

# WHITHER SHALL I GO?

DATE: 10/16/2016 am

TEXT: Psalm 139

## INTRODUCTION

**III.** I heard a story once about two mischievous brothers, ages 8 and 10, which were always getting into trouble. If anything happened in the neighborhood, the parents knew their boys were involved. The parents finally decided to take the boys to a preacher that had been successful in dealing with unruly children. The eight year old was sent to the preacher first. The preacher, a huge man with a booming voice, sat the eight year old down directly in front of him. He leaned over toward the boy, took him by the arms, looked him right in the eyes, and with his booming voice asked, “*Where is God?*” The boy did not say a word, but just sat there wide-eyed, with his mouth open. So the preacher repeated the question in an even sterner tone, “*Where is God?*” Still the boy did not respond, so the preacher raised his voice even louder and asked, “*WHERE IS GOD?*” The boy let out a yell, bolted from the room and ran all the way home. He ran through the door, up the stairs, and dove into the closet. When his older brother found him he asked - “*What happened?*” The younger brother, gasping for breath replied - “*We are in BIG trouble this time. God is missing and they think we did it.*”

Have you ever felt like God was missing in your life?

Yet, as we look at our text we are reminded that God is *never missing, but is always present*

Let’s look at our Bibles, and the question the Psalmist asked in v. 7 - “***Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence***”

As we seek an answer to the Psalmist’s question ...

We are shown some wonderful truths about our relationship with God

## *Whither Shall I Go? – Psalm 139*

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As the Psalmist thinks about his relationship with God ...

He finds himself incapable of being able to fully grasp all that he is learning

It leaves him ... standing in Awe of God

As we look to answer these questions, I'd like to point out 3 Great Truths

Truths that left the Psalmist filled with Amazement and Awe

Let's Pray and think on this thought this morning

**“Whither Shall I Go?”**

~~~PRAYER~~~

First we see ...

### **I. WHAT HE COULDN'T “COMPREHEND”**

The Psalmist declared in v.6 –

***“Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it”***

The Psalmist is saying that the Truth about God he has been Contemplating is beyond his Comprehension

It's such a wonderful truth that it's beyond his ability to fully understand

So what is this Truth that the Psalmist is Contemplating?

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God's Omniscience / that is, He is All-Knowing

It's God's Complete Knowledge of our life and ways

The Psalmist has been thinking about the great truth that  
*God knows all there is to know about us*

He says in v.3 - ***“Thou art acquainted with all my ways”***

The Psalmist proclaims - *“Such knowledge is beyond my comprehension”*

So, what kind of knowledge does God have of the Psalmist  
ways?

First we see ...

### **A. God's 'Complete' Knowledge**

The Psalmists says in v.1 - ***“O LORD, Thou hast searched me, and known me”***

He says - *“The Lord knows me”*

How well does He know the Psalmist?

The word ***“search”*** is a Hebrew verb that means *to dig, such as a miner digging for precious metals*

There has been a diligent search of his life that resulted in a complete knowledge of his ways

The word ***“known”*** speaks of *all that can result from a careful and complete scrutiny of a person's life*

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In other words, there was nothing about him that was not known by God

He continues describing this Complete Knowledge ...

He says in v. 2a – ***“Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising”***

Whether sitting or sleeping, the Lord knew everything going on

In every posture, state, activity, movement, there was nothing about him that the Lord did not know

He adds in v. 2b – ***“Thou understandest my thought afar off”***

He says – *“God, you know even the thoughts that cross my mind”*

The Psalmist may have been on earth and God in heaven

But the distance didn't hinder God from knowing his every thought

He continues in v. 3 – ***“Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways”***

God knows everything he does and everywhere he goes day or night

There was no place he could not Go without God knowing where he was (kinda like today's I Phones)

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There was nothing that he could Do that God did not know what he was doing

God was acquainted with all his ways

He says in v.4 – ***“For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether”***

There was not a word he spoke that God did not hear

God knew of every conversation

He knew of every word spoken both in public and private

**Matthew 12:36 – *“But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment”***

**God’s Knowledge was “Complete”**

Furthermore, we see ...

### **B. God’s “Constant” Knowledge**

The words of the Psalmist not only tell us that God is aware of our every Movement,

But also suggest that He is aware of our every Moment

God’s Complete Knowledge is a Constant Knowledge and Constantly Complete

There is never a moment that He does not know where we go, what we do, what we think, and what we say

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-- He knows everything about my yesterday

-- He knows everything about my today

-- He even knows everything about my tomorrow

To go even further, He knows everything about my life from beginning to end

Even Before it happens

There is nothing He does not know, He even knows my future

He has Complete and Constant knowledge of my way

He sees and knows all that we do

Understanding that God knows everything about us ...

...Can be either an *Alarming* or *Assuring* thought

### 1. The Alarm

The Awareness that He knows all things should be very Concerning if there are things in our life that are not right

There are times when we convince ourselves that no one knows what we are doing or what is harbored in our minds and hearts

We deceive ourselves when we think that the ugly thing in our life is unknown (even to God)

### 2. The Assurance

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But it can also be very Assuring to know that the Lord knows what we are going through and all that is happening in our life

You may be going through a difficult time

It should be Comforting to know that God knows!

He knows the burden you bear; and the load you carry

Again, the truth of God's knowledge can either be Alarming or Assuring

As the Psalmist thought of God's Complete and Constant knowledge of all his ways,

It was beyond his ability to Comprehend

### **WHAT HE COULD NOT "COMPREHEND"**

Secondly I want you to see ...

### **II. WHAT HE COULD NOT "CAUSE"**

So, as the Psalmist continues to think of these Truths about God ...

He Contemplates the Truth that He cannot Cause or Create a separation from God's Presence

We find him asking in v. 7 - "*Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?*"

Then he provides the answer to his own questions

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He tells us that it impossible to be Separated from the Presence of God

Notice what he says

First we see ...

### **A. A 'Flight'**

The Psalmist says in vs. 8-10 – *“If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there” “If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;” “Even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me”*

The Psalmist declares that there is no where you can go to get away from the presence of God

He says – *“If I was able to go to heaven, I would obviously be in the Presence of God. If I make a bed in the grave (the idea behind the word hell used here), even death will not separate me from the Presence of God. He will be there even in death. If I could sprout wings and fly off into the morning sun to the ends of the sea, fly away as far as I can go, I will not separate myself from the Presence of God. He’ll be there”*

The Psalmist is reminding us that no matter where we are or where we go, God is there

This is God’s Omnipresence’s / That He is everywhere

It is impossible, even if we tried, to run or flee from the Presence of God

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No matter what you Do, God knows!

Furthermore, no matter where you Go, God is there!

I think of Jonah

The story is familiar of how he tried to run from God

Yet, Jonah found out that you can run ahead of God and you can run away from God, but you can't run anywhere or anyplace that He is not there

### **A 'Flight' Cannot Separate Us from God's Presence**

Secondly, we see ...

#### **B. The 'Night'**

The Psalmist says in vs. 11, 12 – *“If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me” “Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee”*

The Psalmist tells us that it is not only Impossible to Flee from the Presence of God,

... But it's also Impossible to Hide from the Presence of God

The darkness of night will not hide or conceal us

As far as God is concerned, the darkness is as the day

**III.** On the night of July 13<sup>th</sup> 1977, the lights went out in New York City. Tens of thousands of people looted and burn the city. Steel shutters and grills were ripped from storefronts, plate glass ...

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...windows were shattered, and people hauled off everything they could get their hands on. Some, even went as far as stealing trucks to haul off the loot. Over 2,000 stores were plundered and damaged at the cost of \$1 billion.

Why? ... Because it was dark!

They thought that since it was dark, no one would see or recognize them

Yet, I remind you that the darkness does not hide us from God

He is there!

You can close the door, pull the shades, turn off the lights, yet God is there

You can go across town or out of town, yet God is there

You can wait till the sun goes down, yet God will be there!

Neither Flight or Night can separate us from the Presence of God

**III.** It was this great truth of **Psalm 139** that prompted the Swedish Botanist, Carolus Linnaeus, to inscribe over the door of his lecture Hall: *“Live innocently: God is here”*

The realization that we are in God’s Presence all the time and in every place, should serve as a motivation to live innocently

Whither shall I Go from His Spirit? Nowhere!

Whither shall I Flee from His presence? Nowhere!

**III.** I read about a little boy that was playing outdoors. He used his mother's broom as a horse. He had a wonderful time playing cowboys and Indians. When it started getting dark he went inside, but left the broom on the back porch. Later, as his mother was cleaning up the kitchen she asked the little boy about the broom. He told her he left it on the back porch. She told him to go and get it. The little boy was terrified of the dark and told his mother that he was afraid to go out on the porch and get the broom in the dark. His mother said to him, *"You don't have to be afraid. The Lord is out there."* The little boy opened the back door a crack and said, *"Lord, if you are out there, can you please hand me the broom?"*

Let me say the Lord is out there

We are never out of His Presence

We can't Flee or Hide from ... God's Presence

He's there!

**WHAT HE COULD NOT "COMPREHEND"**

**WHAT HE COULD NOT "CAUSE"**

The final truth we see is ...

**III. WHAT HE COULD NOT "COUNT"**

We read in vs. 17, 18 - ***"How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them"***  
***"If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand"***

The final Truth that the Psalmist has been contemplating has been the Acts and Activities of God in his life

This is God's Omnipotent / That is, God is All-Powerful

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He describes the number as the sands of the sea

In other words, if I tried to count the many ways God has worked in my life, it would be impossible

It would be like trying to count the grains of sand you find on a beach

-- Oftentimes we feel that God is doing nothing in our life

-- Other times we feel that we are not of any special interest to Him

I want you to notice carefully How the Psalmist describes God's attention to his life

First we see ...

### **A. God's 'Pre-natal' Attention to His Life**

In vs. 13-16, the Psalmist describes the Attention God gave to his life even before he was born

We read in v.13 – ***“For Thou hast possessed my reins: Thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb.”***

The statement, ***“For Thou hast possessed my reins,”*** simply means, *Thou hast created my innermost parts*

The word ***“possessed”*** means to *create* or *form*

The word ***“reins”*** is the Hebrew word for *bowels*

It would include all the vital organs—lungs, kidneys, liver, heart, brain, etc.

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The word **“Thou”** is very strong, meaning *God, you and no other, created and formed all my inward parts*

Notice the statement, **“Thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb”**

The word **“covered”** speaks of *something being fenced in or that which is protected*

The Psalmist was saying that even when he was in his mother’s womb, the Lord was watching over him, protecting him

As he thinks of this Attention God gave him, even before he was born,

He exclaims in v. 14 – **“I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well”**

He exclaims – *I am a work of God! He has made me. He formed me and fashioned me. I am a marvelous creation of God!*

He continues in v.15 – **“My substance was not hid from Thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth”**

The word **“substance”** speaks of *his body*

The Psalmist was saying - *Before I was ever seen by human eyes, when I was in secret, God was not only giving attention to the formation and creation of my inward parts, but my body as well*

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The words ***“curiously wrought”*** are one word that describes *a weaver making a tapestry or working on fine needlework*

Like a weaver working on a tapestry, the Lord was forming my body, what my features would be, what I would look like

He says in v.16 – ***“Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in Thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there were none of them”***

The word ***“substance”*** as used in v.16 means ***“embryo”***

The word ***“see”*** means *to watch over*

The Psalmist declared that when he was in embryonic form, he was being watched over by God

From the time we are conceived, we are the subjects of God’s attention

God even goes as far as to keep a record of every little detail of our life

He kept it all in His (***“Thy”***) ***“book”***, with our names

What is the Psalmist saying?

Each of us is Special and Significant to God

We are the result of His creation and formation

Even before we were born we were the objects of God’s special care and attention

Do you ever feel that you are unimportant?

Then just read **Psalm 139:13-16**

I want you to understand that God carefully chose each one of us

He carefully formed and fashioned us to be just what He wanted

Even before we were born, we were the objects of God's attention

### **God's 'Pre-natal' Attention to our Life**

Secondly and lastly we see ...

### **B. God's 'Perpetual' Attention to His Life**

Again in v.17 we read – ***“How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God!”***

The Psalmist says – *Lord, you gave me special attention even before I was born, but even more, you have never ceased to think about me!*

The Psalmist is reminding us that we are always on the mind of God

God is always thinking about us!

**Psalm 40:17 – *“But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: Thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God”***

He is always watching over and out for us

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There is never a moment when we are not the objects of God's Attention and Affection

In fact, the Psalmist says – *If I were to try to count the thoughts you have for me, it would be like counting the grains of sand in the sea*

He sums up this great truth by saying in v.18 – ***“when I am awake, I am still with Thee”***

Can we flee from God's Presence? Absolutely not!

God's Presence is always with us and we are always in God's Presence

We are the objects of His Personal /Perpetual Attention

### CONCLUSION:

In closing let me say; if the thought of God's ...

-- Perpetual Knowledge Of your life

-- Perpetual Presence In your life

-- Perpetual Attention To your life

...is a bit alarming, then do what the Psalmist did in vs. 23, 24

Pray the prayer he prayed ...

***“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:” “And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting”***