

# *A Special Creation*

**Bible Reading:**  
**Psalm 139**

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There is a pain that digs deep into the heart of many a resident of Ottawa. You can see it just about every time you wander through the mall. It's perhaps more hidden, but present in cubicle after cubicle -

the pain of people feeling alone  
the pain of people feeling unnoticed and unwanted  
the pain of people feeling worthless.

Some experience it because they have gone through rejection by someone they had loved. Perhaps because, for some reason, they have not felt the affirmation and encouragement of their parents. Perhaps because of merciless teasing and bullying at school. Or perhaps just simple circumstances of life that have left them rather alone.

It can happen for many different reasons.  
But it happens.

Many try to compensate through their work. They work hard. They work well. They seek, and often gain recognition for work accomplished. They rise through the ranks. Get the corner office. Attend the important meetings. Receive the raises.

Others become involved in relationships that are somewhat less than wholesome.

In recent years there's been a real scourge on the Internet as virtual relationships and fantasies get played out to the point of addiction, as lonely souls try to fill their inner emptiness.

And then, of course, there are all these self-esteem programs we could sign up for.

But at the end of the day - well, somehow these things seem to drain away. They don't really satisfy. Feelings last a short while, but then the dullness settles back in again.

If you really want to fill the inner gap, the longing for affirmation, the need to be able to look in the mirror and feel good about the one you see, we need go no where other than God's gracious Word.

Here we are reminded that our importance doesn't come through our own efforts - what we do, or who we're with, or where we are.

Importance comes from the One who created us valuable - created us valuable because He himself is valuable. We are special because we are like Him — and **HE** is special!

Life can sometimes be a cruel experience. It can sometimes be singularly painful. Sometimes just plain hard.

And even for those of us who are raised in faith, and have heard it before, we need the healing medicine for our souls that comes through passages such as Psalm 139. We need to hear about the majesty of the Creator. And we need to hear, again and again, how He is our Heavenly Father. And we need to hear how important we are to Him. Yes, we need to hear that again and again.

And in that hearing comes a divine encouragement - yes, we are filled in wholesome ways, rather than the often destructive ways or false ways and really oh so temporary ways which the world offers.

There is much in Psalm 139 that we could ponder.  
Today I invite you to quietly reflect on the words of v.13-18.

Let's say them together -

13 You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb.

14 Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous-- and how well I know it.

15 You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb.

16 You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.

17 How precious are your thoughts about me, O God! They are innumerable!

18 I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up in the morning, you are still with me!

These words come in a context, an important one.

To appreciate our value, we first appreciate the value and magnificence of the One who made us.

The opening two words prepare us well.

You can go over them quickly. But don't.

They are more than simple and quick words of address. They are words of wonder: *Oh, Lord!*

And then it begins.

Verses 13-18 are cradled within verses that speak of the omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence and omni-judgement of God - the truths that He is everywhere present, all-knowing, all-powerful, and perfect in His evaluations.

[Marva Dawn *I'm Lonely Lord* p.151]

God is, quite simply - "*all*."

And the miracle is that we, who are anything **but** "all"

who are limited in where we can be  
who don't know everything by a long shot  
who find ourselves sometimes very weak  
and who make some really dumb errors

**we** get to be in relationship with the God who is so total.

It is that relationship with Him which becomes the ground for our value, our significance and our purpose in living.

In that context then, we can ponder v.13:

*"It was you who formed my inward parts..."*

or, as the New Living Translation puts it:

*13 You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body...*

The original language refers to the abdominal organs, which is where the emotions and affections were believed to reside.

That's where we get our laughter, our love, our drive, our passion.

That's where the "*true us*" is found.

The most private parts of ourselves, the most secret, the parts of our lives that no one else knows about or understands or wants to take the time to get to know -

- those parts are understood perfectly by God.

Those inner parts,

**every** part of our being

was carefully put together by God, the Master Craftsman.

One of the defining characteristics of ancient Hebrew poetry was that it used parallelism - a statement was repeated in two lines in slightly different ways; ways that reinforced each other.

"A thousand may fall at your side  
ten thousand at your right hand..." (Ps 91:7)

And so it is here throughout Psalm 139 - poetic parallels.

V.13 - God forms our delicate, inner parts.

Parallel - He knits us together in our mother's womb.

Other translations have "You wove me together in my mother's womb."

Have you ever examined a woven tapestry?

All the threads going back and forth?

The different colours, each chosen deliberately, and each brought onto the loom at exactly the right time and place?

You can't do that sort of work without tremendous care and skill.

It doesn't "just happen."

All the threads and colours, in just the right pattern, to make me.... and you!

Hair.

eyes.

Skin.

IQ

Personality.  
Abilities.  
Interests.

When a man and woman unite in an act of love 23 chromosomes from the woman and 23 from the man, carrying some 15000 genes from each parent, are joined together. These genes, like letters of a divine alphabet, spell out the unique things that make each person who they are:

- colour of eyes, hair and skin, facial features, body type and personality qualities and intelligence, sex.

It's God's divine blue print.

Within 6 to 12 hours of fertilization the one cell had split into two, and then 4 and then 8 and so on.

The new human being – and yes, that's what it is even at that early stage, no matter WHAT the laws of the land may choose to say –

all 8 cells of that person, journey down the fallopian tubes and settle into the mother's womb, implanted into the uterine wall, and begin to grow at a dizzying rate. At 3 weeks the baby's heart begins to beat. By 4 weeks arms and legs appear, internal organs grow, and the little person is 10,000 times larger than at first.

By 6 weeks the brain is fully developed and its signals can be measured. At three months the baby is a beautiful little astronaut moving in a watery capsule with unique fingerprints, closed eyelids and a translucent skin.

And so it proceeds, until some 266 days after conception there is birth, an intricate baby containing millions upon millions of cells, each with a special function.

That, friend, is ***your*** story.

What a wonder!

What a miracle!

What a gift!

David may not have fully understood all this detail, but that it was an amazing miracle - that he truly gets!

*v. 14: I praise, you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.*

*Fearfully* - not in the terror sort of meaning. The Hebrew word comes from one meaning something that is awe-inspiring, astonishing, something truly amazing that it leaves your mouth open; speechless.

*Wonderfully* - (there's the parallel poetry thing again!)

Made as a wonder.

In other words, as something that is too great, too deep, too much to understand. You can try all you want, but you'll never fully understand it.

And, oh, isn't that the truth!!

I've sat with people who have gone through test after test, and the doctors have been left baffled.

Baffled sometimes by illness.  
And baffled, sometimes, by their recovery.

Marva Dawn reflects on her own medical condition. She is a sensitive Christian scholar who has struggled her whole life with disabilities. Marva writes:

“The failure of my pancreas in my teen years made it impossible for me to gain weight, to metabolize food effectively, to develop properly. Now the intricacies of balancing blood sugar with activity and insulin affect my gum tissues, vision, the speed of healing, the sensitivity of the fine nervous system, the ability of my body to increase blood pressure to handle energy needs, and on and on. How could these interconnections have happened by accident?”

*[I'm Lonely Lord, How Long p.153]*

And the answer is - they didn't.  
They didn't happen by accident.  
**You** didn't develop by accident!

Don't ever forget it!  
Which the poet reminds himself with the parallel statement:  
*wonderful are your works; that I know very well.*

“Yes, Lord, I AM amazed by how you made me. It IS truly MAGNIFICENT.”  
I don't understand it all.  
Sometimes I don't even realize how deep the mystery goes.  
But that it is amazing, a mystery, a wonder -  
that my life is this.....  
that much I know.

The wonder in the womb -  
Your life, friend, created deliberately.  
Created with purpose. Created with meaning.  
Right from the very first day.

Which is the very truth that prolife groups rally around as they seek to defend the defenseless.

As do those who work for those that have been born into difficult life situations; working for adequate food and provisions, working towards reversing ghetto conditions, working against domestic violence and abusive situations.

If that weren't enough, there is a repeat in verse 15 - same truths all over again.  
To remind us.  
To encourage us.

And then moving forward to verse 16 -  
Not only are our body parts carefully sculpted.  
So, too, are our days prepared.

Please - don't think of this in the sort of fatalistic way that our muslim neighbors do, where every event is Allah's will, and we have absolutely nothing to do with it. All we can do is roll over and submit.

That's not what the Psalm is saying.

There are two words here in Psalm 139 that actually stand in tension.

The first is "In your book were written all the days"

The word for "writing" indicates incompleting action, ongoing action.

The writing is in process.

It continues to happen.

The next phrase - "*all the days that were formed for me*"  
the word *formed* indicates completed action.

As in many other places in the Bible, there is a conjoint tension, a living tension between what is ongoing and what God has decided in His eternal decree,  
where God grants us free will and where He sovereignly commands  
where we speak, and where God does.

God sets in place our gifts and personalities - amazing, isn't it, how early you can see them develop in children, and how form they can be?

God has long-term plans and goals. He will guide and shape our lives towards them.

But God also grants us, as He has his people all through time, the freedom to rebel, to wander, to change course.

The miracle of the gospel is that God can pick up the broken pieces of our lives, of our errors, misjudgements, run-ins with the effects of the Fall in Creation — He can pick that up and make beautiful new beginnings for us.

That's the teaching from Romans 8 - "*God works in all things for the good of those who love Him...*".

The miracle is that not only **can** He do this.

He **will** - for all who come in repentance to Him through Jesus.

God cares for our lives.

And He calls us to care about them.

To care about our own lives.

To care about the lives of our neighbors.

To *love your neighbor as yourself*.

It's something I certainly have experienced.

Though I never dreamed it in high school, or during my undergrad years, I now can look back and see that God had been shaping and preparing me all along for the place where he's now put me - in parish ministry.

I've made many choices and done many things.

But they were all under the guidance of, and in the care of, the all-knowing, all-wise, all-powerful, all-present Father in Heaven.

The same is true for you.

The God who wove you together, continues to hover over your life, shaping and creating it the way that Genesis 1 tells us that the Holy Spirit hovered over the formless deep and chaos and fashioned it into a beautiful cosmos.

He does that because He loves you.

He does that because He values you.

He does that with the love and value that propelled Him to send His one and only Son to earth to redeem you and me.

The cross - **that**, friend, is your value!

Never, ever forget that.

You know, if you're like me, the things that weigh heavy on us, the challenges and hard times seem to some how spring to life with most power in the middle of the night.

Have you ever found that?

If that's as true for you as it is for me, here's one final word of advice.

From Psalm 139.

When you're down on yourself, or down on life,  
think about this Psalm.

Think about the God that this Psalm praises.

Your God.

Your Father in heaven.

Remember this important truth of your great value -  
- value because of His great value.

And what you'll find, as you start to count that all up,  
is that you'll settle down.

Peace will return.

And you'll fall asleep again.

Which is why v.17-18 say, in the New Living Translation:

17 How precious are your thoughts about me, O God! They are innumerable!

18 I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up in the morning, you are still with me!

David calms down and falls asleep thinking of God's goodness.

And wakes up again - God is still there!

Even when he loses track and drifts off - God never does.

Always conscious.

Always present.

Always caring.  
Always guiding.  
Always working.

The God of All and Always.

Our Father.

for Jesus' sake. Into whose hands we are given.

And from whose grasp we can never be snatched (John 10:29).

That's your value.

That's your place in life.

And that, friends, is worth getting up for on Monday morning!