



HOW precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! 18 If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee. 19 Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God: depart from me therefore, ye bloody men. 20 For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain. 21 Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? 22 I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies. 23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: 24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (Psalms 139:17-24)

In Part One of this devotion on Psalm 139, we learned God knows us completely – far better than any other man, and even better than we ourselves. He knows not only our physical features and intricate design, but He also knows the thoughts of our hearts. He knows us beyond the scale of time – knowing our past, presence and future. No one but God has this knowledge of men. We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. He made us with His own hands. We are not mass produced, but individually designed and created.

In Part One we also learned God is with us always. He is the immutable Emmanuel. Whether we travel a dark, country road; the depths of the sea; the outer limits of deep space; or even beyond the bars of the sleep of death – God is with us. This is the greatest encouragement of all for the Christian – to know that we are never alone because God is with us.

In today's lesson, we will find out God is not only familiar with us in intricate detail, and is always right beside us in every condition; but He is also mindful of our every need. As the Psalmist proclaims in the earlier Psalm: 3 *When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;* 4 *What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?* 5 *For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.* 6 *Thou madest him to*

have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: 7 All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; 8 The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. 9 O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! (Psalm 8:3-9)

When a young man or woman falls in love, their whole mind, soul, and being is preoccupied with the object of their love. But even such infatuation does not nearly approach that with which the Mind of God is fixed upon the objects of His love.

In the final verses (13-16) of this Psalm, the Mind of God toward us is revealed. *How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!* Can you even imagine the sum of God's thoughts unto each of us? Our very lives are in His hand moment by moment. If you know that to be true, you will also acknowledge that our next breath and heartbeat are afforded by His grace and mercy toward us. The Universe and all of its Heavenly Bodies are held in their predetermined orbits by the power of God. *12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: 13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: 14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: 15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, AND BY HIM ALL THINGS CONSIST.* (Col 1:12-17)

There is a trend today to be positive in all of our outlook of life. To have a strong self-image of our worth. This sounds very pleasing to the fool who is alienated from the love and truth of God. Apart from our stake in God, we have no worth. Even that which we have is imputed unto us by our Lord. When we come to believe that we are worthy is the very moment that we are unworthy. When we come to the realization we are totally depraved without the grace of God, then we have come to the point that God can teach us His love and grace. *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for **WITHOUT ME YE CAN DO NOTHING.*** (John 15:5)

All of the national, social, and personal problems of this world result from the supposed free will (spelled self-will) of man¹ that does not surrender itself to the Sovereign Will of God. Our complicated personal issues in life all have their origin in a disregard for the will of God in our lives.

Do we provide aid and support to the enemies of God? Perish the thought! *19 Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God: depart from me therefore, ye bloody men. 20 For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain. 21 Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? 22 I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.* God will not turn His head of Judgment from the destruction of the wicked – not only in eternity, but in the very present. Not knowing the judgment of God, the wicked feel that they are escaping that present judgment, but they are not. They are among the most miserable people on earth. They waste endless hours in sleepless nights plotting and scheming envy and covetousness against their neighbor. Even their physical health is diminished by their evil thoughts. We too often consider our Lord to be an effeminate Savior who lacks the ability to bring harsh judgment. How wrong that false assumption is! Our Lord came as a baby in a manger, but shall, at God's appointed time, descend with the sound of the trumpet leading the armies of God to vanquish and destroy the wicked.

¹ Imperfect creatures with free will. What could possibly go wrong?

David's benedictory prayer is one which should be taken to heart by each of us. *23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: 24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.* Verse 23 of David's prayer is more rhetorical than substantive. He perhaps intends it to remind us personally of the fact that God does search the heart, knows our thoughts, and puts us to the trial as a sifter of wheat winnows the grain at harvest.

The final verse of the prayer is also rhetorical for God does find evil in the hearts of His people. He constantly refines us in the fire of life to purify us more and more in sanctification. Knowing this, and consciously responding to that knowledge, Christ will lead us in the Way, the Truth, and the Life everlasting.

The Psalms – all of them – are beautiful expressions of the beauty of God's Will for us. They are the poetry of life itself. It is for this reason that we daily read a Psalm in our daily worship in the Reformation Anglican tradition.