

# INTRODUCTION >

**Illustration:** An investment property

Learn as much as you can about it, buy it, and then use it to make money.

It is not your home; it is a tool.

If we see God as an investor who, at great cost, purchased us, we'll feel the continual need to prove He has chosen wisely; otherwise, we'll be crushed by the cost He paid for something that still has issues.

And so, because of that fear, we'll devise strategies to paint over and hide what is going on behind the decorated drywall.

- We'll find ways to compare ourselves to others to prove we were still a good choice among the flawed.
- And so continued confession is something that we are afraid of, because our Investor might grow weary of learning about new underlying issues.

In Psalm 139, David declares that God knows us fully at a very personal level.

And that leads David to go before the Lord with a desire to see his own sin, because God has not made an investment in him; rather, He has set His Steadfast love upon him.

We will read it as we go.

Let's pray

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## Purpose Statement

**We are fully known by our Lord, and that is a precious truth that enables us to walk in continual confession and confidence in and before Him!**

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Today, we will look at the following:

1. The Realization
2. The Treasure
3. The Surrender

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# I. THE REALIZATION >

VERSE - 1-16

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## Summary Statement

**The Almighty Lord knows us continually in all ways.**

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## Personal Knowing

**Illustration:** Celebrity Sighting with a friend

What if you didn't just know them from what you read, but what if they knew you?

That's two very different things.

**God knows all things; He knows all that has ever been and ever will be.**

- And He's not just wise, but rather He is wisdom, meaning there is no truth apart from Him, and so every lesson to be learned about the universe was from His hand, for He is the curriculum of all things.

**Now compare that reality of God's incomprehensible majesty and size to David.**

- He was the smallest of all his brothers, so small and unassuming that his own father did not count him as **worthy** to be God's anointed.
- A shepherd boy who was also tasked to be his brothers' door-dash food delivery when they were on the front lines.

**That small shepherd writes this about our Great God:**

- **Vs 1 - O Lord, you have searched me and known me!**

**He says, you know me!**

And this is not simply about an All-Knowing God who is aware of all things - David is explaining that the Alpha and Omega KNOWS Him personally.

**He's saying that he is completely, continually, and fully known by God.**

- There's never been, nor will there ever be, anything about David that is hidden and unknown from His Lord.
- **David doesn't worship a God he knows; he worships a God who knows Him!**

That's a VERY different thing.

## **And David goes on to say:**

Vs. 2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar.  
[3] You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways.

**When I sit down and when I rise up is the first of many merisms in this passage.**

- A merism that is meant to show the scope or the breadth of something.
- It is like saying, from A to Z and everything in between.

## **So David says, you know from when I sit to when I stand, and all things in between; you know all of my actions!**

- And he's not just fully known in the things he does; he's fully known in the things he thinks.
- His thoughts and intentions are all within the knowing of His God.

Look at verse [4] **Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether.**

**Even before I can articulate something!**

When you are in lockstep with someone, when someone knows you so well that they can finish your sentences. There is a joy in being known to that level.

BUT here we read that God does more than finish our sentences; He knows how they begin before they're formed.

## **And in all of this, David declares how he feels about these things!**

**Vs 5 I am hemmed in all around; you lay your hand on me!**

- To be hemmed in and to lay your hand on me could carry the weight of being surrounded and bearing the weight of the hand of punishment.

**BUT also!** It can provide a sense of comfort of being surrounded and held by the hand of care and concern.

## **And David says this truth is too wonderful!**

**Vs 6**

Which can mean feeling overwhelmed, or it can carry the weight of a humble understanding that God knows us more than we can even know ourselves!

## **Personal Presence**

**Vs 7 - [7] Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?**

**Is David like Adam and Eve trying to FLEE from the face of God?**

- Is his shame leading him to the death that is separation, or to life that is His presence?

- There is nowhere to go! There is no place that you are **further away** or **closer to** God.

**Right now! Our hearts may be hard or numb towards God, but we are never far from Him.**

- Even in the moments when the enemy would like to convince us that we are alone, that we are unseen, that there are no eyes upon us - He is there. His eye on us.
- And see the eye of compassion, not condemnation.

## **Personal Power**

**Then, in verses 13-16, David explains that God's All-Powerfulness is not a vague cosmic power concerned only with the headlines.**

No, our God KNITS together each of us.

- His power is personal; it is intimate and close.

**And it is not just in the womb that His power is known; He knows our last breath.**

From the first inhale to the last exhale, He is sovereign over all things.

He has never been surprised by one of our days.

- It is all known to Him!

## **Considering these things**

**Before we move on, I wonder how these things land on our minds?**

**Illustration:** Movie Theater: All around us - creepy or awesome?

**Do we feel intrusion or freedom in the reality of the God who knows us fully?**

- In the God who is all around us?
- In the God who created us and upholds us?

**If God were not all-powerful, all-present, and all-knowing in a personal way, and he was just aware of us at a 50,000-foot level, I am not sure I would ever be able to find rest.**

Just think about the truth that He knows your last day and last breath, and therefore knows everything you will think, say, and do before then.

- YET, by His grace He still fully loves you!

- This means that I do not go to sleep in panic about what has happened, what is happening, and what could happen.

## **There are no “What Ifs” for the Steadfast Love of the Lord.**

- I KNOW He who started the WORK will FINISH the work in me!
- And He can say that for certain, since He is already in Eternity; He already knows tomorrow me, and he already knows forever me.
- When I stumble and do the things of the flesh that my spirit hates, He is not second-guessing or evaluating His investment in me.
  - He did not choose me for my potential.
  - He chose me; He chose us, not because of what we will do for Him, but because He did.
  - There is no explanation outside of complete unmerited grace and favor of our Lord set upon us.
- I am not an investment; I am His child.

And in that truth, we are able to exhale in the All-Knowing, All-Present nature of our God. There is no fear of constant evaluation; there is only the assurance of complete restoration.

## **Summary Statement**

**The Almighty Lord knows us continually in all ways.**

### **Transition:**

David then goes on to write how he too finds joy in these truths.

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## II. THE TREASURE >

VERSE - 17-18

17 How precious to me are your thoughts, O God!

How vast is the sum of them!

18 If I would count them, they are more than the sand.

I awake, and I am still with you.

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### Summary Statement

**The Presence of a Holy God is made precious and not disastrous by the person of Christ Jesus.**

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### Precious to me

**And David writes vs 17-18.**

- These truths are precious to me!
- Or you could say these thoughts are of great worth; they are so valuable to me!
- I'll hide this treasure in my heart!
- From the very beginning, he has been fully known, and it is a beautiful and wonderful realization to him.

### “I” Awake

**And look at the last phrase of verse 18: I awake, and I am still with you.**

- On the surface, this is a great hope for those who are in the hurt of the evening.
- For those whose tears tucked them in the night before, they can find assurance that in the morning they are still **with** Him.

**But there is even something deeper that David is alluding to, and that is the hope of what comes after the dark night of death.**

- And David says, he will awake in the presence of the Lord.
- This is to say that not even death will separate him!

**How precious is this truth!**

- The thing the world is most afraid of, the great equalizer of physical death, cannot separate us from God!
- The wrinkles, the sore backs, the aching joints are not the prologue of our loss of True Life.

And this is the truth that Paul unfolds in Romans 8:38–39

[38] For I am sure that neither **death** nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, [39] nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Just like David, Paul says there not even death can exile us from the Love of God.

**BUT, we must be careful not to miss the condition for these things.**

We need to SEE clearly what David knew only dimly, and Paul knew intimately.

**Apart from one thing, we have no confidence before the face of God.**

- Which means that apart from the everlasting King from his line, David's song of God's presence is a terrifying prospect.
- David only knew it by promise, but we know it by name!

**And that is what comes at the end of Romans 8:39**

- Nothing in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God...IN Christ Jesus our Lord!

It is ONLY in the Lord Jesus Christ that Psalm 139 goes from a frightening reality to a precious Truth.

## **The Amen of our Confidence**

**And this is what we see throughout the OT.**

**In Genesis**, the great flood was death for Noah and his family, if it were not for the Ark of God.

**In Exodus 33** - The Glory of God passing before Moses would have killed him if it were not for the cleft of the rock.

**In the story of Jonah**, the waters would have consumed him if it were not for the belly of the great fish.

**But quite possibly we most clearly see the fearful reality of Psalm 139 apart from the grace of God in Isaiah 6:**

In the vision of the upright prophet Isaiah, we read that he stood in the Lord's throneroom.

- And the angels declared that the beauty and worth of the Lord filled not only the temple but the whole earth.
- And so there is no escape from the glory of God.
- There is no place for Isaiah to flee from His radiance!
- And so the prophet relents.

**In his shame, he does not try to run away; he does not try to find cover in fig leaves; he knows there is no covering or place he could run, and so he says, “Woe is me.”**

**Woe is a declaration of impassioned grief.**

- So, in seeing the presence of the Lord, Isaiah says, I am desperately grieved.
- He says, I am lost, or destroyed, or it could be translated, I am done away with!
  - I am sent out, and pulled apart; I am undone in total separation.

**And that realization leads Isaiah to confession and repentance.**

- He says, I am a man of unclean lips; I am defiled, and I dwell among a people of defilement.

**And it is then and only then that Isaiah can be put back together before the face of the Lord.**

- And the **angel** touched his lips with the burning coal and said You are cleansed, and your sin is atoned for.

And we know that this coal of fire that does not destroy us, but rather cleanses us, is only a shadow of what is to come.

- That the **angels** would fill the sky and declare the arrival of the true and better coal of our atonement.

**And Jesus willingly went into the darkest night.**

- And He took on our sin and defilement on the cross.
- And He too cried out in grief before the Father.
- As He suffered loss and was undone by our sin.

**But on the third day, He awoke. And He was still with us.**

And it is in our unity in the death and resurrection of Christ that this Psalm goes from a truth that undoes us, to a truth that comforts us.

On the Cross, and out of the tomb, Jesus became the Person of the Promise that David claimed by faith from a distance, and we claim by faith in His Name.



In Christ, the terrible fear that filled Isaiah when he stood before the presence of the Lord is removed, and we claim that there is no fear of condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

- He is the Amen of our confidence before His throne!

## **Summary Statement**

**The Personal Presence of a Holy God is made precious and not disastrous by the person of Christ Jesus.**

**Transition:**

So what then? What is our response to these things?

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# III. THE SURRENDER >

VERSE - 19-24

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## Summary Statement

**We are against the enemies of God, and so we surrender and seek the vision to see our own rebellion.**

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## The Enemy

David then spends the next stanza on his hatred of the enemies of God.

[19] Oh that you would slay the wicked, O God! O men of blood, depart from me!

[20] They speak against you with malicious intent; your enemies take your name in vain.

[21] Do I not hate those who hate you, O LORD? And do I not loathe those who rise up against you?

[22] I hate them with complete hatred; I count them my enemies.

David's zeal for the Goodness of the LORD and the glory of His name is good and right!

We ought to see that the enemies of our God are our enemies.

## The Enemies

**AND here is the great danger that even David realizes as He goes before the Lord.**

- Our zeal for God can quickly be perverted into self-righteousness.
- We can hear God's Word preached and think about all the specks in our brother and sister's eye.
- And we think, they need to repent.
- I hope they hear these things - they are against His goodness!

**Child of God, it is a fearful thing to call someone else to repentance.**

- It does not mean that we are not called into admonishment, but we do not do it lightly.
- We do it in fear and trembling of the All-knowing, All-present, all-powerful God who knows every thought and action **WE** have ever had.
- And so we do it at great risk of becoming self-righteous.
- And David knows this!

So then...Look at how he follows up his lines about how much he hates the enemies of God.

Which again, is a good and right zeal, YET a dangerous thought if held in pride.

## **The Surrender**

### **So David concludes by writing this:**

Psalm 139:23-24

Search me! Know me! Test me! See me!

- And please lead me!
- This is not, search them, know them, see them, and then lead them...

### **And see the contrast in all of this!**

- David says he is fully known by God in ways that he doesn't even know himself!
- **David is not even the expert on his own heart, let alone the hearts of others!**

**But there is only one way our hearts can say these things.**

- And that is, we must trust Him.
- And so we come out of hiding!
- We drop the fig leaves.
- We lift our bowed heads of shame to the cross where it was paid for.

### **This doesn't mean we shouldn't first FEEL shame.**

In **Jeremiah 6**, the Lord declares the impending fall of Jerusalem by saying that they had no shame; they did not even know how to blush in their sin.

- And we know that throughout the book of Jeremiah, the false prophets were called out as those who said, peace, peace, where there is no peace!
- In other words, don't be concerned with your sin; you have peace with God.
- And Paul says in Romans, they presume upon the grace of God.
  - They walk in sin, feeling entitled to the mercy.

### **Paul also wrote in **2 Corinthians 7**, that he knows that his previous letter has caused them grief.**

That is, his letter has exposed and called out their sin.

- It has made their sin known, and in that they have felt grief.

**So then, does Paul say, I am sorry I grieve you?**

- No, he says, I am glad because of how you responded to your shame.
- They repented.

**And to be clear, there is a difference between REGRETTING your sin because of the grief and consequences it may bring, vs REPENTING of your sin because it's a direct offense against God.**

**Paul writes, Godly grief leads to repentance, while worldly grief leads to death. Remember in the Garden of Eden...**

Genesis 3:10–11

[10] And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." [11] He said, "Who told you that you were naked!"

This is the work of the enemy.

- Tell a lie about God's good plan for your life, and then when our hearts believe it, and we sin, the enemy says, you are naked, cover your shame!
- Run from God and from others!

**Instead, this is how we ought to pray each day - Our Father in Heaven, you are the All-Present, All-Powerful, All-Knowing God!**

- May your name be seen as Holy, Holy, Holy
- Forgive me of my sins!
- Please don't lead me into temptation, for I don't even know the extent of sin that might find opportunity in those lies.
- Search me and know me - and lead me away from that which seeks to hold me captive, and unto that which is Life!

## **The Turn**

### **Consider this...**

- It's one thing to say to your child, "regardless of what you do, I will love you, and you will be my child."
- It's another thing to see what the Good News of Jesus Christ declares about our adoption into the Family of God.
  - It proclaims, I knew you when you were formed, and I already know what you will do on your last day on earth - and I love you; you are my child, and that will never change.
  - I am not hoping I'm able to hold on to you; once you are of me, none can take you from my hand.
  - So then there are none who can bring a charge of condemnation upon those who are mine, because every accusation and charge was part of what I paid, and that payment was finished on the cross.
    - The great separator of families is death, but it has been defeated.
    - And death's sting, that is the venom of the serpent, has been removed from his fangs!

- So then, while it may bruise, it can not consume, because on the third day, the sealed and guarded tomb was emptied of its power!
- **Confession may feel like death, but actually is how we find life.**

**And it is only when we understand these things** that we can lower our defensive posture, we can be the poor in Spirit, we can acknowledge our poverty, and walk in the Confidence of Christ unafraid that our confession will condemn us, knowing that any consequence is only for a little while.

### **So then, WHAT IF the most mature Christians were not those who confess less, but rather confess more?**

- What if the progressive sanctification of our hearts leads to a growing awareness that we no longer need to cover ourselves?
- What if the effect of the Gospel is that we do not flinch at the conviction of the Spirit, but rather we thank Him for the grace to see what we had become blind and numb to.
- What if freedom is only found in acknowledging we are still living as if we were captive?
- What if Grace abounds when our unrighteousness is made clear?
- What if the only way we can enjoy a free gift is if we continually declare we can't afford it?
- What if the only way to flourish in Christ is to confess what He already knows?
- What if prosperity in Christ is only found in the declaration of the poverty of our flesh?
- What if it is only through confession that numb hearts become sensitive, and stiff necks become responsive?

**Conviction and Confession are a Joy not because we are excited about our sin,** but because we know we were fully known, before, during, and after the cross of Christ's costly purchase of us!

- We can only experience grace when we see and declare that we are without a righteousness of our own.
- Pride must be buried, so that life may be found.
- Washing our tombstones will not change what lies beneath.
  - It is only through the Gospel that a casket can be emptied of its death.

### **Confession declares the goodness of the full Gospel of our Lord and Savior!**

**So then, as those who are without a resume to protect, we say...**

Search me! Know me! Test me! See me!

And please Lord, lead me in the way of everlasting life!

# Summary Statement

**We are against the enemies of God, and so we surrender and seek the vision to see our own rebellion.**

Transition:

**[change slide]**

# CONCLUSION >>>

**BUT - I'd be grossly negligent to close without noting that this is not a universal truth for everyone.**

To be known by Christ is not something all people, for all time, can find rest in.

**Christ Himself warned** that there are even religious people who spend their lives learning **ABOUT** God and doing things **FOR** God, but on that day, will find that Christ never knew them.

- Paul clarifies in **Galatians 4** that believers don't just know God; rather, they are those known **BY** God.

And this knowing is not simply an awareness, as if, on that Day, Jesus would turn in confusion and say, "Sorry, I do not know who you are."

- No, to be known by God is to be in a relationship with God through Christ Jesus.
- You are not a Christian because you know Jesus; you are a Christian because He knows you.
- And that is only done through participation with the work of the Spirit who calls us into repentance and faith that **trusts Jesus Christ as the ONLY WAY we can be known.**

**We must confess that our good works, and even our knowledge of and about God, will not and cannot save us.**

We are only known by God by Grace.

And so our good works are not resume builders; they are the Aroma of Life in Christ Jesus.

**Even if you have spent the last 3 decades walking away from God, you are not far from Him.**

- It's just a turn, a repentance, and trust.
- The Prodigal Son was never truly far from his father; he found his father's goodness while he was still eating with the pigs.
- The father received the son, not because he was going to shape up and work for favor, but because the father loved the son.

If you think your evening of sin or decades of disastrous living has created a distance from God that can only be traveled through earning your way back into his grace, then you misunderstand grace.

**And so, with this understanding, we now walk together.**

**Remember the Woman at the well in John 4?**

She went to the well at midday to hide herself from others.

But she met the One who knew her shame – that she had already had 5 husbands and was living with another.

- And when she realized she was known, she tried to change the subject toward religious things.
- And when Jesus told her that He was the Messiah and was not there to condemn her,
- She ran back to the people she was trying to hide from and said...

John 4:29 “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?”

We are all HER - We CONFESS that we are the Bride who has no white dress of our own, and so we wear the gown of His Righteous Purity!

**In the kingdom of man, confession is the begrudging last-ditch effort to save the crown we long to keep.**

By our nature, we all seek to cover as much as we can so we can continue the narrative that we are worthy to ascend the throne.

**But may it not be so among the gathered people of Jesus Christ!**

- We bear witness to the fullness and worth of the Gospel through taking off the masks of our self-righteousness.
- We pursue truth in humility.
- Those who are dead to their sin have no need to cover themselves; they can be no more dead.
- Because we are eternal, and in the forever, we will walk in full restoration!

And we know that on that day, when we all stand before Christ, all those who put their Hope in Him will not be put to shame!

Pray

**Time of Consideration**

## **Consider**

[change slide]

Questions to consider:

**How does knowing you are fully known and fully loved...**

Shape your prayers?

Shape your day-to-day lives?

Shape your relationships with others?



# **Benediction**

New City Catechism! A resource to be used as a diving board into our growth in Christ.  
But remember, these things can only help us know about God; they cannot save us.  
And so, may we learn about the one that we confess is the Only Way to true Life.