

Grace Lutheran Community, 23 July 2023:  
Eighth Sunday After Pentecost

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The sermon text for today is based on  
Psalm 139:1-12, 23, 24

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Where is God in all this? A question perhaps you have asked before in your life? It may be something someone you know has said, but as humans there are times we feel that God is distant, far off from the present situation you find yourself in. Is it suffering, a time of loneliness, a time of anger and frustration? Maybe you are hurting, feeling broken and just that you have given everything you have from the depths of your being and you now feel tired. So tired from fighting for something or from fighting to make sense of your life.

Well friends if you are feeling like that today you have come to the right place. If you have ever felt like this in the past you have come to the right place today.

How many of you know the poem footprints in the sand? It is wonderful isn't it? As you read through it you are drawn into a better knowledge of the love Jesus has for you. You are drawn into a deeper understanding of the personal relationship Jesus has with you especially when we are reminded that during the hardest, darkest, loneliest and most difficult scary and trying times that is when I carried you. Of course human hearts when seeing only one set of footprints in the sand quickly assume that Jesus has deserted or was some distance away. But no.

In the Psalm today, Psalm 139 we are reminded of a deep relationship the writer King David has with God. That same relationship that we all have by faith in the God who made the heavens and the earth and the God, your God, our God who made each one of us as precious beings in God's own image.

So today if you are feeling somewhat neglected by God or if you are angry or frustrated with Him and hurting or suffering or questioning listen to this. Our God who is not far off but here now and always in His word planted and growing in our hearts.

If you are tempted to think God doesn't care or that He doesn't know what you are going through have a listen to this.

You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely. You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.

Now how much does David the writer of this Psalm express his confidence in God through a deep relationship with Him? How much when you hear these words of God do you start to see just what God sees in you and more?

If you are ashamed of your sin or of the things you have done or are doing God already knows. If you want to run from God because He knows you or if you are longing for God to respond to your cry for help: Where God can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my

bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, 'Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,' even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.

We cannot get away from God and that is such a message of love and of grace and mercy. God cares. God wants the best for His children, for you and me. God sent His only Son Jesus to rescue you and give you hope and a future in a right relationship with our heavenly Father.

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

What a joy it is then to be known intimately by God. To have every anxious thought known. As God by His words tests us for offensive ways how do you feel?

Do you feel like running or denying the things you think and do? Do you feel vulnerable or scared of God?

When God through His word by His spirit taps on our hearts and asks you why are you living that way or why are you holding onto that sin and guilt how do you respond? God's spirit brings you to the foot of the cross of Jesus and declares to you over and over again that in Jesus your sins are forgiven. You are free.

What wonderful news that we can't get away from God. What a joy that comes from knowing that God knows us deeply. Not the same way a nosey neighbour or acquaintance wants to know all your deepest secrets in order to gossip, no. God knows us and searches our hearts and tests our anxious thoughts because He loves us. He wants us to come to Him through His Son Jesus to be comforted by love, by grace and by mercy.

The purpose of God's word that convicts us of our less than perfect ways is to draw us back to Himself by His love. Not to ridicule us and say see I caught you, rather let me rejoice over you my child who is made whole again by my love. Let me restore and recreate you because I have a job for you, one that only you can do with your unique gifts I have given to you. Each of us has a unique gift to work for the glory of God and to share God's love with others as we serve them in Jesus name.

As you go out this week know that God is with you always and know that you cannot get away from God. He will never let you fall but will watch over you and strengthen you always. He has a purpose for you, His work that is done in you and by you in the world you live and in the place you find yourself this very day.

Amen