

**Messiah Lutheran's Wednesday Evening Service**

**February 13, 2019**

**"The Need To Run Away"**

**Psalm 139:1-12**

**By Pastor David Nygard**

**Psalm 139:1-12 (NIV)** <sup>1</sup> You have searched me, LORD, and you know me. <sup>2</sup> You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. <sup>3</sup> You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. <sup>4</sup> Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely. <sup>5</sup> You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me. <sup>6</sup> Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. <sup>7</sup> Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? <sup>8</sup> If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. <sup>9</sup> If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, <sup>10</sup> even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. <sup>11</sup> If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," <sup>12</sup> even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.

**My sermon is called "The Need To Run Away".** One night at 4:30 A.M. the burglar alarm went off at church. An unlocked door triggered the alarm. As I was driving to meet the police the sky was pitch black. The temperature was 20 degrees. I passed a man on the street. He was jogging in the dead of night, wearing shorts in freezing weather. He had a need to run that I do not understand, I can understand the need to run away because I have felt it. The need to run away is a need that no one needs.

When Moses killed an Egyptian, he ran away to a distant place to hide his crime. When Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, they ran away when they heard God coming near. Saul the future king of Israel ran and hid behind a pile of luggage because he was shy. Jonah ran from God because he didn't want to forgive certain people. No matter what our reasons, running away always makes things worse.

**Some people run away physically by keeping themselves too busy to be involved with family or anyone else.**

## The Need To Run Away

**Some individuals run away emotionally by denying the pain or fear in their hearts.**

**Many run away spiritually by avoiding anyone who prays, goes to church or worships God.** They try to do things that push God and people away, so they fill their emptiness with drugs, sex or immoral actions.

When have you pushed God away? Do you know someone who is running from God right now – spiritually, physically or emotionally? It's scary isn't it?

I was five or six years old when my parents did something that made me angry or sad. So, I packed up some socks and put them into a handkerchief and lowered myself out the bedroom window. No one knew what I was doing. I walked to the corner and sat down on the curb. Here's why: I wasn't allowed to cross the street.

Running away has to do with fear. The most common fears that we deal with are the fear of rejection, the fear of failure, the fear of punishment, or the fear of dying. The writer of Psalm 139 ran from God. His discoveries give us reason to stop our escape plans.

**Let's measure your need to run away. A) Do you ever try to hide in the crowd; to blend in with others so that no one knows you very well?**

I remember an episode from the TV show "Taxi". Elaine met a man who had been employed in this successful company longer than anyone else. The reason that he worked there so long is that he never volunteered, never offered an opinion and people weren't sure of his name. No one had any reason to criticize him. Elaine talked him into sharing his "good" ideas with the boss. Within minutes he gets fired.

Hiding in the crowd has to do with low self-esteem. We're afraid no one would like us if they knew us. We think that no one will care about our ideas and feelings. That might be true for others, but it isn't true for God.

Here's what David realized about God, <sup>1</sup> **You have searched me, LORD, and you know me.** <sup>2</sup> **You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.** <sup>3</sup> **You discern my going out and**

**my lying down; ...<sup>4</sup> Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely."**

David was the forgotten, last child in a large family. He was not impressive physically and he held the lowly job of shepherd. Yet God knew everything about him. God knew when he stood up. He knew David's thoughts before he thought them and David's words before he said them.

Someone knows you inside out. Someone knows your most private thoughts. Someone is there for you when others turn away. His name is Jesus.

**B) Do you ever avoid anything that reminds you about God, faith, prayer or responsibility?** There was a time in my life; a short time, thank God, that I stopped going to church. Our pastor would say, "God told me in prayer that someone would be here in church who was struggling with a certain problem. If that person is you, please talk with me." Inevitably that person came forward for prayer.

I skipped church because I knew that the pastor was going to say "God told me that a pleasantly plump Norwegian was going to be in church today and these are his sins..." I didn't want anyone to know my heart or my secrets.

Here's what David realized about God, **"<sup>7</sup> Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? <sup>8</sup> If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. <sup>9</sup> ... if I settle on the far side of the sea, <sup>10</sup> even there your hand will guide me..."**

Simply said, "We can run from God, but we can't hide from him." Wherever we run to, he gets there first. He finds us in the bar, or on the golf course, or sleeping late Sunday morning.

Even when people become angry, disgusting or mean so that God and others give up on them, it doesn't work. David wrote, **"<sup>11</sup> If I say, 'Surely the darkness will hide me ...' <sup>12</sup> even the darkness will not be dark to you; ...for darkness is as light to you."** Simply said, "We can hide in the darkness, but guess what, God can see in the dark."

## The Need To Run Away

**C) Are you ever afraid to let anyone see your heart?** Is it hard for you to say, "I love you", "I was wrong", "This is what I want" or "Let's pray together"?

There is nothing in your heart that I haven't felt. There is nothing in my heart that you haven't experienced. There is nothing inside of us that God doesn't understand. That's why David can say, "**<sup>1</sup> You have searched me, LORD, and you know me.**"

**Tonight, God gets personal with you and me.** Earlier when we confessed our sins, you heard me say, "**Almighty God, our heavenly Father, ...has given his only Son to die for us, and for his sake forgives us all our sins.**" God is talking to you.

In a few minutes when you take Communion you will hear me say, "**This is the body and blood of Christ given and shed for you.**" Everything that Jesus experienced on the cross was for you. God is talking to you.

**Dear friends, nobody knows you and loves you more than Jesus. God bless you. Amen.**