



Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – August 12, 2023

The Lord be with you.

“I think I know you.” This what a man said to me recently as we were introduced. I think I know you. Really? You know me? That can actually be kind of scary to have someone say to you, I know you... For the next few moments, I want us to think about being known known by God and how that offers us an incredible opportunity for growth as there is great untapped potential in being known by God. I find this in a prayer, a prayer of David in Psalm 139, verses 23-24.

I pray it. 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.

Here was David, the man after God's own heart, who is presenting himself to God for a spiritual CAT scan, a spiritual MRI, as David is asking God to do a deep searching, probing diagnosis and then to lead David in the way to genuine, authentic life. David pleads with God, Search me, O Lord, look deep inside me. Psychologists tell us that you and I, that we have areas in our lives to which we are blind. Well even across the internet, you probably can't see things in me that I can see, as there were things about all of us that other people know that we don't know about us. It's like the blind spot when you're driving a car, that if you're not careful about the blind spot, it will blind side you. And there were areas in all of us where we are blind, and there were areas in us that are buried.

Now, it took me a lot of years and a lot of help to finally come to some awareness that there were parts of me that I didn't know, stuff buried so deep inside that it was unknown to me, even unknown to others, but known to God. This prayer of David is about the blind spots and about the bare spots in all of us that God can help us with, the God wants to help us with that can lead us to our most significant growth. David begins Psalm 139, acknowledging that God does know him. And so David says in verse one, O Lord, You have searched me and known me. And now David is turning all of that into prayer. David is well aware that we are complex creatures, well aware that even the most self-aware among us have a deep place known but to God, David knows how prone to self- deception he is, places where He is blind places that are very deep.

In Psalm 51, David's bitter, sweet confession of the sins of adultery and murder, David is painfully aware of areas where he is blind and self-deceived, and so David prays in verse 8 of Psalm 51, teach me truth in my inward being. Teach me wisdom in my secret heart. Lord, I need



water from rock

help. John Calvin said, that true and sound wisdom consists of two parts the knowledge of God and the knowledge of ourselves. Many spiritual writers tell how spiritual growth starts with self-awareness, spiritual growth always requires a knowing of ourselves, we have to first know those parts of ourselves standing in the need of prayer.

Now, it strikes me that David is a man who is confident of God's love in order to pray, search me, O God, and know my heart. Test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me. This is a prayer by someone who is sure of God's love for him just as he is, but that God loves him too much to leave him where he is. Now tell me, does this thought that God knows everything about you, does that frighten you? Or does it bless you? I mean, if you think of God as demanding, stern, unforgiving then it likely scares you that God does know everything about you. But if you know the God of the Bible is infinitely loving, gracious, forgiving then it inspires you, it lifts your spirits that the great physician does know everything about you and the great physician wants to help you and can help you.

Knowing God the way David knows God, David is bold to pray, he's confident to pray, see if there is any wicked way in me, Lord, I wanna know if I have a spiritual cancer growing in me, I want to know where I might be spiritually blind. See if there is any wicked way in me. Now, the word translated here as wicked is not the usual Hebrew word for wicked, the margin of my Bible, and I think rightly translates it as hurtful, see if there was any hurtful way in me. Hurtful to me. Hurtful to others. Hurtful to God. Lord, I want to know. And then lead me. Lead me in the way, everlasting.

Search me, O God, and know my heart. Test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any hurtful way in me and lead me in the way, everlasting. This is a prayer about untapped potential, about great opportunity for growth, and as in the best way we know how we present ourselves to God, and we ask him to look deep inside of us and to show us weaknesses we did not know to show us strengths that we did not know and to lead us in the way to life, because God loves you more and then you could ever love you.

God will be so glad to help answer this prayer as you pray it, and God will help you. He will. I am Tim Smith, a fellow traveler on the pilgrim way.
Thanks for listing. Until next time.