



still waters

home church studies

psalm 139 .1-6, 13-18

[Worship]

1 O LORD, you have searched me and known me. 2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away. 3 You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. 4 Even before a word is on my tongue, O LORD, you know it completely. 5 You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it. 13 For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. 14 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well. 15 My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. 16 Your 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. 17 How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! 18 I try to count them—they are more than the sand; I come to the end—I am still with you. "

Consider:

[Think & Pray...]

"The psalmist stands in wonder, utterly overwhelmed by the gift of life given to each of us as God's first act of unconditional love: (Psalm 139:13-14). Truly we each begin purely as gift and as gifted; we are granted the spirit of life at no cost, with nothing owed.

We are invited, however, to deeper, lasting life through a relationship with God. It is not a guarantee of special favors, or a life free from pain. Psalm 1.3 promises only that God will walk with us; we will be "like a tree planted near running water, that yields fruit in due season, and whose leaves never fade." God does not fade, but cares for us through all; God's faithfulness will be our strength.

The fruits of such discipleship are evident in Paul's letter to Philemon regarding his slave, Onesimus. Writing from prison, Paul implores Philemon to re-examine his relationship with Onesimus, now estranged from him after having run away and possibly stolen from Philemon. Though human laws demand that Onesimus be punished and forced to pay for his actions, Paul responds according to the laws of discipleship when he asks Philemon to "welcome him as you would me." He vows that "if he has done you any injustice or owes you anything, charge it to me." Paul's actions are utterly senseless according to human laws; as such, they bear the marks of his true allegiance to the law of the gospel.

In Luke, Jesus states the only way by which to live God's law: through a commitment so absolute that all others are secondary, including those to our families and our own lives. When we choose discipleship, we do so with our whole hearts and our whole lives, renouncing forever all that we possess, and all that possesses us.

[The Scripture]

luke 14 .25-33

25 Now large crowds were traveling with him; and he turned and said to them, 26 "Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. 27 Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. 28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, 30 saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.' 31 Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. 33 So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.