

Psalm 139
Theme: God
Series: The Apostles Creed

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I BELIEVE IN GOD: MYSTERY, POWER, AND THE TRIUNE GOD

“That does not make me happy.” It is common refrain today. It is the source of the end of a countless number of marriages. How many people have walked out of their marriage simply because they were unhappy? We live in a self-centered world where the person is the center of the universe.

People do the church shuffle because their church does not make them happy. So, they skip around until they find one that does. But, almost certainly, something will make them unhappy and off they go looking somewhere else. It happens in relationships, churches, jobs, and families.

When we think like this, it is a direct indicator that we really do not know God. Let me make this as blunt as I can make it. When we think we are the center of the universe, when we think our happiness is paramount, when we think that what I want or need is more important than God or family or friends or church then we do not really know God.

Modern conceptions of God vary from need to need and want to want. For some, God is a grey-haired grandfather in the sky who pets us and indulges us. For others, he is the granter of wishes and desires and if he does not give us what we want, we dump him for a better God. I know some who see God as their emergency rescue team. God is only important when they get into trouble. But, mostly God is this mystical observer of life and he spends most of his time overlooking our sins. We have a customized God who looks and acts and speaks exactly as we want him to. And if you have not guessed it, this imaginary creature is no God at all.

David, understood something of the nature of God. Scripture makes it clear that God is no one to trifle with. When Isaiah found himself in God’s presence in Isaiah 6, he was completely undone, he felt as if his life had ended. In Revelation 1, John falls to the ground as if dead when he sees a vision of Jesus standing before him: white hair like the Ancient of days, eyes like flame, a tongue like a Roman sword. We forget that the Bible constantly admonishes to fear the Lord. The book of Proverbs 9:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. Proverbs 10:27 The fear of the LORD prolongs life, But the years of the wicked will be shortened. Proverbs

14:26 In the fear of the LORD there is strong confidence, And his children will have refuge.
Proverbs 19:23 The fear of the LORD leads to life, So that one may sleep satisfied,
untouched by evil. (NASB)

We need to have a proper understanding of God. When we understand who God is, then there is comfort in times of trouble and joy in times of celebration. It is hard to tell if David was in trouble or he if was full of the joy of God when he wrote this Psalm. It has been said by scholars that this was the prayer of an accused man or a man who had many fierce enemies. I also believe it is the prayer of a man who has had many experiences and has come to know the power of God to sustain him. Because of that experience, David exclaimed "Where can I go from Thy Spirit? Or where can I flee from Thy presence?" We can no more hide from God that we can live without air.

David had learned that the transcendent and omnipotent God was also immanent and omnipresent, God is close by and he is everywhere. David affirms that if he would ascend to the heavens that God was there. But that is to be expected, where else would God be. But, sheol, the place of the dead, if I descend into sheol, behold thou art there. A place like that is not where we expect to find God, But behold He is there.

David goes on, I can soar to the heights that wings can take me. Perhaps he is referring to emotional highs or to high moments in his life. But again, this is where we expect to find God. But in the remotest part of the sea? In the dark and lonely recesses of depression and darkness and loneliness. In the pit of failure and anger and self pity, are these places we find God? David proclaims yes, "Even there your hand will lead me."

David continues. Surly darkness will overwhelm me. David had a sense of his own darkness, his own sin. He was afraid that his sinfulness would blot out any sight of God. But he made a wonderful discovery. God cannot be overcome by darkness. John said that God causes the darkness to flee. God will not be kept out.

When I was a kid and even now sometimes as an adult, I will go out at night and look at the stars. As you stare, you seemingly can see farther and farther and there is no end, it appears infinite. If you think for a while, you feel small and insignificant in light of such a immense universe. As great as the universe is and the infinite number of stars, God is greater still and he cares for me and for you. Otherwise, he is no God at all.

David used poetry to describe doctrines which are hard to understand. Transcendence, imminence, omnipotence, omnipresence, infinity, holiness, are words that are often used

to describe what David has laid out in this beautiful song. What are the implications of these words?

First, we must quickly realize that God is not like us. He is the creator of all things, including us. We belong to him. Only He is God. Second, God is intensely personal. He is the living God. He is not the unmoved mover. He is not silent. He is not some remote being who sets things into motion and then removes himself. No, we are confronted the One who created the universe. He is called Eloihim Adoni (Lord God). He walked with Adam and who called Abraham from the land of Ur. He is the same One who revealed himself with a personal name, Yahweh, at the burning bush. His name means "I Am" The Great I AM is the one who became flesh and we know him as Jesus. God has revealed himself to us. Without his revelation, we would never have found him because we are so small and we are too blind. God revealed something about his nature as a unity, God is one. But Scripture also reveals God as three persons, what we call the trinity. One God in Three Persons. Father, Son and Holy Spirit live in a perfect relationship of which we can only barely understand. This triune Person is holy and glorious.

God's character is holy and just. His holiness burns us. We are sinners totally separated from God and we cannot stand to be in his presence. Only he can make us fit for himself and for his kingdom.

The character of God has several implications for us. Here are just a few of them. God can never be completely captured in human ideas. Our minds will never be that big. Our salvation is not our achievement. And neither can fellowship with God be obtained by making our way to God. Finally. God always comes to us. Reverence is appropriate in our relationship to God. He is not the man up stairs, or our good buddy. He is the infinite, personal God whose Glory and Holiness forever set him apart from us.

We are not the center of the universe, God is. Happiness is a subject that just fades away when we realize to whom we belong. This very same God who is the Wholly Other, who is not like man, who is holy and dwells in glory, loves us and has made himself known to us. More than that, he has become involved in our lives by becoming flesh so that those who believe might have everlasting life.

When we profess that we believe in God, we are talking about mystery, power and trinity. The proper response is to fall before him and worship.