

Sermon Note: Wonder

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Introduction

As we begin our **Call & Response** series, we start with wonder. Something happens when we realize we are known—truly known—before we even have to explain ourselves. Psalm 139 draws us into that moment. It reminds us that our lives are not anonymous, nor are they forgotten. We come from love, we live within reach of the Divine, and every breath is known before we're even aware of it. Wonder lives in the awareness that we are never alone in the universe—and never overlooked.

Illustration Videos

Note: This video includes mild strong language and emotionally intense themes. Viewer discretion is advised. The full video is approximately 10 minutes, so viewers may wish to pause for group discussion or to focus on selected scenes.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ic_FnHBiOYo

In this video from *The Queen's Gambit*, Beth is quietly mentored by Mr. Shaibel, who sees her potential from the beginning, believes in her, and follows her journey even after she leaves. His care remains hidden until she returns and discovers just how much she was known and remembered.

Why This Video?

This story mirrors the emotional and spiritual center of Psalm 139. Beth spends much of her life feeling alone and overlooked, unaware that someone was quietly paying attention. Mr. Shaibel didn't force his presence or seek credit. He simply saw her, supported her, and stayed connected in ways she never imagined. When Beth discovers what he had saved and followed, the moment becomes a turning point. Being known can change how we see ourselves and how we see the world.

Video Discussion Questions

1. What stood out to you most in the relationship between Beth and Mr. Shaibel?
2. Why do you think Beth was so affected when she saw the wall of clippings?
3. Have you ever discovered that someone was paying attention to your life more than you realized? What did that mean to you?
4. What makes it difficult to believe we are known and cared for in this kind of way?
5. In what ways is being known a comfort? In what ways can it feel vulnerable?
6. When have you felt seen or understood by someone else—even if they never said it directly?
7. How might this story shape the way you understand God's presence in your life?
8. How does it feel to imagine that God knows you this personally and completely?

Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18 (NRSVue)

¹O Lord, you have searched me and known me.

²You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.

³You search out my path and my lying down
and are acquainted with all my ways.

⁴Even before a word is on my tongue,
O Lord, you know it completely.

⁵You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.

⁶Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is so high that I cannot attain it.

¹³For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.

¹⁴I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
that I know very well.

¹⁵My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

¹⁶Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.
In your book were written
all the days that were formed for me,
when none of them as yet existed.

¹⁷How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!

¹⁸I try to count them—they are more than the sand;
I come to the end—I am still with you.

Scripture Study Questions

1. Which lines of the psalm stood out to you most? Did anything feel familiar, surprising, or new?
2. How does the psalmist describe what it feels like to be fully known by God?
3. When have you experienced the joy—or the discomfort—of being known deeply by someone?
4. Do you think being known by God brings comfort, accountability, or both? Why?
5. What kind of environment helps you feel safe enough to be open and honest—with God, with others, or even with yourself?

Additional (Optional) Questions

1. What does Psalm 139 say about how well God knows us?
2. When you read the psalm, what verbs (action words) catch your attention?

3. What do you think it means when the psalmist says that God “searches” us?
4. How does this passage suggest God treats us, knowing both the good and the hard parts of who we are?
5. How can we echo the attributes of God in our world?
6. Who knows you the best right now?
7. Whom do you know the best right now?
8. How do you treat the people you know the best? Is that different from how you treat strangers or acquaintances? Why?

Weekly Action

Set aside ten quiet minutes this week to quietly sit with God. No agenda, no requests. Simply let your prayer be presence. If it helps, read Psalm 139 slowly and imagine God saying it directly to you. Afterward, consider sharing with a trusted friend, family member, or spiritual partner what it felt like to be known in that moment. What was comforting? What was challenging? What did you notice?

Prayer

Loving God, You know us completely. You know our thoughts, our fears, our hopes, and even the things we try to hide. And still, you call us beloved. Help us to rest in your knowing, to stop hiding, and to find courage to be more fully ourselves... with you, with one another, and within our own hearts. Amen.