

PS. 139:1-2 & 23-24 & MT. 13:24-30 & 36-43

GOD CAN SEE YOU HERE, GOD CAN SEE YOU OUT THERE, GOD CAN SEE YOU ANYWHERE; EVEN HIDING IN A FIELD OF WHEAT MIXED WITH TARES.

THIS NEWS IS NOT ALWAYS MET WITH JOY, ESPECIALLY WHEN PEOPLE ARE TRYING TO HIDE FROM GOD.

WHO WOULD DO THAT, YOU MAY WONDER? LET'S LOOK AT SCRIPTURE TO FIND A FEW EXAMPLES.

AFTER THEY SINNED EVE AND ADAM HID FROM GOD, UNTIL THE LORD CALLED TO THEM, AND THEY DECIDED THEY MIGHT AS WELL COME OUT.

BUT, THEY ALSO TRIED TO HIDE FROM TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR SIN.

INSTEAD OF WILLINGLY CONFESSING, AND THEN SINCERELY REPENTING AND ASKING GOD FOR MERCY, BOTH OF THEM TRIED TO BLAME THEIR SIN ON ANOTHER CREATURE.

ADAM BLAMED EVE, SAYING SHE GAVE HIM THE FRUIT, AND EVE BLAMED THE SERPENT, WHO SHE SAID, TRICKED HER.

YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED THE SERPENT, WHO WAS SATAN IN DISGUISE, DID NOT DENY ANYTHING, KNOWING GOD KNOWS ALL.

JONAH GIVES US AN EXAMPLE OF SOMEONE WHO RAN FROM GOD AND ATTEMPTED TO HIDE AT SEA, BUT GOD FOUND HIM AND PERSUADED HIM TO OBEY, AT LEAST EVENTUALLY.

THE PROPHETS AMOS, ISAIAH, AND JEREMIAH SPOKE, ON THE LORD'S BEHALF, ABOUT THE FRUITLESSNESS OF TRYING TO HIDE FROM GOD.

BUT STILL TODAY, PEOPLE, SOMETIMES EVEN CHRISTIANS, SEEK, AT TIMES, TO RUN AND HIDE.

SOME PEOPLE ARE GOOD AT HIDING. THEY ARE ABLE TO HIDE FROM THEIR GOVERNMENT, THE LAW, FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND NEIGHBORS.

A FEW CAN EVEN PSYCHOLOGICALLY HIDE FROM THEIR TRUE SELVES, AT LEAST FOR A WHILE.

BUT WHILE EVERYONE CAN RUN IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER FROM GOD, NO ONE CAN SUCCESSFULLY HIDE.

THERE IS NO WHERE ON LAND OR SEA OR AIR OR OUTER SPACE, OR EVEN BELOW THE SURFACE OF THE EARTH THAT IS BEYOND THE KNOWLEDGE AND REACH OF GOD.

EVEN THOSE WHO TRY TO HIDE, BY DENYING THE EXISTENCE OF THE LORD GOD, CANNOT AVOID THE SEARCHING AND KNOWING OF THE LORD. AND THIS IS ACTUALLY GOOD NEWS.

THE PSALMIST IN TODAY'S READING OFFERS A BEAUTIFUL PRAYER ABOUT THE INTIMACY OF THE LORD'S PRESENCE AND AWARENESS.

HIS PRAYER, YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED, DOES NOT ASK ANYTHING OF GOD UNTIL NEAR THE END.

THEN, THERE IS A BRIEF REQUEST FOR DELIVERANCE FROM ENEMIES, WHO SAY AND DO EVIL.

AND, AT THE VERY END OF THE PSALM, WE FIND WORDS THAT ARE MORE OF A WELCOMING OF THE LORD'S INTIMATE PRESENCE, THAN THEY ARE A SUPPLICATION.

THE PRAYER'S ENDING ACTUALLY, ASKS THE LORD TO DO WHAT HE IS ALREADY DOING, AS SPELLED OUT WITHIN THE PSALM.

THERE, KING DAVID PROCLAIMS ABOUT GOD: "O LORD, THOU HAST SEARCHED ME, AND KNOWN ME...SUCH KNOWLEDGE IS TOO WONDERFUL FOR ME...."

TRULY, THE WORDS OF PSALM 139 ARE NOT A PHILOSOPHICAL STATEMENT, AN ACADEMIC LECTURE, OR THEOLOGICAL DECLARATION.

BUT RATHER, THEY COME FROM THE HEART OF A MAN WHO HAS COME TO THE AWESOME REALIZATION THAT GOD, HIS CREATOR, KNOWS HIM FULLY AND DEEPLY.

THE LORD OUR GOD INDEED KNOWS EACH ONE OF US MORE INTIMATELY THAN WE KNOW OURSELVES, OR CAN BE KNOWN BY ANYONE OTHER THAN GOD.

THE LORD KNOWS OUR GENETIC MAKE UP AND HOW OUR BODY, MIND, AND SPIRIT CAME TO BE, IN A WAY THAT GOES FAR BEYOND THE BEST SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE.

AND EVEN MORE THAN THIS, GOD KNOWS NOT JUST THE HOW OF OUR CREATION BUT ALSO THE WHY.

INDEED, GOD KNOWS THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION NO HUMAN BEING CAN EVER FULLY DISCOVER, WHICH IS --THE WHY OF THE LIFE OF EACH INDIVIDUAL, INCLUDING HIS OR HER OWN.

THIS TRUTH IS FOUND IN THE MEANING OF THE WORD THAT SAYS GOD SEARCHES US.

IT SUGGESTS DIGGING DOWN DEEPLY, SO AS TO DISCOVER NOT JUST OUR THOUGHTS, BUT OUR MOTIVATIONS AS WELL.

WE ARE, INDEED AN OPEN BOOK TO GOD, SO THAT NOTHING IS HIDDEN FROM HIS SIGHT.

WHILE THIS THOUGHT CAN BE BOTH A JOY AND A CONCERN, TO PEOPLE, THE IDEA IS NOT THAT GOD IS A SPY- OR AN IMPERSONAL ALL-SEEING EYE WE MUST GUARD AGAINST.

INSTEAD, THE MESSAGE IS- THAT GOD WHO CREATED US, LOVES US WITH A LOVE THAT IS BEYOND THE HUMAN CAPACITY TO GRASP, OR FULLY RETURN.

AND IT IS GOOD NEWS THAT GOD, OUR CREATOR, IS AWARE OF THE- HOW, WHY, AND WHEREFORE OF OUR LIVES.

THIS FACT THAT GOD KNOWS YOU AND ME AND ALL PEOPLE, TOTALLY AND COMPLETELY SO THAT NOTHING IS HIDDEN FROM HIS SIGHT OR UNDERSTANDING OF US -IS MEANT TO BE A GOOD THING.

EVEN THE FACT THAT GOD KNOWS ANY OF OUR PAST OR PRESENT THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS WE'D PREFER TO FORGET, IS A CAUSE FOR PRAISE.

WHY IS THIS THE CASE? IT IS A CAUSE FOR PRAISE BECAUSE GOD NOT ONLY OBSERVES US BUT UNDERSTANDS US.

THIS IS A GOOD THING IN THAT HIS JUDGMENT IS NOT MERELY BASED ON OBSERVABLE FACT.

INSTEAD IT INCLUDES, GOD'S KNOWLEDGE OF THE WHY AND HOW OF OUR—WORDS AND SILENCE, OUR ACTION AND INACTION, AS WELL AS OUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS.

THIS MEANS GOD DISCERNS THINGS ABOUT US NO ONE, NOT EVEN WE, CAN FULLY SEE, OR UNDERSTAND.

AND THE REASON THIS IS SOMETHING TO BE CELEBRATED RATHER THAN FEARED IS BECAUSE WE CAN TRUST GOD.

IN FACT, WE HAVE AN ABILITY TO TRUST THE LORD THAT SURPASSES EVEN KING DAVID'S.

THE APOSTLE PAUL EXPLAINS THIS IN HIS LETTER TO ROME, WHERE HE SHARED HIS CONVICTION THAT- NOTHING CAN SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF GOD IN JESUS CHRIST.

YES, BECAUSE OF JESUS WE CAN SAY TO GOD WITHOUT FEAR- "SEARCH ME AND KNOW ME...AND LEAD ME IN THE WAY OF EVERLASTING."

OF COURSE, WE DO NOT ALWAYS WISH TO BE KNOWN OR SEARCHED, DO WE?

INDEED, PEOPLE OF ANY AGE CAN BE LIKE CHILDREN OR YOUTH WHEN IT COMES TO OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

THERE ARE TIMES THAT WE SEEK TO EXERT OUR WILL AND DECLARE OUR INDEPENDENCE FROM GOD; TO SHOW WE CAN GET ALONG JUST FINE ON OUR OWN, AT LEAST FOR A WHILE.

PERHAPS THE PSALMIST HAD UNDERGONE A SIMILAR INNER STRUGGLE WITH WANTING GOD'S HELP AND INTERFERENCE, SO TO SPEAK, YET ALSO SEEKING SOME INDEPENDENCE.

BUT HERE, IN THE PSALM, WE ARE GIVEN A STATEMENT OF SURRENDER TO THE LORD.

THE FINAL VERSES VOICE AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT GOD IS AWARE OF US, AND THERE IS NOTHING THAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT IT.

NOTICE THE WAYS THE PSALMIST DESCRIBES FOR US THE UNAVOIDABLE ATTENTION OF GOD.

"WHERE CAN I GO?" HE ASKS, ALREADY KNOWING THE ANSWER IS- NO WHERE IS BEYOND GOD'S SIGHT OR REACH.

THE SECTION ENDS WITH THE DECLARATION THAT EVEN DARKNESS IS NO BARRIER TO GOD, WHO SEES AS WELL IN THE DARK AS HE DOES IN THE LIGHT.

THIS BRINGS US TO PARABLE IN THE GOSPEL READING, WHERE JESUS, IN A VERY SUBTLE WAY, ADDRESSES THE FACT THAT PEOPLE CANNOT HIDE FROM GOD EVEN IN THE CHURCH.

HIS PURPOSE WAS TO INFORM HIS FOLLOWERS THAT THEY WILL NOT BE ABLE TO PREVENT HYPOCRITES, AND OTHERS WHO ARE NOT SINCERE ABOUT THEIR FAITH, FROM BEING A PART OF THE CHURCH.

THE PARABLE OF WHEAT AND TARES CONCERNS A FIELD, WHICH WAS SOWN WITH GOOD SEED.

AND, AS JESUS LATER EXPLAINED, HE IS THE SOWER, THE FIELD IS THE WORLD, AND THE SEED ARE HIS TRUE FOLLOWERS.

HOWEVER, DURING THE NIGHT, AN ENEMY, WHO IS THE DEVIL, SOWED WEEDS AMONG THE GOOD SEED.

THIS MAY SOUND TO US LIKE A MADE UP STORY, SOMETHING UNLIKELY TO HAPPEN. BUT THAT IS NOT THE CASE. THE

WEEDS, ALSO CALLED TARES, WERE A PLANT KNOWN AS DARNEL, WHICH IS TOXIC TO HUMANS AND ANIMALS. IN THE EARLY STAGES OF GROWTH, BOTH PLANTS LOOK ALIKE. ONLY WHEN THEY BEGIN TO MATURE CAN ONE TELL THE DIFFERENCE.

THE PROBLEM WAS- THE ROOTS OF THE TWO PLANTS OFTEN INTERTWINED, SO THAT IT WAS VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO GET RID OF THE WEED WITHOUT ALSO PULLING UP SOME OF THE WHEAT.

FURTHERMORE, RECORDS SHOW THAT PEOPLE DID SOW BAD SEED IN SOMEONE ELSE'S FIELD, ON OCCASION.

IT USUALLY HAPPENED AS A WAY TO GET BACK AT A NEIGHBOR YOU HAD A CONFLICT WITH.

SO JESUS, USED THIS PRACTICE HIS DISCIPLES WOULD HAVE BEEN FAMILIAR WITH, TO HELP THEM TRUST IN GOD TO SORT OUT THOSE WITHIN THE CHURCH WHO ARE NOT PART OF CHRIST'S BODY.

THE SAVIOR INSTRUCTED THAT WE ARE NOT SKILLFUL ENOUGH TO DISCERN GOOD SEED FROM WEEDS, WHEN IT COMES TO PEOPLE.

GOD, HOWEVER, WHO KNOWS ALL IS ABLE TO MAKE THAT JUDGMENT AND WILL DO SO AT THE RIGHT TIME.

THE GOOD NEWS OF THE PARABLE IS THAT GOD WILL SORT EVERYONE OUT AT THE FINAL JUDGEMENT, SO WE DO NOT HAVE TO DO IT NOW.

THE ONE EXCEPTION IS IN CASES WHERE THE COMMUNITY, OR THOSE IN, IT ARE BEING HARMED IN SOME WAY.

THE BETTER NEWS IS THAT PEOPLE ARE NOT PLANTS. A PLANT CANNOT CHANGE WHAT IT IS, BUT PEOPLE CAN TO SOME DEGREE.

OR MORE CORRECTLY, WE CAN AND WILL CHANGE WHEN WE ARE OPEN TO THE SEARCHING AND KNOWING OF GOD, ALSO ALLOW THE LORD TO HEAL US OF OUR SIN.

INDEED, JESUS CAME INTO THE WORLD TO PROVIDE US WITH A WAY TO ENTER INTO A RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

AND THE HOLY SPIRIT HELPS US CHANGE FROM TARES TO WHEAT, SO THAT WE BECOME A NEW CREATION IN CHRIST.

WE ARE STILL IMPERFECT, STILL SINNERS, BUT OUR INNER NATURES ARE BEING TRANSFORMED TO MAKE US GOOD SEED.

THE SPIRIT, ALSO HELPS THE CHURCH, AS A COMMUNITY, BEAR GOOD FRUIT.

THIS IS NEEDED IN ALL CHURCHES SO WE DO NOT BECOME SOME KIND OF SOCIAL CLUB, BUT ARE TRULY THE BODY OF CHRIST GATHERED FOR WORSHIP.

AND JUST AS IMPORTANTLY, WE ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST MEANT TO WITNESS TO GOD'S LOVE IN JESUS, AND TO SERVE THE LORD BY HELPING OTHERS.

IT IS IN OUR ACTS OF SERVICE AND KINDNESS, AS WELL AS IN SHARING THE LOVE OF JESUS IN OUR WORDS, THAT WE BEAR THE FRUIT FOR WHICH CHRIST'S CHURCH WAS CREATED.

THUS THE MESSAGE WE SHOULD TAKE FROM THE PARABLE IS THAT GOD KNOWS EACH ONE OF US, AND ALSO KNOWS EVERYONE ELSE, COMPLETELY AND INTIMATELY.

GOD'S KNOWLEDGE IS DEEPER THAN THAT OF OUR CLOSEST FRIENDSHIP OR LOVING FAMILY RELATIONSHIP, INCLUDING THAT OF A MARRIED COUPLE.

THE LORD KNOWS MORE THAN OUR PERSONALITY AND HABITS, HE KNOWS THOSE THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS WE NEVER SHARE.

GOD KNOWS OUR HISTORY, INCLUDING WHAT WE HAVE FORGOTTEN.

THE LORD ALSO KNOWS OUR PSYCHOLOGICAL MAKE UP AND HANG-UPS, AND WHY WE HAVE THEM.

YES GOD KNOWS US, AND LOVES US NO MATTER WHAT HIS SEARCHING OF US, FINDS.

GRANTED, THE LORD MAY NOT ALWAYS BE PLEASED WITH US BUT GOD STILL LOVES US, AND IS PATIENT WITH US.

INDEED THE LORD FOLLOWS US WHEN WE RUN, FORGIVES US, AND CALLS US BACK TIME AND TIME AGAIN.

IN ALL OF THIS, GOD IS AWARE OF WHO WE ARE AND WHO WE ARE BEING CALLED AND TRANSFORMED TO BECOME.

AND SO LIKE THE PSALMIST LET US PRAY TO THE LORD:  
"SEARCH ME, O GOD, AND KNOW MY HEART; TEST ME AND KNOW MY THOUGHTS. SEE IF THERE IS ANY WICKEDNESS IN ME; AND LEAD ME IN THE WAY OF EVERLASTING."

THROUGH CHRIST OUR LORD AND SAVIOR, WE PRAY. AMEN