

QUANTOCK MINISTRIES

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*A Bible teaching and preaching ministry
for the Christian community*

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PSALM 139 – Our spiritual and emotional wellbeing

Notes accompanying a message delivered at Forefront Community Church on 29 August 2021

One of the greatest psalms in the Psalter. To summarise – this psalm shows that David’s security in his relationship with God is the central feature of his life: “At all times, in all places, and in every circumstance, God is in control and David is in safety” – IVP New Bible Commentary. This message is not a full exegesis of the psalm, but a summary of some of the lessons it teaches us, showing that David knew he was known and loved.

1. The occasion of the psalm

Verses 19 & 20 show that David was facing one of his many crises – a crisis of injustice. Injustice of any kind is a huge cause of spiritual and mental distress. Only when Jesus returns to establish his messianic kingdom will there be true justice and righteousness – Psalm 89 v 14a, Isaiah 9 v 7; we pray (in the Lord’s Prayer) “Thy Kingdom come”.

2. David’s experience of life

Verses 1, 23 & 24 show his security in his relationship with God – e.g., Psalm 23 v 1 “The Lord is my Shepherd”. The history of David’s rejection early in life, leaving a life-long emotional condition of rejection. He only had the Lord to turn to for acceptance. Christians are not immune from mental, emotional, and psychological conditions stemming from childhood experiences – rejection, loneliness, inferiority, being unloved, bullied, evil and demonic attacks, etc. These conditions are not sins – they are part of the human condition that God wants to deal with in our walk with Him - part of our growth in grace. David still needed to ask God in v 23 “show me why I still have so many anxiety attacks?”.

3. David’s relationship with God

This psalm shows David had inner holistic peace with God – shalom, a wholeness, the absence of a barrier. While we can have horizontal barriers between us and God, vertical barriers between us and others, and circular barriers within between us and ourselves, in his case there was no barrier between himself and the Lord. He knew God and knew that God knew him. His relationship with God was not based on religion, legalism, tradition, etc, but on inner and personal shalom.

4. David knew God’s nature and character

Wonderful knowledge – verse 6. David understood that God is:

- a) Omnipresent – transcendent - above, and far beyond His physical creation; immanent – within every atom of His physical creation.
- b) Omniscient – all knowing, the seat of all knowledge. He planned the workings of every atom, as the supreme designer and sustainer.
- c) Eternal – beyond time, and He does not “progress through eternity as we progress through time”. He is the source of all being and existence and is utterly the same yesterday, today and forever – all at the same time.

5. Application for us – seeing and knowing God in Jesus

“If you have seen me, you have seen the Father”. How easy it is for us to have the same relationship with God as David had, as we can so readily identify with the Lord Jesus – John 15 v 15, Jesus is yearning for our friendship!! This is the ultimate answer to all spiritual and emotional wellbeing.

Discussion points

1. If we feel able and safe in doing so, we could share with the group some of the inner insecurities we may have personally. This is not obligatory in any way, but if we do feel we can share, the concern and prayer offered by others around us can be part of God's healing process.
2. Are there areas of inner concern and anxiety we feel, due not to personal past experiences, but the state of the world today? Are we genuinely upset, angry even, about the injustices that are going on all over the world affecting children, families, individuals with addictions and other needs, political upheavals in many countries, "religious" brutalities, corruption, etc.? Don't get drawn into politics, but rather the injustices of what people do to each other, and the work of Satan and his demons worldwide. Should we be more concerned than we are? If so, how?
3. Discuss whether our knowledge of God tends to be based more on tradition, legalism, the desire for "experiences", academic theology, or some pet hate! Are we single-issue Christians (e.g., denominational labels, Bible versions, the right/wrong sort of Christian music, etc)? Do we really have the spiritual desire and inner freedom to know God's help and closeness in times of mental and emotional stress?
4. Think about the reality of a personal walk with God (through Jesus), and how that relationship helps us in life's battles and other experiences. Can we all honestly say that the sense of the Lord's presence is growing more and more real as we get nearer to meeting Him? Try to share together our growth in the knowledge of God.
5. Discuss whether the thought of Heaven and being with the Lord is as real and comforting as it should be if we love Him more and more as the days go by.