

Psalm 139:1-18 (CEV)

You have looked deep into my heart, Lord, and you know all about me.
2 You know when I am resting or when I am working,
and from heaven you discover my thoughts.
3 You notice everything I do and everywhere I go.
4 Before I even speak a word, you know what I will say,
5 and with your powerful arm you protect me from every side.
6 I can't understand all of this! Such wonderful knowledge is far above me.
7 Where could I go to escape from your Spirit or from your sight?
8 If I were to climb up to the highest heavens, you would be there.
If I were to dig down to the world of the dead you would also be there.
9 Suppose I had wings like the dawning day and flew across the ocean.
10 Even then your powerful arm would guide and protect me.
11 Or suppose I said, "I'll hide in the dark until night comes
to cover me over."
12 But you see in the dark because daylight and dark
are all the same to you.
13 You are the one who put me together inside my mother's body,
14 and I praise you because of the wonderful way you created me.
Everything you do is marvelous! Of this I have no doubt.
15 Nothing about me is hidden from you!
I was secretly woven together deep in the earth below,
16 but with your own eyes you saw my body being formed.
Even before I was born, you had written in your book
everything I would do.
17 Your thoughts are far beyond my understanding,
much more than I could ever imagine.
18 I try to count your thoughts, but they outnumber the grains
of sand on the beach. And when I awake, I will find you nearby.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Lord, we know you by many names: God, Holy One, Divine Presence.

Protector, Healer, Creator, Guide, Friend.

You call us Daughters, Sons, Children. You call us by the name: "Treasure."

We confess that we have not always claimed your name for us,
And we have given names to others that are unfitting for your children.
Speak to us again this day.

**Call us all by our true name from the depths, and into your love and
light. Amen.**

“Treasure”

A couple of decades ago, during months of anticipating the birth of each of my children, I used to spend sleepless hours imagining what each child would look like, which personality traits they would inherit (or not!), what skills they would develop, what passions would drive them. As I longed for sleep, the words of the psalmist would swirl in my mind,

*You have looked deep into my heart, Lord, and you know all about me.
You know when I am resting or when I am working,
and from heaven you discover my thoughts.*

*You are the one who put me together inside my mother’s body,
and I praise you because of the wonderful way you created me.
Everything you do is marvelous! Of this I have no doubt.*

The totality of this Psalm (which I never could fully memorize), contains elements of hymns of praise, thanksgiving, and even lament. It begins with praise for God’s presence and continual care. The lament is expressed in the next section of the Psalm...so, we’ll let that go for another day!

But during those months of birthing expectancy, I imagined how God was forming each child within me. And then after each was born, I would look at them with teary amazement at the thought that God had given me the opportunity to shelter and nurture what had become a small human being ~ with toes and eyelashes, ruby lips and functioning organs, soft skin and a button nose! The child in my care was an unparalleled TREASURE.

I often wondered if God gets a similar feeling looking at me, and at each of you?!? Perhaps it is that question that draws me to this Psalm. It’s words, from any translation or paraphrase, trigger so many memories of experiences, emotions, and questions within me. When I was younger, I learned a popular slogan that really sums up this psalm: “God doesn’t make junk.” True. True. For God has created each of us to be a TREASURE.

While it would be a whole lot easier to simply focus on the two verses of this psalm which pull at my emotional heart-strings, we should not ignore the rest of the message. That means that while I do praise God for how “wonderfully” I have been made, both God and I are well aware of my shortcomings!

Each time I read this psalm, I can hear God's voice saying, "I'm watching you!" (gesture) It's both a comforting feeling and a reminder to be vigilant about my actions and the choices I make. It also reminds me that my potential is endless and that Someone (God) always has my back. While God has equipped each of us to fulfill the call to discipleship, it is the decision of each individual as to how to utilize that gift.

I became even more aware of that as I learned how to be a parent. I remember writing in each of my children's baby books something along the lines of my prayers that each one would grow to be kind and loving, and to remember that God had given each one many gifts, and that there would be many experiences to explore and learn from. And now, as young adults, each one is on their way to discerning God's call upon their lives.

But life is not without struggles, even for young adults! There are struggles with relationships, education, career choices, lifestyle capacities, financial matters, societal and political identities, and the list could continue.

And God knows all of that, and still calls us each a TREASURE!

One of the other things that attracts me to this psalm is how personal it is. It reminds me that God desires to have a personal relationship with me ... and with each of us! That is a relationship that is based on such deep and abiding love that one minute I can be angry with God because people who are precious to me are grieving, or have been harmed, are addicted, or have been treated unjustly. And then the next minute I can start counting blessings and recognize that no power or prejudice, no abuse or unfair treatment, no system or structure, can separate me or anyone else from God's love. God has created each of us with intimate wonder. God is always there for us. And in God's sight, we are each a TREASURE.

That's why God sent Jesus to us! To remind us, especially when we are in the pit of despair, when our sin is overwhelming, when we cannot seem to escape our own poor choices, God still treasures us enough to send a Savior, a member of the Holy Family, and an abiding Spirit, to remind us of our worth, and help us to claim new beginnings. **THIS** is the journey of Lent. In all circumstances of life, **you are a TREASURE to the Creator of the universe.** Thanks be to God!