God’s Perfect Knowledge of Me

Psalm 139

Scripture Reading: Genesis 28:10-16

I. Introduction: The problem of others
   a. From the moment we first come into being we are surrounded by others
      i. FAR SIDE – penguins – One singing “I gotta be me. I just gotta be me….”

   ii. Three responses
      1. Fusion
         a. GOAL: Deny differences
         b. Try to merge others into self
            i. Others are just an extension of me and my needs and goals
            ii. To know me is to love me, and you should
            iii. Narcissism
         c. Try to merge self into others
            i. I am here for you
            ii. Your needs are more important than my needs
            iii. If we disagree, I must be wrong
            iv. Co-dependency
      2. Isolation
         a. GOAL: Avoid differences
b. Hide differences
   i. Near to others, but not close to them
   ii. Afraid to share true self
   iii. Only share a version of self that may be acceptable to others

c. Run away
   i. Avoid interaction with others altogether

d. Chase others away
   i. Unexplained demands
   ii. Others must take it or leave it

iii. Problems
   1. Fusion produces Confusion
   2. Isolation produces Loneliness
   3. We can function without intimacy,
      a. So many survive without it
      b. But we cannot thrive without intimacy
      c. We cannot be all God intends for us to be as a human being made in the image of God
      d. We are made for intimate relationships with others
   4. There is an Other Who we cannot Deny or Avoid: God

iv. God brings the problem of others to a crisis
   1. Fusion won’t work
      a. We are not God
      b. We are not just an appendage of God
      c. Some try
   2. Isolation won’t work
      a. We can’t run away from God
      b. We can’t drive Him away from us
      c. Some try
   3. We when begin to understand Who God is, we begin to understand that these self-defeating means of coping with the existence and differentness of others won’t work
   4. The only way left to us is the right way

v. The Solution: Intimacy
   1. GOAL: To know and be know for who we are
   2. There is an enormous relief and peace in being known and accepted for who we are
      a. Our true self
      b. With all our shortcomings
      c. Odd opinions
      d. Checkered past
      e. Weaknesses
      f. Doubts and Fears
      g. Joys and desires
   3. Hindrances
      a. Lack of intimacy in our human relationships
i. Parents failed to demonstrate acceptance of the unique characteristics of their children
   1. Events that occur that cause children to doubt their acceptance by parents
      a. Separation and divorce (Epidemic!!)
      b. Cruelty by siblings and other children
   2. Millions of children reach adulthood never having experienced the peace of intimacy

ii. Parents were unable to connect
   1. Still in Fusion mode
   2. Or Isolation mode

b. Psalm 139 is a record of a child of God and His delight in the knowledge that there is an all-powerful, all-present, all-knowing Other who knows us and cares for us.

II. Key Thought: David’s psalm demonstrates that when we begin to understand the perfect, intimate knowledge that God, as our heavenly Father has of us, His children, we are motivated to respond to His knowledge with joy and delight.

III. He knows me intimately
   a. I am completely understood by Him (v. 1-6) – “No one understands me?”
      i. Our thoughts – even unexpressed
      ii. Our movements – and the motivations behind them
      iii. Our words – even unspoken
      iv. Do you know and believe this?
   b. I cannot escape His presence (v. 7-12)
      i. Jacob – “Surely the Lord is in this place and I didn’t know it!” – Gen. 28
      ii. In heaven or in hell
      iii. In time and space
         1. This is not an attempt to run from God
            a. Like Jonah (ch. 1-2)
            b. Or those attempting to escape the judgment that Amos prophesied
               i. Hide at the bottom of the sea
               ii. God sends the sea serpent to get them (Amos 9:3)
         2. Rather it is a recognition that wherever we go, God is there
         3. Perhaps a sign of spiritual maturity is no longer being surprised that God is in each new place, but eagerly expecting to find Him there
      iv. In darkness
         1. Night is light
2. When we sin, we do not do it behind His back, we do it to His face
   v. Do you know and believe this?
c. I am His workmanship (v. 13-16)
   i. He made us – inside and out
   ii. He made us well
   iii. He made our situation
   iv. Do you know and believe this

IV. Therefore:
   a. I love His thoughts (v. 17-18)
      i. Since He knows our thoughts, shouldn’t we desire to know His thoughts?
      ii. Since He thinks of us, wouldn’t we like to know WHAT He thinks of us?
      iii. We cannot even number them, much less know them all
      iv. Shouldn’t we regard as precious the few of God’s thoughts that we can know?
   v. Awake – from sleep, from lethargy, from death
   b. I hate His enemies (v. 19-22)
      i. We don’t want them around
         1. Taken by God
         2. Sent away
         3. Should we leave?
      ii. Their crimes
         1. Speaking against God
         2. Taking His name in vain
         3. Hating God
         4. Rebelling against God
      iii. Perfect hatred –
         1. “To hate with perfect hatred is to neither hate men because of their vices, nor to love vices because of the men who have them.” – Augustine
         2. Not incompatible with “Love your enemies”
   c. I desire His scrutiny (v. 23-24)
      i. Requesting His inspection. Compare v. 23 with vs.1
      ii. Welcoming His “intrusion”/understanding
      iii. Seeking His cleansing
      iv. Seeking His guidance

V. Invitation
   a. How do you respond to the differences of others?
      i. Fusion?
      ii. Isolation?
      iii. Intimacy?
      iv. There are several paths to becoming rightly related to the others around us
1. Ideally, we grow up in a nurturing intimate environment in which we develop intimate relationships with others that bring us to an intimate relationship with God.

2. In our time, fewer and fewer have that benefit. For most, then, intimacy is discovered in a healthy, loving relationship with another human being. When we do experience true intimacy, we recognize it as something that we have always been longing for, perhaps without knowing it. Being known and accepted by another can open the door to believing the unbelievable: that we can be known and accepted by God.

3. There is a third, hard way. The way of vainly trying every door of escape from the differentness of others around us, until we finally discover that God cannot be denied or avoided. And having come to peace with Him, then to be reconciled to all the strangers around us.

b. Where are you on the path to intimacy with God?
   i. Denying Him?
   ii. Avoiding Him?
   iii. Seeking to know Him and be known by Him?

c. The Bad News
   i. We are already known by Him
   ii. Uh oh!!

d. The Good News
   i. God is already willing to accept us
   ii. We simply have to approach God through Jesus Christ