponder to a greater depth who our God is, how we respond to him and how we worship him.

Now tonight we're going to be thinking about the God who is both all-knowing and all-wise. Two massive concepts that are very closely connected.

For example, we define knowledge as the intellectual comprehension of something. And wisdom is the practical outworking of that.

So to use a silly analogy to help us see that, take a tomato. Knowing or knowledge is knowing that a tomato is a fruit. And wisdom is knowing not to use it in a fruit salad.

Or another example, you know that driving to Lidl in a snowstorm is not a good idea with black ice on the roads. But wisdom, or the lack thereof, determines whether you give it a shot or not.

[2 : 29] Wisdom is mostly gained from experience and often making mistakes, isn't it? So how does that relate to God? Well it means, because he makes no mistakes, it means that God has perfect knowledge.

And because of that, all of his actions are just, fair, right and good. Some of the things that we've already looked at in this series.

And so tonight in our final installment, let's dive into these wonderful truths that God is all-knowing and all-wise. And to do so, we're going to spend our time in Psalm 139.

And we'll see from its four sections, it will help us grasp the knowledge and wisdom of God. So keep Psalm 139 open in front of you and let us be blown away by how great our God is.

The first thing we see in this Psalm is that God knows me. In verses 1 to 6. Psalm 139 is a personal prayer of King David.

[3 : 40] That can teach us so much about God. And these six verses particularly teach us about God's knowledge of his people. Notice how in these six verses, David uses intimate language.

See, David's understanding of God's knowledge isn't out of fear. It isn't out of dread, but it is one of comfort, intimacy. We might say that someone knows us if they know our name, if they know where we live, if they know our family.

For example, most of you probably say, you know me. You know my name. You know I work here for the church. You know my wife, Sabina. You probably have my mobile number. You know me.

But the knowledge of God is far, far greater than a superficial knowledge. See, God cares enough for every individual that he knows them intimately.

He knows their thoughts and their desires. Verse 2 says, he knows that when you, he knows when you sit and when you rise before a word even leaves your mouth.

[4 : 52] Verse 4, God knows what you will say. So even the things that you might think are unimportant and things you do on a daily basis, God is interested and takes notice of them.

The fact that God knows you so intimately and is ever watching you should be a reason for you to praise him. And this cannot simply remain an abstract theological conviction that we keep over to the side.

But it must impact how we live. And it should comfort us. Because God isn't like an overpowering micromanaging line manager watching every move you make.

Wanting to be CC'd in every email. Waiting for you to make that mistake so he can punish you. But he is like a loving parent watching over his child.

Like my little one year old nephew. We were in Austria last year for a little while. And he was playing on the couch. He was rolling around, getting very close to the edge, knowing he's not allowed to.

[6 : 03] Throwing himself quite literally all over the shop. Without a care in the world. Very happy. Very confident. Because he knew that there were three adults there watching over him.

He was happy. And confident. And comforted. Because we knew he was there. And as a child finds comfort knowing that a parent is watching them.

Looking out for their best. Protecting them. So we too should be comforted by the knowledge that God is watching over us. Not with a scowl. But with the intimate knowledge and deep love of a good father.

Now if the fact that God knows all things scares you a little bit. If it makes you a little bit nervous. It would be good to reflect on why that is.

And what it is in your life that you don't want God to know about. But knowing that God knows him. David cannot help but say in verse 6.

[7 : 08] Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. Too lofty for me to attain. God knows me. David says. The second thing we see in this psalm.

Is that God is with me. In verses 7 to 12. God is with me. So David argues that this all-knowing God. And he argues that he is all-knowing.

Because he is everywhere. Look at the language David is using in verse 7. Where can I go from your spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens you're there.

If I make my bed in the depths. You are there. David isn't trying to run away from God. But he's using examples. To express the intimate and constant presence of God.

See God's knowledge is not limited. Because God's presence is not limited. God is everywhere. Including with you.

[8 : 14] In verse 9. David uses the sun as an illustration. As the light dawns over the skies. With such brightness and speed. He says. If I were to sit on that light.

As it beamed across the sky. Even there. Verse 10. Even there your hand. Will guide me. Your right hand will hold me fast.

Now as one of God's people. David is so sure. That God's loving hand is there to guide. To care for him.

And to lead him. And that nothing. Not death. Not darkness. Can separate him from God's presence. We know this to be.

We know this in an even greater sense. Than David could grasp. Because of where we stand in history. Because we look back. And we see Jesus. We see the sacrifice.

[9 : 08] That he took upon himself. On the cross. Which means that sinners like us. Can become the people of God. That we can be certain. Of his constant presence. With us by the Holy Spirit.

Who has come to comfort us. Until that glorious day. That he returns. There is not a place. In this world. There is not a moment.

In history. There is not an inch. Of your life. Where the presence. Of God. Is not real. God is with you.

By his spirit. Every second. Of every day. And so if you're feeling anxious. If there are times. Of loneliness. And darkness. In your life. God is there.

No matter what. You are not. Alone. That truth alone. Should comfort our hearts. Should comfort our troubled souls.

[10 : 06] And lift our eyes in wonder. Should make us ponder. How great God is. How wonderful it is. That he promises. To always be with his people.

David says. God is with me. The third thing. We see in this psalm. Is that God. Made me. In verses 13 to 18.

So David then. Hones in on himself. And how wonderful. Wonderfully. And intricate. God's creation. Of humanity is. Read verse 13 with me.

For you created. My inmost being. You knit me together. In my mother's womb. Whom I praise you. Because. I am fearfully. And wonderfully made.

Your works. Are wonderful. I know that full well. So this. All knowing. Constantly present. God is so involved.

[11:07] In the care. And creation. Of every single human being. That David says. God. Personally. Knit him together. In his mother's womb.

And it also means. That God. Knew. Loved. And was intimately involved.

With David's life. Before he was even born. That's why David. Says in verse 16. Your eyes saw. My unformed body. All the days. Ordained for me.

Were written in your book. Before one of them. Came to be. This means. That you. Are not. An accident.

Both the family. You were born into. As well as the color. Of your hair. Or the fact that you have no hair. Is not. An accident.

[12:02] God has known it all. From the very beginning. Of time. See a doctor. Can tell you. All the organs. Of your body. They can point out. The different tendons.

The different. That hold your muscles. And ligaments. And everything in place. They can tell you.

The different veins. That pump blood. Around your body. But they do not know you.

Like the God. Who made all that happen. He knows you. Like no one else does. Because. He made you. This is precisely.

Why Christians. Should be at the forefront. Of human rights issues. Caring from. For the lives. Of all people. From the womb. To the tomb. Because every single person.

Regardless of where you're from. Regardless of what you've done. In this life. Regardless of what culture. You were raised in. And the color of your skin. Every single person. Is made.

[13:01] In the image. Of God. And that includes. You. You. Maybe you've been told. Or you have believed. Unkind things.

About yourself. Maybe you think. That you're worthless. Or that you're ugly. Or a waste of time. Or a waste of space.

Maybe you're self-conscious. About your body. And you think. That you're some kind of mistake. Or let down. None of that is true. You are an image bearer.

Of God. Full of worth. Full of dignity. So beautifully made. And put together. By God. Who sees you. Who made you.

And who loves you. Every person. In this world. Can say. With absolute confidence. With David.

Verse 14. I am fearfully. And wonderfully made.

[13:57] And now our response. To that. Should be the exact same. As David's. In verses 17 to 18. Pondering the vast. And intricate.

Nature of. God being all-knowing. All-wise. Should explode. In praise. Because his thoughts.

Are magnificent. His purposes. Are wonderful. And his plan. Whilst we may never. Understand it. Is good. Every attribute.

That we've seen of God. As we've traveled through. This series together. Should help us see. That behind. All of that. That all of that. Sorry. Is behind this. Wonderful.

Knowledge. Of God. The good. And holy God. The loving. And faithful God. The all-powerful. And infinite. God. And so on. Is the one. Who ultimately. Knows you.

[14:56] Loves you. And cares for you. He knows you better. Than you even know yourself. And the fact. That God knows you.

Knows us. So intimately. Should impact. The way we live. God created us. And therefore. He knows what is best. For us. And yet.

So often. We go against his word. And his will. Don't we? Because we think. We know what is best. We decide to pick. And choose. What parts of the Bible. We want to believe.

And obey. We gossip about our boss. Behind their backs. We lie to our loved ones. We don't follow God's instructions. About who to date. Who to marry. About how.

To live in this world. About even how to worship God. Like he says we should. God tells us. To live the way.

[15 : 54] That he does. Not because he is a killjoy. But because he is all knowing. And all wise. And he knows you better. Than you know yourself. He knows what is right.

For you. So do not turn away from him. And follow your own desires. But come to him. In humility. And honor him. With your life. God knows you.

God is with you. God made you. And then the fourth. And final thing. We see in this psalm. Is that God will vindicate me. In verses 19 to 24.

See the tone of the psalm. Changes from verse 19 onwards. And instead of it being a prayer. Of thanksgiving. And praise to God. David now prays.

That God would vindicate him. And deliver him. From his enemies. Read verse 19 with me. If only you God. Would slay the wicked. Away from me. You who are bloodthirsty.

[16 : 56] Now here we see the context. That this psalm was written. David hasn't written. This wonderful description. And praise of God. From the comfort. Of a cushy life. In the palace.

In Jerusalem. He's in some kind of trouble. We don't know exactly what it is. Or when exactly this happened. But aren't you thankful. That that's the context of this song.

I know I am. Because it gives me a sense of reality. So the Bible wasn't written. By perfect people. Who lived perfect lives.

Who lived happily ever after. Many of them suffered. David suffered so many times in his life. Sometimes as a result of his own sin.

And at other times as a result of other people's sins. But his troubles. Pushed him towards God. As his refuge. Because this God is all knowing.

[17 : 54] And he is all wise. God sees all things. Now how can an all knowing God. Allow suffering. Suffering.

Is part and parcel of living in a broken. Sin stained world. But that doesn't make it easy. We see horrible things on our news screens. Discrimination.

War. Crime. We feel suffering ourselves. Broken bodies. Family breakdowns. And it all hurts. It is all suffering.

In our culture. We see no good reason for suffering. And so we cry out in pain. We want it to be gone. And we cry out. Why? Why am I suffering?

And that's not a bad thing. Because that points us to the truth. That when suffering happens. It is the result of sin. That may be general sin.

[18 : 56] Or the sin of others around us. Or maybe the consequences of our own sin. Suffering. Whilst we never. We may never know why.

It does happen to us. It presents us with a decision. You either run to God. And find comfort. Or you run away from him.

And you are hopeless. Suffering can be that thing that pushes people towards God. That doesn't make it easy.

And it doesn't always answer the why question. But the Bible tells us. Instead of trying to focus on the why suffering. The why of suffering. Instead. We should be looking at the who.

Looking at this great God who is all knowing. This great God who does see all things. And that even if we don't understand what's going on. He does.

[19 : 54] See throughout history. Atrocious acts have happened behind closed doors. Plans have been hatched that have cost.

Thousands of people their lives. Oppressed countless people. Even in recent years and days. Taliban soldiers killing innocent men.

Women and children. Hunting and persecuting Christians.

Countries invading other countries. Putting the whole world on alert with nuclear dangers. Thousands of children being killed.

Before they even get the chance to take their first breath. Millions fleeing their homes.

[20 : 57] From persecution in search of safety. God sees it all. And on that final day. He will bring.

True justice. He will right every wrong. And every person will be held accountable for their actions. And how they responded to Jesus.

Now because we trust in a perfectly good God. Who knows all things. We do not have to understand. And know all things. That is a relief.

I don't need to understand everything that is going on. Because I know the God who is. And I can trust that he is good. And trust that his good will will happen.

God knows our suffering. And that should comfort us. It's a relief. Whilst we cry out to God in prayer.

[22 : 03] We can still leave things with him. But more than the fact that God knows what it knows. Our sufferings. He also knows what it is like to suffer himself.

See Jesus knowledge of suffering. Of suffering isn't theoretical. He lived in our world. He felt the pain of losing close friends.

He knows what it means to be betrayed. He was grieved as he saw the destruction. That sin has caused in the world. In individuals lives. And he felt that himself.

He walked to his death. Was beaten and nailed to a cross. The innocent one.

Dying in the place of us the guilty. See Jesus has both the knowledge and experience of suffering. And he is not indifferent to it. But he is also not defeated by it.

[23 : 01] See Jesus rose from the dead. Making it possible for us to be in a right relationship with God. And helping us know this great God who knows you.

Who is with you. Who made you. And who will vindicate you through Jesus. That is the ultimate comfort of knowing this all-knowing, all-wise God.

So look at how David concludes this psalm in verse 23. Search me God and know my heart. Test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.

David recognizes that this same sin is in his own heart. And he asks for God to vindicate him. To make him blameless.

And to lead him in the way of everlasting. To bring that into today's language. David recognizes his own sinful heart. And he repents. Asking the Lord to forgive him.

[24 : 07] And to help him walk the path of everlasting life. That is only found in a right relationship with God the Father. God is able to see into our hearts because he is all-knowing.

God is able to vindicate us. Make us blameless of sin through Jesus. And God has promised to be with his people. In the end, God will dwell with us forever.

And so we can rejoice knowing the all-knowing God is looking out for his people. You can rejoice because God's perfect knowledge is intimate. But the other response about this all-knowing God is that it should make us tremble.

So for the non-Christian, for the one who doesn't believe in Jesus, this means that when you stand before God on that final day, you will not receive the love of a father. But you will receive the sentence of a judge.

So listen to the call of a father who begs you to come to him. Because he knows you. And he loves you. Live the life he created you to live.

[25 : 26] And for the Christian, it should also make us tremble, not in the sense that we're afraid, but it should produce in us a healthy fear of the Lord.

That fear of the Lord means a feeling of awe, a sense of majesty as we approach this God who is far greater than we can even begin to comprehend. And we get to call him our father.

That fear should produce in us a desire to live the way he wants us to. Wholeheartedly devoted to him, living in a way that brings him glory, forsaking all else that would distract us from him.

So that is Psalm 139, a snapshot of the wonderful, all-knowing God who knows you, who is with you, who made you, and the God who will vindicate you.

Now think back to that isolated puzzle piece. You can take, you can look at an individual puzzle piece and you can get a glimpse of beauty, but you only truly grasp how marvelous it is when you see the whole picture.

[26 : 44] Throughout this series, we have seen little puzzle pieces that have been laid out in order that we take a step back. And with praise on our lips, with amazement in our minds, we gasp and we say, this is our wonderful God.

Let's pray together. Father, as we come to this topic of you being all-knowing and all-wise, we have but scratched the surface.

We have so many questions, so many thoughts, and we recognize that we may never get the answers, but we come to you, the one who is good, the one who is loving, the one who is trustworthy, faithful, and the one who sent his son to die in our place.

