

“Intimacy and Deep Trust”

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Today’s Old Testament lesson is Psalm 139, verses 1 through 12 and verses 23-24. I’ll be reading from the New Revised Standard Version. O Lord, you have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away. You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, O Lord, you know it completely. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it.

Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?
If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.
If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast.
If I say, “Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light around me become night,” even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you. Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. This is God’s word for God’s people. Thanks be to God. Lord bless the reading, hearing, and understanding of your word today. Amen.

Dan and I have all our family pictures hung in the hallway of the parsonage. The other day I walked past a picture we had taken the first year we were married. I’d just come from the bathroom after putting on some make-up don’t want to scare anyone. I got an eyeful of that first year we had with each other. We

were 22 and 23. I thought to myself, “Wow, I hardly recognize us, *especially Dan.*”

I decided to go back into the bathroom and take a better look at myself in the mirror—just to make sure I was really as young looking as I remember. At first, I was rather shocked at what I saw. I stared, poked, pulled my skin up, hung upside down from the shower rod without it breaking... and then put on more makeup, added to the mascara and blush but, then it sunk in. That really is me! I thought, “*I have* changed a lot. We both have!” I guess that’s part of what Wedding Bell Sunday is all about. You look back and remember, and it brings you full circle.

Funny how we try to pretend to ourselves we really haven’t changed that much. And our friends always tell us how great we look! We try to lose weight, maybe get our teeth whitened, wear makeup, and wear modern designer clothes. We might even wear a girdle (although that’s probably not the correct terminology nowadays). We might buy a toupee or try to outrun the young guy at the gym to feel and pretend to ourselves that *we haven’t really changed **that much.***

We pretend. We hide from the truth. We rationalize, but God is one who knows us completely as the psalmist says. There are no secrets hidden from God. God knows everything about us better than we do. What we’ve done, what we’re going to do, what our weaknesses and strengths are, what we’re thinking, and what we’re going to say next. What we need is deep intimacy and trust.

Sometimes after spending 20 or 30 years with your spouse you know and feel many of the same things. But God, who is perfect, all-knowing, and all-present is one who loves us regardless of knowing all those things we may hide from each other. We may do our best to not keep secrets from our spouse, but at the end of the day, I think some or maybe most of us admit—we might not tell all.

So, we admit to ourselves that God knows everything and sees everything about us. Why *is it* then that God would even *want* to be in a committed relationship with us? We're flawed, imperfect, doubters, hiders, and many times unfaithful. God puts us at the top of his list. He wants to be in a committed relationship with us. In Psalm 139, the first four verses are dominated by the verb "know" (vs. 1, 2, 4). God knows us inside and out!

The psalmist says there's nothing hidden from God about us, he knows us completely—so there's nothing we should try to hide from God right? I don't know, maybe that's why some of us don't pray as much as we should—we don't want to think too much about what God knows. If we acknowledge to ourselves there's nothing hidden from God and live a life that's filled with acknowledging God's presence—why not be more candid with God? Why not listen and hear God search our hearts? Why not ask to be shown more about who we *really* are—not who we *think* we are? God knows and is committed to us. God loves us. Regardless of all those flaws and imperfections—why not be more candid?

God loves us so much, verse 10 says he leads us with his hand and holds us fast so we don't fall or wander away into a dangerous place. God protects us. We're safe. He searches for us until we're found, he knows our hearts, and understands our thoughts. God loves us so completely.

There's a song that's titled "Wrapped Up, Tied Up, Tangled All Up In Jesus." The beginning lines go like this. "Lord, I've searched far and wide, trying to find a love like yours. But in my searching, I've discovered that you were the only true love." Seems like *God* is the one who's wrapped up, tied up, and tangled all up in us! I'm not so sure sometimes about us being all tangled up in God. We're so very blessed to have a God that's so devoted to us.

So as we celebrate this Wedding Bell Sunday, we acknowledge the God who walks along with us through our spiritual journey. There's no need to hide anything in our relationship because we're fully known by God. Only because God loves us are we able to love one another. God's example in love to us is that we should love one another. And this kind of love is an act of the will. We determine to be patient. We yield to the other's way when we don't feel like it. We're kind even though we've asked you know who to keep his car cleaner on the inside just in case somebody other than me has to ride in it. We don't insist on our own way. We're not arrogant or rude. Love knows how to be humble and is ready to say, "I was wrong. Please forgive me." Let's reach for the example of love that God has given us. Let's love our spouse with the same kind of Godly love that only God can provide. Let's purpose to have a deep intimacy and trust.

Let's pray. Holy loving God, instill in us a desire to love each other and those who mean the most to us. As all-knowing and all-present God, we give you thanks for knowing us so completely. You have blessed our union with each other. Make us a help and support to those we love. As we're open and honest with you, help us to be the same with those we love so dearly. Remind us of how you protect us. Grant that our love for each other grows each day as you lead and hold us together. May we be as devoted to you as we hope to be devoted to each other with your love—the love that passes all understanding. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.