

still waters

home church studies

Psalm 139.1-12, 23-24 [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. 7 Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? 8 If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there. 9 If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, 10 even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast. 11 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light around me become night," 12 even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you. 23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. 24 See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Consider:

[Think & Pray...]

"A spirit of adoption": to become one of the family, to be at home. There are relationships in which we're at home, and relationships in which we live in fear. Each of us knows the difference: When our inmost self is affirmed and accepted, we are at home. When we are not accepted, we live in fear, a kind of slavery to someone else's preference, to rules, to caprice. We do not trust because we are not loved.

Paul shows us ourselves and our world trembling on the brink of that knowledge: God knows, accepts, loves, adopts us. We

tend to think of loving as hard work, but being loved is hard work, too, a discipline of trust. And knowing ourselves to be loved is a gift of grace that transforms our lives and makes us, in our turn, channels of love.

In our world only some of us have a right to life. Wealth, education, race, gender, nationality, political expediency—all determine our membership in the family. We haven't realized our own membership; we do not recognize our brothers and sisters. Our lack of vision orphans us.

About the gospel: I wonder if, come harvest, the servants might not discover that wheat and weeds together are culled, each for its own proper purpose. Perhaps at maturity each is seen in its own way to be part of the family.

[The Scripture]

Romans 8.12-25

12 So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—13 for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. 15 For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" 16 it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him. 18 I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; 20 for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; 23 and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

