

Sermon Note: Creative Creator

Second Sunday after Pentecost

Introduction

As we continue our series on Seeking God, we explore Psalm 139 which beautifully captures the omniscience and omnipresence of God, portraying a Creator who knows us intimately and is with us constantly. This Psalm invites us to marvel at the intricacy and intentionality with which we are made, highlighting the divine artistry involved in our creation. As we prayerfully consider these verses, we are called to recognize and celebrate the creative power of God today, in our lives and in the world around us.

Illustration Video

https://youtu.be/nEUzQ7yL9A0?si=_oMn2PYxtiwNUWWG

In Pixar's *Inside Out*, the control room scene showcases the intricate workings of Riley's emotions, symbolizing the complexity and creativity within the human mind.

Video Discussion Questions

1. How does the depiction of emotions in "Inside Out" help us understand the complexity of human nature?
2. In what ways does the creative portrayal of the mind in the film reflect the wonder of God's creation as described in Psalm 139?
3. How does recognizing the intricacies of our emotions and thoughts inspire a deeper appreciation for the Creator?
4. Can you share a moment when you felt a profound sense of God's creative presence in your life?
5. How can understanding the creativity within ourselves lead us to a greater sense of purpose and connection with God?

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

¹Lord, you have examined me.

You know me.

²You know when I sit down and when I stand up.

Even from far away, you comprehend my plans.

³You study my traveling and resting.

You are thoroughly familiar with all my ways.

⁴There isn't a word on my tongue, Lord,
that you don't already know completely.

⁵You surround me—front and back.

You put your hand on me.

⁶That kind of knowledge is too much for me;
it's so high above me that I can't reach it.

¹³You are the one who created my innermost parts;
you knit me together while I was still in my mother's womb.

¹⁴I give thanks to you that I was marvelously set apart.

Your works are wonderful—I know that very well.

¹⁵My bones weren't hidden from you

when I was being put together in a secret place,

when I was being woven together in the deep parts of the earth.

¹⁶Your eyes saw my embryo,

and on your scroll every day was written that was being formed for me,

before any one of them had yet happened.

¹⁷God, your plans are incomprehensible to me!

Their total number is countless!

¹⁸If I tried to count them—they outnumber grains of sand!

If I came to the very end—I'd still be with you.

Scripture Discussion Questions

1. Think back to a time you tucked a loved one into bed, “hemming” them into a safe slumber. In the first several verses of this scripture, the psalmist uses a collection of similar images to talk about a relationship with God. Which images show the depth of God’s searching and knowing about the psalmist’s life?
2. What metaphors does the psalmist use to describe the way we are made?
3. The psalmist says in verse 14 that we are “fearfully and wonderfully made” (NRSV) or “marvelously set apart” (CEB). What do you think that phrase means and why does it (or does it not) matter?
4. The UMC Discipleship website notes interpret the psalm as, “the only knowledge of God accessible is in relationship.” Are there aspects of God we can think about and reason outside of a personal relationship with the Divine? If so, what are the limitations of reasoning out who God is? If not, how can a person deal with personal doubts surrounding reasoning that may seemingly come into conflict?
5. What does it mean to you to consider that you are a “wonderful” or “marvelous” work of God? How does considering this reality make you feel?
6. The UMC Discipleship notes also talk about the need for creeds or a shared list of beliefs: “A creed, then, is a statement of belief that defines us as a community of faith. It identifies us for ourselves and for the world at large. We are the people who believe. And because we believe, we live, we serve, we act, we love.” Get together with family members or a trusted group and give each person a chance to write a single line of belief based on reason and/or their relationship with God. It may be helpful to ask someone to serve as a scribe or use a whiteboard. Read the Creed you have made together. Have someone agree to email or take pictures/make copies of the creed now to use daily (or whatever is agreed by the group) for one week, even if the creed is not perfect. (Note: Each person should have the freedom to adjust the creed as needed for personal use.)

Add'l (Optional) Discussion Questions

1. What is your earliest memory of doing something you knew was wrong but decided to do it anyway? Did you keep it a secret? How did you feel?
2. Was your secret safe? Did you hide the evidence? Did you get caught? Did you feel the need to confess to someone or apologize to anyone you may have harmed?

3. Think about your strongest beliefs and your moral compass – your sense of what is right and wrong. Do those beliefs come primarily from your family, from society, from your friend group or vocational group, or a combination of all those sources? What other sources might influence those beliefs?
4. If you write down what you believe today, how is it different from what you believed five years ago? How do you think it might change five years into the future?
5. How would you compare thinking and feeling regarding beliefs? When do you think are the right times to use “I think...” versus using “I feel...”?
6. Do you feel that God knows your thoughts, even when you don’t state them out loud?
7. When you seek forgiveness, do you feel comfortable taking your request for healing to God in prayer? Do you feel comfortable asking for forgiveness from the person or people from whom you might be seeking forgiveness?

Weekly Action

This week, take time each day to reflect on an aspect of your life or the world around you that showcases God’s creativity. It could be through nature, art, relationships, or personal talents. Write these reflections in a journal (physical or digital) and share them with someone in your family or faith community, discussing how these moments deepen your understanding and appreciation of the Creative Creator.

Prayer

God, who has searched us and known us: we are longing to be hemmed in by your love. Release us from what we thought we knew about you and create afresh in us an image of who you might be in our midst. Help us to know you as you know us and therefore to move closer and closer to the grace you have waiting for us today. Amen.