

Reading: Psalm 139:1-24

Theme: Wonderful things!

George Orwell in his book 1984 wrote of the posters on the walls saying “*Big brother is watching you*”. This seems true in our security conscious age and people are reacting against it, especially with fake news being spread online - a microchip is in the Covid vaccines to track our movement!!! Often people who believe such are quite happy to use their mobile phones to post pictures of where they have been, eaten, partied and are quite happy to use various apps to give them directions etc! In our society cameras record us going into and out of shops and even what we do when there. There are cameras on streets to monitor what is going on, there are speed cameras, there are tracking devices for cars and even the people. Banks can monitor our use of payment cards, can detect abnormal use and cause our cards to be frozen.

Make no doubt about it, we are under surveillance. How does that make us feel? Is it an infringement of our Civil Liberties or is it a comfort to know? Is it a pain because we cannot do what we want, when and where we want to do it? Or is it a restraint on those who would commit various types of crime?

In Psalm 139 David, the psalmist, declares that it is not big brother who is watching us, but the Lord God Almighty. He does not just watch what we do, but He monitors our words, thoughts and desires. We cannot escape His view in any area of our life. This sounds either a confrontation or a consolation as it will confront or comfort those who take such teaching seriously.

This evening we begin to look at Psalm 139. It has been a great help to me through the years, but it has great big truths in it that are going to wrestle with me as I try to break it down into useful parts for messages applicable to us all. This psalm gives big views

of God along with huge comforts and challenges too! We learn much of some of the characteristics or attributes of God - His knowing all things, His being present everywhere, that He has all power and can do whatever He wants in accordance with His holy nature (omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence). All these will have implications for us - to worship, adore God for His greatness, also to consider our lives and what these truths mean for us in our day by day living. All I will do this evening is to consider v1 of this wonderful psalm using 3 points:

1. The wonderful contrast.

David, the shepherd boy who became king, wrote personally in this psalm. We do not know when in his life he wrote it, but as he thought of God, he was amazed, awed, astonished that this God should ever notice him. Not only notice him, but have an interest and knowledge of him that moves God and David from a Creator/creature relationship, to a personal relationship. David in the psalm stresses “*you and me, you and I*”. In the psalm God is personal to David; David is personal to God; yet this God knew **all** about David!

There is this awesome, wonderful contrast between the Observer and the observed, between the view God had of David and the brief, but awesome glimpse David had of God. Yes, David says much of God here, but even all he says is but a glimpse of the Almighty eternal God. The One David wrote of is the Lord and God. He uses 3 words for God in this Psalm - Jehovah/Yahweh = LORD; then 'el = mighty One (God) and then in v19 O God = el-o'ah (an emphatic form of 'el) underlining He is the One to worship.

David confronts us in this psalm with the One who is not the cosy grandfather, domesticated “God” of people’s construction or imagination, the One who simply smiles helplessly and does His

best to help people like some celestial Boy Scout or social worker. David presents to us the awesome God, the One who is the LORD - the eternal self-existent One. This God appeared to Moses in a burning flame in a bush in the dessert and yet the bush was not burned - it shows God was nourished by His own life and needs nothing outside of Himself. He is the God who is ever the “I am” - no past or future, for Him, all time and eternity is now. He sees the beginning from the end, has ever existed. The term LORD means basically the self-existent, self-sufficient, ever existing God - shorthand for who He is in and of Himself.

Here in v1 David says “*O LORD, you have searched me and you know me.*” David had been learning of God, seeking God, knew of God, but this awesome One had also searched David and knew not only David (*the word “me” after know is added to make sense*), but all things. Yes, it is good to add “me”, but God always knows all things about us all and everything. David says he could not take this in (v6). Here he owns this God knew all about him. Have we considered God’s knowledge? We will see of it in the following verses, but we are told that God knows all things about everything and everybody - His omniscience.

The Lord also has a full knowledge of Himself, the infinite God. He has a knowledge of all things - all things actual and possible. Every instant in history, every atom, every star, every hair on the head of all people is known. God knows all things, all things are complete and present in His mind, His consciousness, all at the same time and always will be.

I find that absolutely amazing. I forget things so easily. I read much, but it seems to evaporate or fall out of my mind onto the pillow at night! Yet God knows all things about everybody and everything - past, present and future. He doesn’t have to be taught anything or be explained anything. Even though David says

“*searched*” we are to recognise that God knew David intimately and did not need to research him to find out what was what, but from David’s point of view he felt he had been searched as God knew him thoroughly.

Although God knows a human sinner such as David or us, it does not pollute God at all. He is not contaminated by the objects of His knowledge - never can or will be. Scientists studying the deadly coronavirus and its various mutations, or similar deadly bacteria, can study such in safety (*hopefully*) and know all about them without contracting the diseases. In a much, much higher and guaranteed way, God knows sinful people intimately and yet without contamination and pollution from them. Nothing is hidden from His sight or knowledge and He knows each one of us personally and completely.

The LORD is not deceived, confused and there is no error or fault in His knowledge - He is truth and knows the truth and will tell and show only truth. He can do no other thing as His holiness is part and parcel of every attribute and characteristic of God. God knows all things - past, present and future. He knows it instantaneously and all at once; there are no gaps or missing links or misunderstandings in His knowing. He knows all instantaneously and ever has been all knowing and He never forgets anything! Some may ask “*Doesn’t God forget our sins?*” They misquote Isaiah 43:25 “*I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and **remembers** your sins no more.*” When God forgives us in Jesus, God deliberately and purposely chooses never, ever to remember our sins and they will never be brought back to His memory - it is a sovereign and deliberate choice on God’s part. God remembers all other things and understands everything and David’s words – search and know, are David’s way of saying this.

There is a wonderful contrast here between the Creator and the creature; the Observer and the observed. God knows everything and that includes everything about each and every one of us as individuals. We know so little about ourselves, let alone God. We by searching cannot find out God. He had to make Himself known - through Creation as we glimpse, perceive, grasp there is a mighty Creator, but by His special revelations He is best known - through His word, the Bible and most clearly through His Son the Lord Jesus.

I hope we grasp there is this wonderful contrast. Moving on we see:

2. The wonderful challenge.

This truth is a solemn challenge to all people. God searches and knows us all as individuals - seeing past all our words, our wealth and influence clothes, morals, masks, hypocrisies, our show of religion. He sees us thoroughly, for He sees and knows our innermost being and desires. In Jeremiah 16:17 God says (ESV) *“For My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from My face, neither is their iniquity concealed from My eyes.”* This includes all we have done wrong against God and His holiness as well as the good things we have failed to do - sins of commission and of omission!

What a thought and consideration! God sees and knows us at all times, even when no-one else sees and knows what we are doing, thinking or desiring! How do we feel as we consider that this God knows all we do, say, think, our sins, lies, lust, covetousness, backbiting etc. - that all these come under the view of His all-seeing gaze and His all-knowing being? If people, even you and I knew and considered this seriously, wouldn't we all change our ways?

One time, travelling on a road I knew well, a boy racer overtook me and a number of cars at a great speed. As we approached a corner, a car coming toward us, flashed its lights and put their thumb down. The boy racer car slowed down dramatically - for around the bend was a police car speed trap. He, and all of us, drove at 29 mph, but when we were clear and out of sight of the police car, off the boy racer went! He was no longer under the eye of the law. From what we have noted, there is never a time when we are not under God's eye or away from His knowing all about us! Shouldn't we then be careful as to what we do, say or think at all times? If people, especially law keepers, prevent us from doing wrong, shouldn't being in God's view at all times do so much more? This means we should be sincere in all we do, say and think. God sees the heart and He judges correctly and justly.

God's all-knowing is a wondrous and wonderful challenge to us all to live, think and speak aright. If we are not a Christian, then realise you will have no defence before God about your life. He will judge you on the evidence He already knows all so well and clearly. You will have no defence and nowhere to hide. Are you ready for that? That is an awesome thought, but now see:

3. **The wonderful comfort.**

If we are a Christian, this is not to be only a challenge to us, but also a comfort to us as God's people. Yes, He searches and knows our failings, our falling into sin, but He knows our hearts, faith and love - however strong or weak it appears to us. Yet He will always accept and care for us because we are Christ's. He knows we are not rebellious sinners, but saved, justified 'sinners', have a legal standing before Him and the love of His heart as our Father. He knows our heart, the struggles, the battles we have, but also our love and faith and He most certainly knows His own work of grace in us.

Yes, we will have our failings, but He knows we are His, knows our hearts for Him, and our thoughts of Him. He sees our grace - given, imparted, placed in us by the work of His grace in us, even if covered in rubble and muck - people recognise diamonds even in rubble or mud, and our heavenly Father knows, recognises His grace and His work in us.

God is not caught out by our failures and faults. His salvation is not for those of a certain standard, but is for sinners. No matter how good we think we are before God - we are all born sinners, with known sin and our sin deserves His eternal punishment. God knew that most clearly and He provided a way of salvation for the worst, the chief of sinners to be right with Him. Picture, if we can, someone who was 1 million times worse than Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot and a thousand other dictators combined! Now realise the salvation God provides would cover that one's sin and also our sin! There is no sin that cannot be dealt with by God, His grace and the salvation He provides - except that of refusing or ignoring the offer of salvation by staying in unbelief.

God knows the extent of our sin - as a world and as an individual. He made provision for its total forgiveness in the death of the Lord Jesus. God knew what was needed and He provided it completely in the plan and purpose of salvation He brought about.

The lovely note of wonderful comfort is that God's all-knowing of His people means He knows all we go through and need. God in His wisdom knows what is what - even before things occur to us. He knows what we need and often the answer, the help is already in place. It is not created there and then, for His wisdom means He is in control from beginning to end. There are no crises or panics with God. He knows what has occurred to us, will occur, is occurring and by His perfect knowledge and wisdom He is in control of all by His power - remember He is there with us and we

may feel as David did in v6 “*Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.*” which can be summarised by the word “*Wow!*”

This God is the God of amazing “*Wows!*” Yet even that is not a big enough word or reaction to try and appreciate Him. We are going to see and look at big things in this psalm. As we learn from them, hopefully we will apply them to ourselves and are to turn such things into the worship of this awesome and amazing God and love Him more.

I have tried to describe the indescribable, to grasp the ungraspable, to present the unpresentable and I will be pleased if I have given you just a bit of the flavour, taste of what is noted here about God. If that is the case, then I will have done what I set to do to! I would ask you to think further on these things, to ask this big God to help us to understand something of the big things this part of His word is speaking of and together we would learn glorious truths about this God who is so amazing.