

## Special Focus Session

January 15, 2023

### VALUED BY GOD

#### Psalm 139:1-10, 13-16

Psalm 139 points out at least two theological truths about the *person and work of God* (what we in the classroom would refer to as *Theology Proper*). The first truth involves His *attributes*. The three “omni’s” of God we see in the text, refer to essential attributes of His deity. His omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence not only help us to understand the nature of God, but also assure us that He is able to accomplish what He says He will do. The second truth involves how God *relates* to His creation. He is both *transcendent* (somewhat “out there” and far away), yet *immanent* (right here “with” us). Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, David joined these lofty theological truths together to highlight both the greatness of God and the significance of God’s greatest creation: mankind. We can structure this week’s lesson around the three “omni’s.”

**Mankind and God’s omniscience (vv. 1-6).** Simply put, omniscience means *all knowing*. One of the attributes that makes God “God” is that He knows *everything*. Verse 1 summarizes David’s conclusion (while alluding to His transcendence and immanence): if God knows everything about everything, then He knows everything about *me!* The verses that follow point out poetically some of those things God knows. God knows about our *actions* (v. 2). He understands our *thoughts* (v. 2). He knows when we *move*, and when we *rest* (v. 3). In short, He knows *all of our ways*. He even knows what we will say before we actually say it (v. 4). Verse 5 goes even further: because He knows us so well, He *protects* us by setting Himself around us and He *steadies* us with His hand. All of these characteristics demonstrate God’s *immanence*. In the final verse in this section, David exalts in the truth that God’s knowledge is *extraordinary*, *beyond his comprehension*, and *out of his reach*. That shows His transcendence. For reflection: *What are some ways that you personally see God as transcendent (“out there” and far away)? What are some examples of His immanence (His “closeness” to us)?*

**Mankind and God’s omnipresence (vv. 7-12).** While the first stanza of the psalm highlighted God’s relationship to man, the second stanza highlights man’s reaction. But the overall emphasis is on God’s *omnipresence*. The term means that God is *everywhere at the same time*. Verse 7 is *rhetorical*. It should not be taken as David’s literal attempt to escape from God’s presence, but rather as an affirmation that God is always present, everywhere. The imagery in the verses that follow is *metaphorical*, the idea being “wherever I go (up, down, east or west; in the darkness or in the light), You are there.” The Hebrew construction is more emphatic, stating, “Wherever I go, *YOU*.” Notice as well that these verses are *personal*. “I,” “me,” and “my,” are scattered throughout the text. And not only is God there *with us*...He is there *for us* (v. 10). For reflection: *What are some ways that God’s omnipresence encourages you? Are there times that it might frighten you? Why?*

**Mankind and God’s omnipotence (vv. 13-16).** The Bible makes much of God’s power, and much of God’s power is seen in His creation (see Jer. 32:17, Col. 1:16, Rev. 4:11, et al). Yet in

all of creation, nothing stands out more emphatically than the creation of man, who alone is made in the very image of God (Gen. 1:26-27). Here, David recounts to His Creator the intricacies (and mysteries) of human life itself. Notice that God does the creating (v. 13); it is *personal, remarkable, and wonderful* (v. 14). But human life is also *valuable*. It is planned by God in advance (v. 16) and superintended by God in its progress (vv. 13-15). For reflection: *What do these verses teach about the sanctity of human life? How much ownership do you think we can legitimately claim over our own lives?*