

“It Gets Better”
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Psalm 139:1-18

One of the greatest fears that I grew up with is that someone would really get to know me and not like what they found; that they would discover there is nothing really special about me. I wasn't always very nice to my sisters. I didn't give 110% at every sporting event I was in. I wasn't a brilliant scholar or an intensely creative person. I just... was. And my fear was that someone would discover how boring just being me could be.

There is a residue of that fear that lingers in the shadows of my mind. What if you were to discover that I am just me? What if you looked beyond the veneer of my existence and found out there is little of real substance beneath it? You might discover I'm not much of a scholar or theologian. That I'm not the kind of preacher you would drive miles to hear, and go away afterwards exclaiming that you had discovered God through the beautiful way the words were crafted. What if, as I sat in the SICU waiting room with your family, you would discover my words were inadequate?

Yes, there is a residue of fear lingering in the shadows of my mind.

Anyone else feel at times as though you have to hide the real you because you can't imagine anyone accepting the real you?

It is scary, contemplating that anyone would so totally know me that they would know my very thoughts even before I knew them. Yet, that is exactly what the psalmist is saying God is capable of. And, God is not just capable of it - the psalmist is saying that God actively searches us out and explores our very essence.

“O LORD, you have searched me 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 know it completely, O LORD.”

In my very human way of thinking I have at times responded to the knowledge that God knows me that intimately by thinking: If God knows me that well then I'd better “be” someone different so that God will love me. And, unfortunately I have acted at times on that thought. I have tried to be different than I really am.

Have you ever tried to be different, because you felt that was the only way to garner someone's attention? The only way to be accepted? The only way to be loved?

The difficulty, in our attempt to be known by others in a certain way, is that we sometimes lose sight of who we are. When we lose sight of who we are we risk losing the essence of God in whose image we were created. We risk losing the wonder and the beauty of self.

Yes, God watches us all. God looks into that innermost part of our being and watches the very real

person we are. And here is the good news: God likes what is there. God likes what is there. God searches us so that we will also like what is there. That is why the psalmist says, “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.”

The knowledge that God knows who we really are - and still loves us, even though we have a hard time loving the self that we see - is wonderful. And overwhelming.

Yet, in the midst of being overwhelmed, the Holy Spirit inspires us – fills us with God’s breath and if we open our hearts uses us to touch others in amazing ways. Somehow, if we allow God into our lives we come to the same point that the Psalmist comes to in verse 13:

“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.”

Yes, each of us is fearfully and wonderfully made. There is no need to pretend we are someone else. No need to hide who we are from ourselves or from others. Hang in; hang on, because you are not alone. You see, you are a part of this community of faith and together we have so much to celebrate and share. Know that you are created in God’s image and the Holy One is pleased. Just a thought.