

Psalm

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[0 : 00] I'll let your attention this morning to the Psalm 139, reading the last two verses, verses 23 and 24.

Psalm 139, reading 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. 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 opens with this word, O Lord, thou hast searched me. And known me.

[1 : 12] Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising. Understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my love path and my lying down.

And art acquainted with all my worries. There is not a word in my tongue. O Lord, thou knowest it all together. Thou hast beset me behind and before and laid thine hand upon me.

Well, is it true? The psalmist says here, how precious are thy thoughts to me.

How great is the number of them. More than the sands of the sea. He was aware of his God. And having said all that, he concludes this psalm with this beautiful word, search me.

You know, that is a prayer of divine wisdom. The prayer of one who had in measure an understanding of what he was in God's sight.

[2 : 21] And you know, when we search for something, if it's something we really want, we search until we find it.

I have, in my work on end steel recently, been filing a lot of my research in new system of filing.

And in doing this, it's very easy to lose something and forget where you've put it. And you need it and want it much. And you search for it.

Sometimes you don't find it immediately. Yesterday I was searching for a particular document and I suddenly discovered it. And my heart rejoiced.

To search and to find. And when we come to the work of God's Spirit here. This is not a prayer of the natural man.

[3 : 24] Why if the wicked were to utter this prayer. What a blessing it would be. They don't want to be searched. They don't want to know what's in their heart.

They have no desire for the Lord to search out the deep, hidden sins and evil of their soul. What an extraordinary word this is.

Try me. Who in his right mind wants trials and affliction? Who in his right mind wants sorrows and sufferings?

Why? Why? Poor one of me. We don't want sorrows in the flesh. We would do without them. But the Lord, in his loving kindness.

Who so is wise. Says the scripture we read this morning. And will observe these things. Even they. Shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord.

[4 : 28] And it's a wise man. Divine wisdom is here. In this word. Search me. And you know. We do need searching. We need searching to the very core.

We can go on. Unaware. Of the solemn nature. Of the path we're walking in. And what God. Feels towards us.

When I was in the hospital at Bristol. Last year. Having my heart operation. After the operation. I lay in the ward. And at night. I found myself quite.

Unconsciously praying aloud. But I was saying. Lord. That's all I could get to. Lord. Lord. Lord. Do you know.

I've said this before. Coming across the ward. Just as an echo. From the back of a chapel. To the pulpit. Came this. Why callest thou me Lord?

[5 : 35] Doest not the things that I say. Oh the Lord was searching me. To see things. As the hymn writer says. Afflictions make us see.

What else would escape our sight. How very vile and baser we in God. How pure and bright. And here we see. And I feel the beauty of this blessed truth.

Search me. Oh when God searches his dear people. There will be so much to confess. Why it is the work of God's spirit.

In each of his dear children. And he works. In different ways. The same spirit. The diversity of operations. Says scripture. He works in such different ways.

How he's worked with me. May not be how he worked with you. When the Lord searches. His dear church. It is to make them see. What's in their hearts.

[6 : 39] And to bring them to Christ. That they may want. And need. And wrestle for. That precious blood. To cleanse of them sin. May the Lord. Begins with some.

In their youth. I was chairing a church meeting. Some time ago. And a young man. A student. Came forward. He was only about 21 or 22.

But it was sweet to hear. How under. One of our dear ministers. Dear Mr. Chapman. He was blessed. At the age of six. When Mr. Chapman.

Started to speak. About his experiences in the Navy. In the last war. And that struck. That young child. And he could never. And he began his.

Speaking at the church meeting. Of what the Lord had begun. At six. Some are not touched. By the blessed spirit. Until their old age.

[7 : 40] I saw one only recently. You've often heard me pray for prodigals. But the Lord has. Caused me to look in wonder. As I pray for prodigals.

I've often thought of the young. Coming back. But on two or three occasions recently. I've seen the old. At the age of 80. Brought back in the last days of their life.

Touched by his spirit. Searched. Brought out. And brought under the sound of the gospel. In their last days. And suddenly gathered to glory. All the work of God's spirit.

Is to shine. As a light in the hearts. Of his dear children. And to bring them into a knowledge of himself. And to make them willing. To be searched. And you know.

Searching. When the spirit works. In the hearts of his dear children. Whether young or old. Searching. Will have a gracious effect. And it will be. The work of his spirit.

[8 : 35] To bring a child to this place. Search me. And try me. Oh we read in the. Epistle of Peter. Trial of your faith.

Being much more precious. Than gold that perishes. Though it be. Tried with fire. May be found unto. Honor and glory and praise. At the appearing of.

Jesus Christ. First word. When I was. 15 or 16. In Manningford Chapel. Back. Under Evin Clark. The first sermon.

I ever listened to. Was this. Through much tribulation. Ye shall enter the kingdom. All my ears were open that night. And I could have.

Desired. What I'd never desired before. That the Lord's sermon. Would go on preaching. Until midnight. Such. To my soul. Was the sweetness. Of his ministry that night.

[9 : 33] And I heard him again later. From the same. Blessed spirit. And power. Fear not little flop. It is your father's. Good pleasure. To give you the kingdom.

Oh when the Lord begin. He will work. And who shall let it. No one will stop it. He will work. And we shall be willing.

To be searched. And made ready here. To be searched. And I read that 130. That 107th Psalm. Because. We read of all the powers.

Into which his people go. Solemn. Powers. Of wandering. Wandering. They wandered. Solemn. Powers.

Of rebellion. Solemn. Powers. Of folly. That beautiful description. Of the path. Of God's dear children.

[10 : 29] They that go down. To the sea and ship. And do business. In deep waters. Great water. They. Are tossed. To and fro. In doubt. And unbelief.

And fear. And temptation. Fiery trials. But. We have that beautiful truth. He bringeth them. To their desired haven. Then they be quiet.

Oh. How we come to a God. Who will search us. And the psalmist here. In this 139th Psalm. He was searched. Why.

The very work of grace. In his heart. Revealed to him. His God. And he had no doubt. That he saw. And knew every word. That he uttered. No doubt. That he knew.

Every word. That he uttered. And he had such a sight. And it searched him so much. And his sight. Was this you know. Whither shall I go.

[11 : 22] From thy spirit. Or whither shall I be free. From thy presence. If I ascend up to heaven. Thou art there. If I make my bed in hell. Thou art there. If I take the wings. Of the morning. And dwell in the uttermost. Parts of the sea.

Even there. Shall thy right hand. Lead me. And thy right hand. Shall hold me. If I say. Surely the darkness. Shall cover me. Even the night. Shall be light about me. There the darkness. Hideth not from thee.

But the night. Shineth as the day. The darkness. And the light. Are both a light to thee. Search. Have you been searched. By your God. To realize.

There's no way. We can go. Anywhere in this world. Where. Thou. Lord. Seest me. Does not follow us. But you know.

We become hardened in sin. God's dear children. Do. The psalmist David. Did. In his sin of adultery. And the Lord's. Will search it out. Thou art the man.

[12 : 22] The Lord. Will come into the souls. Of his dear people. And shine. By his spirit. Often in affliction. When they're weak and low. And then show them. And there are two aspects of this.

He searches them. To bring them to a knowledge. Of their sin. And he tries them. Often by being silent. Sent unto them. Because of their rebellion. And he tries them.

As we read. In the 107th Psalm. Then they cried unto the Lord. In their affliction. They're brought. To his sovereign mercy seat. Like Queen Esther was.

Are going under the king. Beautiful word. And that lovely word. Of the prodigal. Are going to my father's house. And oh. The searching. I'm not worthy.

To be called thy son. Make me as one of thy hard servants. I have wandered far. But now. Through sovereign grace. Brought back.

[13 : 19] And taught by his blessed spirit. I go to my father's house. And humbled. Searched. Oh have you been searched.

I wonder. I don't know. And I'm thankful I don't know. I can't. Preach. Regarding anyone's experience. Because I don't know it.

But God knows. How far. Have you wandered. May not be Aitwood Lee. I've known some.

And I know some today. Although they're in the chapel. They have wandered. In their minds. In reasoning. And trying to fathom.

What cannot be fathomed. Except by revelation. I know what's happened. Because. They're in the chapel. They've asked me questions. And I can tell.

[14 : 17] They need searching. As to their ignorance. And their darkness. And their unbelief. And their rational mind. And they need bringing.

To the mercy seat. To the. Blessed place. Show me. Teach me. Lead me. In the way everlasting. They need bringing down.

In their ignorance. And their darkness. And their unbelief. The Lord needs to search me. He's able to. Oh the blessed nations.

And try me. The Lord searches. His dear people. In condemnation. He tries them. In his sovereign grace. He keeps them waiting. At the mercy seat.

Before he answers. He makes them well understand. Well understand. Salvation is all a sovereign grace. And that he has mercy.

[15 : 17] On whom he will have mercy. And he will bring them to his mercy seat. Like Queen Esther. I go to the kings. And if I perish. I perish. But oh how he brings the wanderers back.

And brings them to his mercy seat. And brings them to his blessed prayer. And this is the reason. They have such a sight of their God. And such a clear view of him.

That they know. They cannot deceive him. They know that. Their insincerity. And their hypocrisy. Cannot deceive him. He will not.

Be satisfied. With a Lindsay Woolsey garment. He must have all the heart. Or nothing. And they long to be right.

They know. That unless they have divine teaching. Divine revelation. The precious blood of Christ. Applied to their soul. His spotless righteousness. Is their robe for heaven.

[16 : 16] And they know. They are never each other. Oh when the Lord works. And moves in his spirit. In the hearts of his dear children. Then they want everything clear.

Sin removed. Pardon known. In their soul. They want sincerity and truth. They know they cannot give it to themselves. And they are willing to be tried.

We are such proud. Independent creatures. That we have to be. Put into the crucifix of the fire.

Into the crucible of the fire. And there. Experience. Crucifying sorrows and sufferings. To keep us down. And to keep us low. We do indeed. The Lord knows exactly how to do it.

Cross handed blessings. As with Ephraim and Manasseh. Jacob couldn't understand it. But. Jacob knew what he was doing. But. Joseph couldn't understand it.

[17 : 16] But he was there. And the Lord moves in such ways. Amongst his dear church. And his dear people. To teach. And to bring them down. And to humble them. And the apostle.

In that thorn in the flesh. Which the Lord gave him. You might think. After all the suffering. Catalog of sorrows. That he went through. In the Corinthians. Where he lists.

The great list of sufferings. And sorrows he'd been through. You might think. The dear man didn't need another one. But he did. And he could see it. He was willing to be searched.

And he says this. Lest I should be exalted. Above measure. Through the abundance. The revelations. That were given to me. That was given me. A thorn in the flesh. He had been given.

Such a blessed. View of Christ. And heaven. And yet. To keep him. From pride. And self exhortation. He knew it. He had to be brought.

[18 : 11] Under that thorn. We're not told. What it was. It's. The wisdom. In the scriptures. Of God. That. The pause. Silent on that. And so. Every.

Dear child of God. Given a thorn in the flesh. Comes into the blessed nature. Of that. He cannot say. Well. That's not my thorn in the flesh. Because Paul doesn't say. What it was.

And they are given. Thorns in the flesh. And they're given. To try. They're not taken away. He besought the Lord's Christ.

To take it away. That was the trial. No. The Lord answered him. But not in the way he wanted. The Lord did not give him. What he wanted.

Yet. You cannot say. He didn't answer him. He did answer him. And he answered him in this way. To take up his cross. And his God would promise him.

[19 : 08] That he would give him strength. To bear it. And it was this. My grace. Is. Sufficient for thee. For my strength. Is made perfect in weakness.

And so. He was searched. He was tried. And he was brought down. At that mercy seat. And there. The Lord. Taught him.

What it was. To rest in his God. And he could say. In the. Remarkable wisdom. What a. Hallmark. That has upon it.

Like the. Hallmark on gold and silver. What a hallmark. There is. In that wisdom. When I'm weak. Then am I strong. And the.

Grace. That was needed. To say. Most gladly. Therefore. Will I glory. In my infirmities. That the power of Christ. Might rest upon me. Shut up. In his sorrow.

[20 : 05] Not seen on his coat sleeves. By other people. But between him and his God. A glorious relationship. That his God had promised.

And who can promise but God. That he would richly surprise every need. And never leave him nor forsake him. And be with him in all places. Where the service you go. Oh the blessed nature.

Of searching. The searchings of our God. In our hearts. To search out those hidden evils. And those dreadful sins. That awful pride. And independence. And to show us.

And to bring us down. As he did the apostle. What good was he in the church of God. Without such teaching. For God's dear tried people. Ever come this way. There are tried and tempted people.

Often tormented. That they haven't got a hope. And that Satan will have them one day. And they'll be cast into everlasting burning. And yet. Longing. And waiting.

- [21 : 02] At the mercy seat. Tried and tempted. And maybe waiting years. For the Lord to appear. And to come. And give them what. They know they need.
- And what they want. And yet. The Lord's trials. We have such a sight of them in scripture. You know. The book of Job. I've been in it a lot lately.
- It all started with heaven. As they have considered my servant Job. And the beauty of that word. Whom the Lord loveth. He chasteneth.
- And scourgeth. That's a solemn word. Every son whom he receiveth. And they would. Whoever. If he be without chastisement. Whereof all the partakers. Any bastard.
- And not son. But the apostle understood. Didn't he? Now. No chastening. For the present. Seemers to be joyous. But grievous. Oh.
- [21 : 59] When we think of that. A mind goes to Gethsemane. The path the Lord himself walked. A dear Redeemer. Lying in prayer in Gethsemane.
- Sweating as it were. Great drops of blood. If it be possible. But for this cause. I came into the world. Oh.
- The remarkable nature of humanity. We shall never fathom it. But if it be possible. Let this cut pass from me. But then this. Sacred submission. Nevertheless. Not my will.
- But thine be done. We are dust and ashes. In his sight. And there's a beautiful hymn. Blessed to me in hospital.
- In 1971. When I was in Bath. In the Anglican church. On a Sunday morning. Went down to a service there. Though dust and ashes. In thy sight.
- [22 : 55] We may. We must draw near. Beautiful world. He wrote me to peace. In great weakness. Just a few days after an operation. Draw near. Ah.
- The beauty of this. Sweet truth. We must. We may draw near. Search me. And. Try me.
- And see. If there be any wicked way in. Neglect. Neglect. Of God's holy word. Neglect. Of the throne of grace.
- And I would form. And a shower. A mere attendance. Upon the doors. Of the house of God. As they open and shut. Coming and going. With nothing. A prophet. Any wicked way in me.
- No desire. No prayer. For God. To God. No wrestling before him. No need. Of his precious blood. What are the wicked ways here? There are solemn. Besetting sins.
- [23 : 54] In every child of God. They need searching out. They lie deep. They're inherent. They're with us. Or when we.
- Speak of God. Searching us. And sometimes. His searchings are like these. They have been with me. To bring you face to face. With eternity. And then search you. Like a light.
- Shining into a dark place. I remember. Back in 1986. When I. Had an ulcer on my tongue. And the. Consultant thought it was malignant. Right under my tongue.
- At the back. And he decided to remove it. And he did. In about half an hour. And he cut it out. I came home with seven stitches. In my tongue. And waited the biopsy. But was I searched that way. For I could see.
- That if that was malignant. There was no hope. And all. How I spent. Ten days on my knees. In my study. Wrestling with the Lord. And I saw.
- [24 : 51] That night. I came home from the hospital. A catalogue. Of the sins of my life. And they passed. Down and down. Before me. On and on it went. And I came to wrestle.
- With my God. And in the midst of it all. One Wednesday morning. On my knees. In my study. He came. And as I was reading.

His holy word. I was looking at the scriptures. I lighted upon this word. He that is washed. Needeth not. Save to wash his feet.

And is clean every whit. And then I came to this. And ye are clean. I was broken to pieces. Sin was washed away. Oh the blessed nature.

Of the truth. But tried. Deeply tried. But now. At peace. When I went back. And the consultant. Had the brown file. With the result. On the table beside me.

[25 : 46] And about to open it. I sat there before him. In peace. I couldn't mind. I didn't mind. What the outcome would be. But you know.

Search me. And try me. And see. If there be any. Wicked way in me. We don't see. Or know. We are so numbed.

Spiritually. We don't see. Or know. A fraction of what God sees. In our hearts. And the corruptions. That lie there. The awful evils. The love of this world. The pride of our hearts.

Our fallen. Ruined natures. But he will show us. You know. Can you see this morning. The wisdom of this prayer.

It won't bring you. Into an easy path. It will bring you. To a place. Where you long. To be right.

[26 : 41] With your God. The psalmist. Had great wisdom. When he prayed this prayer. And he. Had known. What his God could do. When he opened this psalm.

Thou hast searched me. And known me. What a realization. He had of his God. And he wanted the Lord. To look into the corners. Of his heart. And the deep evils.

That lay there. And the solemn temptation. The fiery darts. Of the wicked one. Day and night. Evil thoughts. Hypocracies.

Darkness and evil. Desperate sins. And then. He desired. Search me. And try me. And see if there be.

Any wicked way. In me. And you know. He says. Thou hast possessed my brains. Thou hast covered me. In my mother's womb. He goes on. I'll praise thee.

[27 : 37] I am fearfully. And wonderfully made. Marvelous are thy works. And he goes on. To speak of his substance. Heads from thee. And I was made in secret. Thine eyes did see my substance. All my members.

Were written. Which in continuance were fashioned. And yet there was none. Then he comes to this. How precious also. Are thy thoughts unto me. How great is the sum of you.

The Lord has precious thoughts. Towards his dear children. He says in the prophecy of Jeremiah. I know the thoughts. That I think towards you.

Thoughts of peace. And not of evil. To give you an expected end. When a child of God is brought. To pray this prayer. Search me and try me. And see if there be any wicked way in me.

Lead me in the way everlasting. And his desire. As you can see. Is for heaven. I tell you this.

[28 : 36] The way everlasting. Is a way hidden from the eyes of the wise. And prudent. And revealed to birds. Has it been revealed to you? Dear Kenick. I believe it is.

Says. The path I see. For do you. And I'll pursue the narrow way. Till him I view. All to be brought. Now by the spirit.

To have a sight of the way everlasting. It is. Heaven itself. This little sanctuary of God. I feel it every time I enter here.

I've come here for so many years now. There is a generation that are gone. But I remember them. They've gone to glory.

They have pursued that narrow way. There are memorials on the walls here. I remember them in my boyhood days. When I was 16 or 17 coming here. And my father came here in 1948.

[29 : 35] I came here. And I remember God's dear people here. And I have known them and loved them. They've gone to glory. But the Lord says this in his holy word.

Seeing ye therefore encompassed about. With so great a cloud of witnesses. They were men and women who were searched. And tried. And they reached glory.

They stood right with God. In his precious blood and righteousness. They went left. To hypocrisy. And Phariseism.

And walking in ignorance. They knew their poverty. They knew their sinnership. They knew their need of Christ. And they obtained it. What the apostle speaks of is.

Peter is like. Precious faith. All to be given grace. To mark the footsteps that they dropped. Dear parents.

[30 : 32] And loved ones. They went to glory. And they've left a mark behind them. Seeing ye therefore. Are encompassed about. With so great a cloud of witnesses.

We've known them. We've loved them. We grew up with them. And they've passed. Through the valley. Of the shadow of death. And they're with Christ.

Which is far better. But they knew. This pathway. Searched. Some of them. I think of some of them. Tried to the very last hour of their life. As whether we.

Right well with them. I watched it. And I know it. And you know. When we come to look at this.

What a blessed truth it is. And it's not the prayer of the godless. Is it? Lead me. In the way. Everlasting.

[31 : 29] What a. Prayer this is. And you will. Be led. In the way everlasting. On one account. And one account alone. Sovereign grace.

The lord. Lead you. And search you. And try you. And lead you in that way everlasting. You'll be. Brought. To understand. With all the sovereign grace. All of his.

Everlasting mercy. I know the source. That I think towards you. Says the lord. To his dear church. Thoughts of peace. And not of evil. To give you.

An expected end. Oh in the depths of our heart. Hidden. Hidden. Hidden. From the wise and pruned. For a child of god.

In the. Pathway. To have this desire. Is divinely ordained. And given. What. Prayer.

[32 : 29] The lord. Answers. He indicts. He does indeed. The dear disciples.

In that storm. Lord save. Will we perish. He arose. And he rebuked the wind. And we read so.

Beautifully. There was a great calm. And I read it in the hundred and. The seventh psalm this morning. Tossed to and fro. And staggered like a drunken man. And they cried unto the lord.

In their trouble. Have you ever cried to your god? Blessed mercy. To be found. At the mercy seat. Crying to your god. And he delivered them.

And that beautiful truth. He led them forth. By the right way. Led them forth. Oh they were.

[33 : 31] Willing to follow him. They were indeed. So they might go. To a city of habitation. Thus. Through the path. Through the path.

Of searching. And trial. And affliction. And temptation. And wrestling prayer. He brought them to their desired home. And their quiet. That's a lovely word.

You know in scripture we have. Be still. Stand still. Sit still. I see such a beauty in it. The child of God.

Under the afflictions of the way. Brought to sincerity and truth. Before his God. Is brought to be still. At his mercy seat. And all he can say is. Lord. Have mercy upon me.

He comes as a beggar. Jesus. Thou son of David. Have mercy upon me. The man that lay at Bethesda. Paul. Thirty and eight years.

[34 : 28] Powerless. While others went into the waters. Before him. Rise. Oh the strength. That was given him to do it. In that word of his God.

When the Lord commands. When he works. When he moves. That they're quiet. They're brought down. Feeling what Job felt. Hold on fire. And they pour themselves.

In dust and ashes. In his mercy seat. The blessed nature of this. Thus he brings them. In this way. Through suffering sorrows.

That they might have. Fellowship with their Redeemer. In his sufferings. And brought to know him. A God who searcheth all hearts. Is not deceived.

And the. Psalmist knew it here. He could not. Every thought and word God knew. Searched. Thou hast searched me.

[35 : 26] And having asked. And told his God that. He asked to be searched again. That he might be kept. From being deceived. And the Lord would bring him.

To himself. And bring him to bow. And to be still. In submission. And obedience. At the mercy seat.

Oh the. Remarkable way. In which the Lord. Conforms his dear people. To the image of his dear son. It's ordained. It's ordained. It's ordained. It's the hand of God.

In their life. They feel it. And they know it. They're brought. To bow. To bow. At his mercy seat. It is the Lord.

And with grace in their heart. Given by him. To say. Let him do. What seemeth in good. No rebelling. And that's grace. And that's how the apostle.

[36 : 27] Took his thorn in the flesh. And could truly sigh. Most gladly therefore. That's grace. And great grace.

Will I glory. Not just accept it. Glory. In my infirmity. We don't. We spend our time. Wrestling with our God. Wanting things.

Different. But. The path is ordained. There's a cup. There's a mixture in that cup. It's ordained. I look back over my life now. To those footsteps.

Which I knew nothing about. And those bitter sorrows. That would. Cross life's pathway. What dear Rutherford said. Deep waters. Crossed.

Life's pathway. The hedge of thorns. Was sharp. Now these. Lie all behind me. Oh. For a well tuned harp.

[37 : 27] And glory. Glory. Do I this. In Emmanuel's land. Search me. And. Try me.

And. See. If there be. Know my thoughts. And see. If there be. Any wicked way. In me. Lead me in the way everlasting.

Know my heart. That's what he desires. And know my thoughts. Oh. To be searched.

And the aim and object. It all was. That he might be found. Right. At the last. Amen. I have a prayer.