

# Psalms

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 29 May 1979

Preacher: Moore, Ronald (1920-1994)

[ 0 : 00 ] In dependence upon the Lord, we will turn to Psalm 139, the last two verses. Psalm 139, verses 23 and 24.

Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

This psalm seems to be filled with searching.

David was a searcher. He was searching here into the wisdom of God, so far as he was allowed to search.

He was searching in a spiritual way, so that he was able to say, such knowledge is too wonderful for me.

[ 1 : 27 ] Such knowledge as is discovered and brought to light by searching for whatsoever maketh manifest is light.

And to search is to bring hidden things to light, to have things disclosed, revealed, manifested.

The psalm begins with searching. O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Surely, the psalmist David was more or less continually conscious of the eye of God being upon him, and of God being fully conversant with him, fully acquainted with his very thoughts and desires and motives.

There is not a thought, there are not a words, says he, in my tongue. But, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. And he was conscious of the Lord's presence, so much so that wherever he might go, upward or downward, or across the seas, or take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

Then he passes on to his birth. He seems to refer to his birth, that he was fearfully and wonderfully made, that his substance was not hid from God, when he was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

[ 3 : 33 ] Thine eyes did see my substance, when there was no substance. In thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.

What sublime language? And what sublime truth? What glorious truths are here expressed? At which point the psalmist says, How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God!

How great is the Son of... And so, in contemplation, and meditation, the psalmist must have been lost.

Not lost as to his soul, of course, but lost in contemplation, lost in meditation, as though he had launched out from the shore to swim.

And we read of this in the word of God, as you know, one who went in the water, first up to his ankles, knees, and so on.

- [ 4 : 50 ]     A river for one to swim in. A sea for one to be lost in. Lost yet not lost. And it occurs to their mind to be lost in Jesus quite.
- Out of self to Jesus lead. Such a thing as being lost, and yet never lost, in the Lord Jesus. And even in the meditation of him.
- And how sweet at times the meditation of Christ is. And surely, David was meditating, contemplating in that way.
- He was musing. He was musing, not only upon the works of God's hands, in creating him, or in bringing him into the world, but he was meditating on the greater things, upon God's great salvation, and the things that accompany salvation.
- So that he was, in effect, lost. Lost. And you know, we have to be lost, my friends, in order to be saved.
- [ 6 : 11 ]     Who can be saved before they are lost? Who can be cleansed from sin before they know that they have sinned, to be cleansed from?
- And who will pray for the salvation of their soul? Until one knows that they have a soul in need of salvation. Who will pray for the revelation of Christ, and the application of his precious blood?
- Until they are brought to feel their need thereof, and are shown by divine revelation that in the gospel, provision is made for all such.
- It's a great thing, really, to be lost in spiritual meditation. I wish I could be more lost in that sense. we have to confess it with sadness and grief, as well as guilt, not sadness and grief without guilt, that we are all too much earthbound.
- How we speak of the earth, my friends, that shows that we are earthy. if we were but more heavenly, if we had more of a spiritual mind, then we should speak not so much of the earth, but of heaven.
- [ 7 : 39 ]     And especially of him who makes our heaven, even Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. Well, to revert to this psalm is so much searching in it.
- Now, it's good to be searched. It is not for us to search each other, although it is for us to try the spirits, whether they be of God.
- And it is for us to know one's spiritual condition, at least to some extent, according to one's fruits. But God is a searcher for all that.
- God is a searcher of all hearts. I, the Lord, search the hearts. I try the reins. I penetrate into the inner being, dissecting, separating, analyzing.
- The Lord knows us, my friends, through and through. But, at the same time, it's so easy to assent to truths in a general sort of way and say, well, I accept.
- [ 8 : 56 ]     I believe, I know that God searches their hearts, and yet, we cannot be concerned about that. And if we're not, it shows us that we're not acquainted with our own heart.
- If we were more acquainted with our own heart, I believe we should tremble at the thought of God searching it, and yet, at the same time, pray that God would search it, because we need him to search our hearts, to detect everything there that is not of him, and to do as David desired God to do, to bring out, to bring to light, to discover, to David, to discover to David what was wicked, and subdue it, and control it, and pardon it, and then to be led in this way everlasting.
- Now, after stating here in verse 1, that the Lord had already searched him and known him, it may to some seem surprising that he should end the psalm in this way, Search me, O God, and know me.
- Was he not already searched? And was he not already known? Thou hast searched me, searched me. Thou hast known me, known me, know my heart.

Thou hast tried me, still try me. Thou hast known my thoughts, still know my thoughts. And you see, it's quite against nature to pray like this.

[ 10 : 40 ] It's against nature to pray at all. Quite against nature. If you pray, my friends, and I mean pray, then you've got something which is above nature.

Something that doesn't spring from nature. A natural man doesn't pray. There's a natural man in me. It's very strong, I can tell you.

And it dislikes prayer so much. It refuses the things of God. It is contrary to the things of God.

It hates God. I have a carnal heart and a carnal mind, a desperately wicked and deceitful heart still. And grace doesn't erase this.

Although sin is forgiven, it's still in our members. The pardon of sin doesn't mean that we cease to be sinners. and the impartation of grace in the goodness and mercy of God doesn't eradicate our old man, the old man of sin, even though that's got to be put off.

[ 11 : 53 ] Yes, as regards the deeds thereof and the affections thereof and the lusts thereof in doing them. Friends, until we put off this tabernacle, this body of sin and death, sin will be in us and we shall be sinners however much God is pleased to indulge us in his pardoning love and mercy and grace.

It's a fact. So let us never think that we are beyond searching however much we are searched already and let us never think that we are beyond forgiveness or do not need forgiveness however much we may have been blessed so as to rejoice in the pardoning love of God.

Search me O God. Notice that the psalmist although he names the wicked and hates them with a perfect hatred counting them his enemies he doesn't say search them he says search me it's one thing for others to be searched or for God to search others quite another thing for God to search me you see this is this is grace my friends this is the effect of grace the result or one of the many results and effects of the work of grace in one's soul if you've got it if I've got it we shall at times be praying for the Lord to search us to search us out and that so closely leaving so to speak not a stone unturned friends have you ever been searched by God as though he has turned you inside out sometimes a garment is turned inside out

I've turned my pockets inside out sometimes when I thought I'd lost something something small we turn it inside out we look into the very corners we look everywhere a garment may be turned inside out in order that it shall be repaired it might have to be turned inside out in order to be repaired friends the Lord turns his people if I may use that expression with reverence inside out inside out so that we are more acquainted with the inner man and although the outward man one's walk and appearance and dress and conversation and so on must be according to the gospel of Christ yet it is the inner man really that counts the inner man

God searches the inner man man looketh on the outward appearance so does God so does God and scripture doesn't imply that he does not look on the outward appearance he does where man cannot look God can and God does he looks into the inner recesses of the heart and of the mind David's psalm here clearly proves that but David would have it more so he would have knowledge more high he can't attain unto this knowledge he would have knowledge higher still and David is in the depths here and he would be deeper yet in the sense that God would search him and try him and know him now it's good for us to be searched

[ 16 : 22 ]    God searches not only for his people in the way of seeking them out as we read I the Lord both search and seek out my sheep but by the light which is his own and in comparison with which the noontide sun is but a dim candle so does God search with that unsearchable light that light which no man can approach unto and yet his people are put to it to the scrutiny of God it's a great thing to pray for this do we pray for it do we see a need for this prayer for the Lord to search us why why are we to be searched why does not God leave us alone I read something recently that was very solemn about someone praying like this

Lord pardon my sins but not yet I wonder if we are guilty of adding that silently pardon my sins but not yet how awful how ungodly how deceptive how destructive to one's own soul my friends we are not beyond anything we are capable of anything what is not human nature capable of a terrible thing to pray in that spirit Lord pardon my sins forgive me my sins but not yet that shows how one loves sin and how they would count it a favor and blessing to be allowed to continue in sin this shows us my friends what a close affinity we have with sin with iniquity with evil and except

God search us and in spirit and in their affection and desires separate us from the love and the practice of sin I feel this that if the Lord saves us from the love of sin then he will save us from sin but except we are saved and delivered from the love of sin we should go on sinning think of king nebuchadnezzar in the time of daniel the lord brought upon that king in a wonderful manner brought him to some degree of acknowledgement and a wonderful degree of acknowledgement that he is god and yet he was a sinner and how faithfully did daniel speak to him on one occasion and bade him to break off his iniquities his sins with righteousness well friends that's what we need we do and the lord search us and in the day of his power make us willing to be searched and as david said to break off their sins with righteousness and their iniquities by showing mercy that's how we put it i believe search me we read in the scriptures of the lord searching jerusalem with a candle why not a brighter night is this candle which the lord is said to use in searching jerusalem comparable to his own glorious unsearchable light a candle cannot be compared with the light of god with him who says i am the light of the world and yet there's some teaching there search with a candle into every corner in every place minutely you see turning everything inside out but we need this it's good for us and i believe we've got to come this way in some measure at least that my friends before we shall enter heaven because nothing but defy them shall enter therein search me oh god and only god can search us i cannot search you you cannot search me but he who knows all hearts my friends he searches although he knows entirely in every minute detail the heart of an ungodly person yet the distinction really lies here one desires not to be searched never prays to be searched although he is searched the other is searched too but he prays to be searched he prays to be known he prays to be revealed to god exactly as he is and in such a way that he shall know he is there's the distinction god searches the wicked god knows the ungodly the wicked the unbelieving heart and the worldly mind and spirit but the searched one is not aware of it in the case of god's people he still searches but they are aware of it and they desire to be kept aware of it and that they shall be made more aware of it why that no hidden thing no secret lust

may remain that no sin shall have dominion let no iniquity pray the psalmist have dominion over me friends if there were one sin left if there were one sin unpardoned only one not two but one not covered with the blood of Christ now that would mean hell for us but blessed be god when he pardons you know he pardons all for all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men and the lord doesn't let one sin of one of his people remain he blots them all out oh yes when Christ shed his precious blood upon the accursed tree and was made a curse and made sin for us it was a complete salvation a complete a perfect and uttermost atonement that's a wonderful mercy isn't it but that will not prevent one from praying like this search me oh god and know my heart know it know it thoroughly and as we have said in such a way that I shall be acquainted with it and why so that I shall learn what it is not to trust in myself so that I shall read in myself the sentence of death in order that I might find the sentence of life in him in whom alone that life is and who says because I live ye shall live also know my heart try me so the tried one still prays try me try me you see the psalmist knows that god has not finished in this matter of searching and trying but he needs further trying that is to say that he should undergo still a trial of faith trial of faith you know that faith which is never tried

I fear that these cannot be of the right sort trial of faith Peter writes in his epistle by the holy spirit about this the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perishes but does gold perish do we not think that gold is imperishable friends is perishable in comparison with the grace of god and the faith that god gives and the work of god in the soul yes in comparison it is trial of your faith which is much more precious than the gold that perisheth though it be tried with fire shall be found unto praise and honor of glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ try me try me it's a great thing to pray like this lord do try me go on putting me on trial try my faith my work my profession of what sort it is and the lord has his means you know of trying his people sometimes this trial is called a furnace and god's people in fact are chosen in the furnace of affliction they're chosen in Christ they're chosen from all eternity by god the father in his everlasting love and they're also chosen in the furnace of affliction and it is in the furnace of affliction and in the trial of their faith that they come to know that they're chosen would you know that you're one of god's chosen ones you won't come to know it easily dear friends this scripture here clearly teaches us that searching searching knowing trying is that ease is this an easy path certainly not it's not an easy path if your path is smooth and easy if you find it easy to believe easy to come to the knowledge of Christ easy to understand the word of god easy to get a blessing in your soul easy to seek the lord then my friends I must be allowed to put this question to us is there religion of god because such a religion will not stand much such characters are spoken to in the parable of Christ about the four different kinds of hearer of the word some receive the word with gladness quickly soon easily but they have no root in themselves and when you see the sun arises they are scorched or when persecution arises for the word sake they are offended they wither away those who have roots in Christ those who are built upon Christ are I believe the only ones who will who will pray like this so if you pray this prayer my friends from

[ 29 : 11 ] your very soul from the heart from the inner man desiring that god will do this both with a view to his glory and also your eternal good your eternal salvation I'm sure you're one of his you must be one of his you are one of his try me and know my thoughts my thoughts how many thoughts pass through our minds within say a matter of five minutes five minutes oh our thoughts our thoughts when we were trying to preach at South Morton you know the friends there I expect some two or three years ago I think it was we were so plagued in reading from the scriptures in the corpid because our mind was on anything rather than what we were reading and I said to a dear friend who gives out the hymns there Mr John

Pogock i said oh how terrible this is so i was reading just now in the in the service from the word of god and i was thinking about all sorts of things and he seemed amazed he said is it like that with you then yes yes it is he said well it is with me sometimes when i read the word at the desk here for a prayer meeting it's just like that he seemed surprised that i should be afflicted in this way and my friends it's not simply an infirmity it's a sin this is one of the terrible sins of their so called holy things a wandering mind a wandering mind and i mentioned to our dear friend on that occasion that we read and we don't seem to make a mistake in reading and yet our thoughts are not on the words of god we are reading showing how mechanically how automatically we can read the word of god and do other things too in the poor medieval this is very sad i'm not excusing myself by saying it's our fallen nature because there's no excuse we are excused this is our sin it's not just being poor in spirit it's being guilty guilty and such sins need the precious blood of christ but in admitting this in confessing my fault before you and my sin unto god that he might pardon it may well be who can tell that this has something to do with a scripture like this that god so searches us to cause us to see where our thoughts are that they're not centered upon christ that their minds are not attentive even in an outward way upon the words of holy scripture so know it's their sin or it is such sin must be pardoned it must be confessed and pardoned my friends such a sin as this know my thoughts know them thoroughly know them all together that they might be brought into the light of thy countenance with all my sins so as to be put behind the

Lord's back drowned in the depths of the sea no more to be remembered against us yes the sea even the sea the red sea of his precious sin atoning and soul cleansing and sanctifying her blood yes the blood of Christ sanctifies then he goes on and see and see did not God already see did not David see that God could see and understand in some measure that God understood with a perfect understanding and knew with a perfect knowledge of course he did yes David knew this and yet still he says and see see God's eye is ever upon us yes 24 hours a day his eye is always upon us he's always seeing us always knowing us always trying and always searching us but

I repeat dear friends the thing is to know it if we know that he knows if we can see that he sees now that will make a difference this will humble us this will make us cautious and wary in our conduct in short surely it will cause us to remember that remarkable word found in in Genesis thou God seest me and see thou who seest me see see if there be any wicked way in me we are not to understand by the word if that David meant that there might not be a wicked way in him certainly not David is not here declaring his innocence rather is he confessing his sin and opening his bosom as it were to to

God to God see see if see if there be any wicked way in me you see there are depths of wickedness in us my friends I'm positive of this which as yet we have not the slightest knowledge of nor are we aware of the fact that they are there hidden sins we read of in the hymn I think depths of mercy can there be depths of mercy Lord for me now those depths of mercy surely are to be related to depths of iniquity as deep as deep as their sin goes as deep nay deeper shall we desire the mercy of God to go there are heights of mercy as there are heights of sin but friends what of these depths the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked who can know it for its depths see if there be any wicked way in me any sin which doth so easily beset me giving

[ 37 : 28 ] Satan the advantage over me and bringing me into distance from God causing me and the Lord to pain and grief because the margin here I notice says any wicked way in me any way of pain or grief it reminds us of the prayer of good James doesn't it he prayed to be saved from sin that it should not grieve or pain him and I'm sure he didn't say that to the exclusion of this that it should not grieve the Holy Spirit see if there be any wicked way any wicked way whatever it is a wicked desire a wicked word yet in its thought form as it were not yet spoken but might be except the Lord keep and preserve a worldly pursuit not put into practice but in its seed form or thought form within any secret alliance or allegiance with

Satan over any particular lust or much coveted much loved iniquity or transgression or sin any wicked way in me or what wicked ways are in us friends apart from the grace the restraining grace of God there's nothing that we would not like to do nothing we would go to the very lengths of sin even though we should be told we should have hell for it.

Oh how we need then to be searched and known and tried any wicked way in me. And then finally lead me in the way everlasting.

The way everlasting. What is this? It's the way of holiness about which we may read in Isaiah. The way of holiness.

And a way shall be there. It shall be called the way of holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it. And then that remarkable word so encouraging for sinners and fools.

[ 40 : 13 ] What is it? And the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. They shall not be lost. Can't be lost.

No. If you're in the way everlasting in the king's highway of holiness all whose ways are peace, friends, your soul can never be lost.

The way everlasting is Christ. Christ is the everlasting way. He's the way to God, the way to bless.

He's the way Christ is by which all the prophets and patriarchs and psalmists and apostles went. Yes. Christ is the everlasting way.

First and foremost, he who said, I am the way, the way of salvation, the way of joy, the way of peace, the way to glory, the way to everlasting bliss.

[ 41 : 15 ] Christ is the way. Is Christ your way? I believe if Christ is your way and if Christ is my way, we shall want Christ to be first and foremost always.

We shall want to set the Lord always before us. The way everlasting. Christ is not a temporary way in this meaning and sense where we read in the scriptures if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable, which teaches us this, I feel, in one way, that there are those who would have hope in Christ but not for eternity.

They make profession of Christ but they have no eye fixed upon that heaven, that inheritance and glory which Christ has prepared for his own.

They want a heaven of their own thinking, imagination but friends, that is not the heaven to which God's people are taken and where there is a place reserved for them now, oh now, lead me in the way everlasting.

Christ is not then just a way for this life. No friends, when God begins a work of grace in one's soul, that is, something everlasting, Christ says, and he says more than once, that those who through grace come to believe in him have not life simply but everlasting life.

[ 43 : 02 ] and to know this one who I'm sure we may regard that rightly as the way everlasting is to have eternal life.

Lead me in it, says David. He knows he can't be his own leader. He needs one to lead him or he won't be led.

That's what it really comes to. We're all led. All people are led, but the thing is, by whom and to what end? We want prospect in view.

That's the thing that matters. All sinners are led. All have a leader and a guide, but the one, my friends, leads and guides are to hell, the other from hell to heaven.

or you pray to be led, Lord, lead me, lead me by thy spirit. And if you can trace that you are led by the spirit of God in a matter of prayer like this, in a matter of believing in Jesus, in a matter of committing your soul unto him for keeping, for salvation, then remember that wonderful word in the eighth chapter of the Romans.

[ 44 : 30 ] And with that we will close this evening. The word is this, and as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

The Lord add his blessing, and pardon all of this. Amen.