

"The Human and the Divine.."
Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18

Our Old Testament lesson is just a part of the 139th Psalm. In the beginning of the psalm, we see "YHWH," the Lord, is the inexpressible, sacred name of God. We are justified by the transcendent, sanctified uniqueness of the mystery of God. We discover that this clandestine God seeks the psalmist, and the psalmist verifies God's relationship with the writer. Intermingled from the beginning of this psalm, the heavenly and the earthly, the human and the divine, are present.

The psalmist writes concerning ordinary, unremarkable actions, that take place in divine and human ways. Human life and a Holy God are woven together in a way that reminds us of the "*Shema*," the central and ancient affirmation of the Jewish faith (Deuteronomy 6:4-6). This is evidence that "God knows you." God is concerned with everything in your life, every little thing and every big thing. God knows you inside and out.

It may be that we are not sure we want God to be THAT interested in us. Do you remember the rock band of the 80's, "The Police," who sang the song, "Every Breath You Take?" It starts like a love song, but soon sounds like a 'stalker's song. You might detect a little of that in this psalm. The verb used in the NIV translation for the phrase, "Hem me in," can mean 'besiege' or 'protect.' The idea that someone may be watching has long made people uncomfortable. Shachel Paige's comment, "*Don't look back, somethin' may be gainin' on ya*" might seem appropriate, too.

The psalmist is unafraid to write of the danger and vulnerability in relationships, without the need or want of control. The psalmist ends the first six verses with wonder and astonishment at God's incredible knowledge. That God knows you as God does, that God desires to be so engaged in your life, is difficult to comprehend.

In the next passage from Psalm 139, verses 13-18, we discover the same pattern as our previous reading, but here we find God is not the Searcher but the Creator. It is like the author has painted a medley of images of God, as One who shapes or interlaces.

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by Wayne J. Schneider – Soli Deo Gloria

It is a celebration of our creator God and the psalmist combining the deep knowledge of God with the artistic movement of God.

Last Sunday I mentioned that time is finite, and today we acknowledge that God's knowledge is infinite, but ours is finite. God knows what God knows, but we cannot comprehend the infinite. Still, we CAN have a relationship, and that is an amazement, and THAT causes me, as the Negro Spiritual says, ‘to tremble.’

First, you and I are viewed as the subjects of God's searching; then we become the purpose of God's creative focus. The heart of God's creative genius, the strength of God's motivation, is self-limited here, because of God's desire for a relationship with you. Note how personal these passages are. The use of personal pronouns abound: ‘you’ and ‘I’ are on almost every line, and sometimes on each line.

This second passage ends as it begins: with wonder and awe. If you take the time to think about it, the impossibility of it: you and I are by God ‘in a relationship with’ THE Holy One. Absolutely mind-boggling, it is outside our comprehension. So we go with what we know: what we say in our creeds, our assurance of a relational reality. The authenticity of our covenant connection with God is always more valid than we will ever possibly know. It is a certainty too weighty, too enormous, too magnificent for us to grasp entirely.

And yet. God is with us, Emmanuel. Alleluia. Amen.