



PSALM
139

Lord, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up.

(PSALM 139:1-2A)



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STRUCTURE

- v. 1-6** The imminence of the Lord.
- v. 7-12** Where can I flee from you, O Lord?
- v. 13-18** I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
- v. 19-24** David's lament: Destroy my enemies, O Lord!



AT A GLANCE

BLESSING The Bible consistently declares the humanity of those not yet born, but nowhere so beautifully as in this Psalm.

THIS SOUNDS FAMILIAR Job reflects the sentiments of this psalm: that suffering man wants God to "Leave me alone, that I may find a little cheer" (JOB 10:20B).

"SPIRIT" (v.7) God's Spirit, from which we cannot flee, is none other than the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Holy Trinity.

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CHRIST IS HERE

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David describes the imminent, abiding presence of God in terms that could be either comforting or oppressive to the believer. David sometimes finds the presence of the Lord overwhelming. He also realizes that God's presence is his only salvation, and praises the Lord for knitting him together in his mother's womb and knowing him even when he was being formed "in secret." Every one of us can say with David, "God did not only create the world; He also created me!" In our sin we may try to flee; when we suffer we may want to be left alone, but the Lord who loves and made us is always with us. Because of this, we may call upon Him in trouble. This psalm calls on God to destroy the enemies of the ones He has knit together in the womb. However, our thoughts and words must also come under the judgment of God. The righteousness that leads to everlasting life is found in the mercy of God in Christ.

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USE IN THE CHURCH

Antiphon: v. 1

In the Daily Office:

Fridays at Vespers; Vespers for Apostles

At the Divine Service:

Historic Introit for Easter Day (ant: v. 18b, 5b–6a) and select Apostles (ant: v. 17)

Historic Gradual for select Apostles (v. 17–18a)

Psalm for St. Andrew (ant: v. 17)

Three-Year:

Psalm for Epiphany 2B (ant: v. 14) and Pentecost B (ant: v. 17)

SPIRITUAL CARE

- When God seems far off.
- For guidance.
- During times of illness.
- Giving thanks for God's blessings.
- For repentance and forgiveness of sins.
- For those who have left the faith.
- For the protection of life against enemies.
- To guard against self-righteousness.

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PSALM PRAYER

O Christ, eternal God, You see all things in heaven and earth. At Your death the darkness of the grave was enlightened. At Your resurrection all the saints rejoiced. At Your ascension the angel hosts sang in praise. Lead us in Your way everlasting, that we may behold the excellent majesty of Your glory at Your right hand; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

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