

139 LORD, you have examined me and you know me... ⁵ You are all around me on every side; you protect me with your power.

The readings for today are Psalm 139: 1-6 & 13-18, 1 Corinthians 6: 12-20 and John 1: 43-51

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

The Bible teaches us that God knows each one of us, and the psalmist in today's reading reminds us that God knows us inside and out. **139** LORD, you have examined me and you know me. ² You know everything I do; from far away you understand all my thoughts. ³ You see me, whether I am working or resting; you know all my actions. ⁴ Even before I speak, you already know what I will say. ⁵ You are all around me on every side; you protect me with your power. ⁶ Your knowledge of me is too deep; it is beyond my understanding.

God is Lord, He is the creator, He saw us as we formed in our mother's womb and He watched us as we grew and He loves us unconditionally for each one of us despite our faults and failings are precious in His eyes, for we are His, that is why the Psalmist praises God for he knows how much God loves him and us.

¹³ You created every part of me; you put me together in my mother's womb. ¹⁴ I praise you because you are to be feared; all you do is strange and wonderful. I know it with all my heart.

¹⁵ When my bones were being formed, carefully put together in my mother's womb, when I was growing there in secret, you knew that I was there— ¹⁶ you saw me before I was born. The days allotted to me had all been recorded in your book, before any of them ever began. ¹⁷ O God, how difficult I find your thoughts; how many of them there are! ¹⁸ If I counted them, they would be more than the grains of sand. When I awake, I am still with you.

What the Psalmist is reminding us of here is that God is always there for us that is why he said that when he wakes that he is still with God and will continue to follow and live his life according to God's teachings for he also knew that God has a plan for us. As he told us in Jeremiah chapter 29 verse 11: "For I know the thoughts and plan that I have for you, says the Lord,

thoughts and plans for welfare and peace and not for evil, to give you hope in your final outcome.”

God loves us and has plans for us, all that is required is for us to listen to His Word and choose to follow Him, and by doing that and committing our lives to Christ, He will then bring His plans for us to fruition. Unfortunately, we also live in a world that is hostile to hearing God’s Word. The Bible teaches us and reminds us that Satan or the Devil wants to destroy God’s plans for us, he wants to take us away from God, so he spreads lies and false teachings around us in society to distract us from God’s truth. In fact, it is a sad situation that too many people listen to the false teachings that abound in the world, where the Devil has a high success rate distracting people with worldly goods and hedonistic pleasures. We see all too clearly that too many people prefer to listen to words that they want to hear rather than God’s healing words, why? It is easier for them to live an immoral life away from God’s teachings than it is to follow His teachings and live, know God’s love and be at peace.

God sent His Son Jesus into the world for a reason, He took on human form for a reason and that reason was to redeem us and to restore all things to proper order in the world. God has written down His will for us in the Bible, it is our guidebook, it is God’s wisdom, and it is this we should study, read, pray about and confess and when we do that it literally becomes real and meaningful in our lives.

Some people who profess to be Christians believe a lot of things but see very little manifestation of them in their lives because this tends to be the case when they believe but do not confess it with their lips. In other words, they do not really believe the teachings of God, they do not hold it dear in their heart, or live their lives by it. As men and women of faith we need to speak out loud God’s words for us, in public and in private if we wish to see God’s plan for us come to fruition and to know His peace in our lives.

This is what Paul teaches about in his letter to the Corinthian church. He is telling them and reminding us that we must not be like some people who try to live their lives in the blessings of God but who still talk like the Devil, using bad language, taking the Lord's name in vain, gossiping, slandering others etc.

¹² *Someone will say, "I am allowed to do anything." Yes; but not everything is good for you. I could say that I am allowed to do anything, but I am not going to let anything make me its slave.*

¹³ *Someone else will say, "Food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food." Yes; but God will put an end to both. The body is not to be used for sexual immorality, but to serve the Lord; and the Lord provides for the body.* ¹⁴ *God raised the Lord from death, and he will also raise us by his power.*

Paul wrote that something may be permissible for him, but at the same time it may not be helpful and the same goes for how we live our lives in service to God. There are many things that we could do, and God will not say a thing about them. This is known as God's permissive will. God will not give us a divine word about every single move we make, but He will always give us wisdom if we ask for it. Let us, therefore, walk in wisdom and let His light guide our steps so we can use our bodies to glorify Him and show the world what His love is, and how happy we are, compared to the lifeless, unhappy person of the world who does what they want and does not care about anyone else except themselves. We see that all around us today with people struggling to cope with the rigours of the pandemic.

¹⁵ *You know that your bodies are parts of the body of Christ. Shall I take a part of Christ's body and make it part of the body of a prostitute? Impossible!* ¹⁶ *Or perhaps you don't know that the man who joins his body to a prostitute becomes physically one with her? The scripture says quite plainly, "The two will become one body."* ¹⁷ *But he who joins himself to the Lord becomes spiritually one with him.* Many people think that Christians only deal with the spiritual things of life and do not realise that we also deal with the physical things of life as well. Paul makes it quite clear that both our physical bodies along with our spirits were brought

at a great price: the blood of Jesus. Once you become a Christian, your body is where the Holy Spirit lives, He is inside us, He is guiding us and living with us, so that means we must treat our bodies well and look after them, remember that good health and sexual purity are integral parts of glorifying God with your body. ¹⁸ *Avoid immorality. Any other sin a man commits does not affect his body; but the man who is guilty of sexual immorality sins against his own body.* ¹⁹ *Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and who was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourselves but to God;* ²⁰ *he bought you for a price. So, use your bodies for God's glory.*

Once more the Bible teaches us that we as Christians always have a choice in life, we can reach into Satan's realm, the realm of curses, immorality, indecent living, and draw out evil, negative things, or we can reach into God's realm, the realm of blessings, and draw out good, positive things. The choice is up to us, so let us choose wisely.

We see a good example of choosing wisely in the passage from John's gospel, where we find Nathaniel being negative about anything coming out of Nazareth that was considered good. Today we know of areas in our towns and cities where we automatically think nothing good comes from there, such is the case here, but this is not what Jesus does – He turns a negative into a positive. ⁴³ *The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me."* ⁴⁴ *Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.* ⁴⁵ *Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth."* ⁴⁶ *Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"* Philip said to him, "Come and see." ⁴⁷ *When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!"* ⁴⁸ *Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get to know me?"* Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you." ⁴⁹ *Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"* ⁵⁰ *Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these."*

⁵¹ And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

Unfortunately, we can be like Nathaniel, we decide that a person cannot be any good because of where he or she comes from, or how they look or live their lives. We can be so biased and opinionated, often without realising it. Yes, if we are honest with ourselves, we have prejudices that have been placed in us by others through the things they have said to us over the years, therefore we have to be careful and examine our hearts, our lives to see if they are truly open to God's teachings and are living according to them and not failing by following the world's standards.

Jesus recognised that Nathaniel had a strong opinion about things, but Jesus saw that he also had an open heart, he was willing to check it out, so let us have an open heart and give people a chance and dare I say it give God a chance. If Nathaniel had been unwilling to open his heart to Jesus, he would have missed his salvation and calling to serve the Lord, he would have missed a great blessing in his life, having a great relationship with the Lord. God has blessings in store for all who believe, and especially in your relationships with Him and others whom we meet, so keep your hearts open and be a blessing and find His peace.

PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven, you love us and care for us always and in your Word, the Bible you teach us to listen and follow your guidance, but today we confess Lord that we forget to do that, to listen, to read your Word and follow your guidance in our lives. Forgive us we pray and help us to follow your teachings by cleansing, renewing, and uplifting us with your Holy Spirit today. We also confess to you today our faults and our failings, we also acknowledge to you in our prayer that it is hard for us to admit our faults and failings, but we are glad that you have given us the Holy Spirit who already has interceded on

our behalf with you in heaven, for He hears and knows our unspoken words, pains and worries that we carry in our hearts, but you Father hear all and know all, so take our burdens off us today we pray and grant us your peace.

Father we pray today for our NHS and all who work within it, they are tired, they are worn out, they are struggling to cope with the demands of the Covid 19 pandemic, help them we pray, comfort them, and strengthen them and grant them your peace. Help all who are struggling today to come to you and lean on your strength as we do today. Bring healing both physical, emotional, and spiritual to those in need today, helps us Lord who know you as our Lord and Saviour, help us to pray for the needy around us. Give us discernment to know who to pray for and help us to be a blessing in Jesus name we pray always.

Grant wisdom to the leaders of our governments and help the people to listen and obey so that we can come out of this pandemic stronger better God fearing and Christ loving people. Amen.