

Living In Awe of God

Psalm 139

Sermon Handout

The apostle Paul's awe after considering God's mercy to him as a sinner:

"To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen." 1 Timothy 1:17 (ESV)

Paul David Tripp says that we were made for awe:

"I came to see that I was wired for awe, that awe of something sits at the bottom of everything I say and do. But I wasn't just wired for awe. I was wired for awe of God. No other awe satisfies the soul. No other awe can give my heart the peace, rest, and security that it seeks. I came to see that I needed to trace awe of God down to the most mundane of human decisions and activities."

- Paul Tripp, *Awe: Why It Matters For Everything We Think, Say, Or Do*

In Psalm 139, David is filled with awe regarding God's presence and work in his life:

"Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it." Psalm 139:6 (ESV)

"How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!" Psalm 139:17 (ESV)

Psalm 139 is a psalm displaying an awe-driven life.

It poses the question: Where is your awe? What drives your life?

A. David's Awe - Psalm 139:1-16

1. Reason For Awe #1 - Who You Are Truly Matters to God. Psalm 139:1-6

- God intentionally knows us deeply (better than we know ourselves.)

“O Lord, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar.”

- God studies the habits and patterns of our lives.

“You search my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways.”

- God knows us better than we know ourselves.

“Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether.”

- God protects and preserves us. He has our back.

“You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.”

Know this: God deliberately and personally seeks to fully understand everything about you. Who you are matters to Him.

2. Reason For Awe #2- Where You Are Truly Matters to God. Psalm 139:7-12

“Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!

If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.

If I say, ‘Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night, even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.’ Psalm 139:7-12 (ESV)

Amazing: The Lord comes after us, finds us and holds on to us (even when we flee from him.)

"even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me."

Frances Thompson’s famous poem “The Hound of Heaven”:

“I fled Him down the nights and down the days
I fled Him down the arches of the years
I fled Him down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind, and in the midst of tears
I hid from him, and under running laughter.
Up vistaed hopes I sped; and shot, precipitated
Adown titanic glooms of chasmed fears

From those strong feet that followed, followed after
But with unhurrying chase and unperturbed pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
They beat, and a Voice beat,
More instant than the feet:
All things betray thee who betrayest me.”

"He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son" Colossians 1:13 (ESV)

3. Reason For Awe #3 - Why You Are Truly Matters to God. Psalm 139:7-12

God’s Intentional Purpose: The Lord formed us for these days and He formed these days for us.

God designed your personal attributes specifically for the days God planned for you.

“My frame was not hidden from you, when I was made in secret, intricately woven in the depth of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book was written, everyone of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.”

Tim Keller tells us that God knows us and loves us deeply and that is what we were created and redeemed to know:

“To be loved but not known is superficial. To be known but not loved is our nightmare. Only Jesus knows us to the bottom and loves us to the sky.”

Tim Keller

Amazing: Who you are. Where you are. What becomes of you matters immensely to God.

How do you know: That is Christ who has made you and sought you at His expense and given you a reason to live in this crazy world.

B. David's Awe-filled Ambition - Psalm 139:1-17-24

- **Worship:** David treasures the truth of God and the presence of God.

“How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! If I would count them, they are more than the sand. I awake, and I am still with you!” (Psalm 139:17-19)

- **Loyalty**: David is jealous for the honour and glory of God.

"Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord! And do I not despise those who rise up against you! I hate them with complete hatred; I count them my enemies!" (vs. 20-22)

- **Humility**: He longs to grow and be deeply transformed by God.

"Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!" (Psalm 139:23-24)

What about you? What fills you with awe? What is the aim of your life?

Group Study Questions:

1. **Psalm 139 reminds us that God knows us completely and yet continues to pursue and love us.** How does knowing that God truly knows you change the way you think about yourself and your relationship with Him?
2. David says, "*You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.*" When have you experienced God's presence, protection, or guidance in a way that increased your awareness of Him?
3. **God is present wherever we go.** How could becoming more conscious of God's presence change the way you approach an ordinary part of your week—your work, family life, conversations, recreation, or time alone?
4. David's words suggest that **where we are matters to God**. Is there a situation or season of life right now where you particularly need to remember, "*Even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me*"? How might that truth give you greater peace or courage?
5. Psalm 139 teaches that God intentionally created us and knows the days He has given us. **What are some ways you see God's unique design in your personality, gifts, experiences, or opportunities?** How might you use those things more intentionally for His purposes?
6. Tim Keller says, "*Only Jesus knows us to the bottom and loves us to the sky.*" **Why is being fully known and fully loved such a powerful foundation for our identity?** Where are you most tempted to look elsewhere for your sense of worth?
7. David's awe led him to **worship**—he treasured God's thoughts and presence. What are some practical habits that help you cultivate awe of God rather than simply going through the motions of faith?

8. David's awe also produced **loyalty**—he cared deeply about God's honor. What might it look like this week to let your love for God shape the way you speak, make decisions, treat people, or respond when God's name is honored or dishonored?
9. David ends by asking God to **search and transform him**: *“See if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”* What is one area of your life where you would like to invite God to grow and change you? What would taking one practical step look like?
10. **Tripp says that we are “wired for awe” and that what we stand in awe of ultimately shapes how we live.** Looking honestly at your daily life, what tends to capture your attention, affection, or energy? How could you intentionally redirect more of that awe toward God this week?