

Psalms 139:1-9

John 1:43-51

How many of us could happily say that there is someone who knows everything that there is to know about us?

Every single thought, every single action, every time we struggle with a wrong inclination or temptation?

We think that we know the people we love and because of that we trust them; but how many times have we been surprised by the words or actions from those same people.

Trust is something that we either give easily or expect people to win from us, but once that trust is broken it can be very difficult, if not impossible, to regain.

We look at the situation in America, at the moment. How many of those people who voted this particular president into office have lost their confidence in him and would ever trust him again? One has to hope not many!

Psalms 139 tells us that God knows everything there is possibly to know about each one of us:

Verse 1

O Lord you have examined my heart

And know everything about me.

What everything?

Am I the only one who feels a bit nervous about that?

I mean, OK, God knows everything about us – does he know or even care that at Christmas I committed the sin of gluttony by consuming a large box of chocolates by myself in order that I wouldn't be tempted the next day?

Well, apparently so:

Verse 2

You know when I sit down or stand up.

You know my every thought when far away.

Every thought? Crumbs!! Every quick, foolish, unworthy thought..

Verse 4

You know what I am going to say
Even before I say it, Lord.

Does God share in my embarrassment when foot in mouth I retreat trying to look inconspicuous?

It takes a bit of getting used to – this fact that actually we are never, ever alone.

Verse 7:

I can never escape from your spirit!
I can never get away from your presence.

This is good news most of the time, if a little daunting.

As Paul says in Romans :
Nothing can separate us from the love of God.

A verse of Scripture that I found a great comfort when my dad died.
But it's a promise that often we don't take any further than that sense of comfort it brings.
Nothing can separate us – Nothing??

What about those people we see doing hurtful things?
Surely God can't love them as much as "me" when I am on my "best behaviour?"

But that is the shocking thing about God's love – at that moment in time God probably has more compassion and love for the one I am accusing than for me in my "cocoon of righteousness."

Of course, the redeeming feature of God's love is that he continues to love us even when we act like spoiled children, because he can see the potential underneath the self-interest.

In verse 42 of John we read of Jesus meeting with Simon for the first time:

Then Andrew brought Simon to meet Jesus. Looking intently at Simon, Jesus said, "You are Simon, the son of John- but you will be called Cephas" (which means Peter).

Cephas in Aramaic is Peter in Greek – and the name Peter means "a rock". But the more we learn about Peter the less like a rock he appears to us: but Jesus could see every part of Peter.

When Nathaniel met Jesus he was dismissive:

"Nazareth!" Exclaimed Nathanael, "Can anything good come from there?"

How often do we hold views about people without getting to know them?

Not far from where I lived in Halifax there was a notorious housing estate. The estate had a deserved reputation for drugs and violence. To my shame I remember once doubting someone's integrity because I knew they had been brought up on that estate and their parents were still there.

It's a sobering thought that whenever we think or say something derogative or dismissive about another person – Jesus hears and sees our lack of grace.

And if we do have negative thoughts about someone, its worth noting how it leaves us feeling. It doesn't leave us with a sense of peace does it ?

The thing is we can never pretend to be someone we are not before Jesus, because he knows everything that we are and everything that we are not – and the amazing thing is that despite all that, he loves us and wants us to follow him!

Verse 51 of John 1 refers back to Jacob's dream recorded in Genesis 28:12

Jacob found a stone for a pillow and lay down to sleep. As he slept he dreamed of a stairway that reached from earth to heaven. And he saw the angels of God going up and down on it.

Jacob was running away, with nothing to his name but the clothes he was wearing. The dream was a promise from God that he would be brought back to his land in peace and prosperity.

The angels going up and down the ladder was to demonstrate to Jacob that God was there with him and the ladder was linking heaven and earth.

Jesus was saying to Nathanael, don't think the fact that I knew who you were before I met you is the most remarkable thing you will see.

He is promising that he stands as the ladder between earth and heaven, or God and mankind, and Nathaniel and the others would be given spiritual insight into who he was and why he had come.

But at the time of this meeting neither Nathanael, or any of the others, had any idea of what lay ahead for them and for the world.

I suppose they found Jesus and the situation all rather thrilling and even magical and very exciting, something completely different to everyday life. They would have no idea that this man, Jesus, was on a mission to save the world and that they would be a part of it.

So it is with us. We enjoy meeting together, we enjoy worshipping and socializing and looking after each other – and so it should be; however, we must never lose sight of the fact that when we agreed to follow Jesus we were given spiritual insight to be aware of God, continually with us and with the world, and we are constantly being renewed by his Spirit in order to assist in Jesus' mission to that world.

Like those first disciples, with all our weaknesses and faults, called to work with God in order to bring heaven and earth back into unity through Jesus.

We are all part of God's plan.

We are missionaries to the Gospel message of love..

We belong to him and we belong to each other. We are one in Christ.

Ephesians 1 :10

This plan, which God will complete when the time is right, is to bring all

creation together, everything in heaven and on earth, with Christ as head.

Thanks be to God. Amen.