

Psalm 139:1-18, 23-24

1 John 4:7-16

## **God's Love Includes Everyone**

He came into the world a few days earlier than anticipated. The expectant mother had been admitted to the hospital as a precautionary measure. Dr. Smilie (yes that was his name) had even said to the mother as he left for a few days away, "Don't have this baby while I am gone. I want to deliver the child." But it was 10 o'clock at night and the baby didn't seem to care that the doctor was away for a few days and daddy would need to be roused from his sleep at home in order to quickly get to the hospital. Mom's water had broke and baby was on the way! A few short hours later, the parent's first son was born as daybreak was happening. Dr. Happy, the on call doctor (and yes that was his name) was holding the baby and sharing the news that it was a boy!

Mom and Dad were just pleased that the little one had all his appendages and was healthy given that he had chosen to show up without regard for the circumstances and a little early at that. A couple of years later, a baby girl came with her own story of showing up on her own terms and a dad with a very numb hand that had supported the mom. She would not let him move it from between the bed and her back until after she given birth to the child. And the final child also entering the world without regard for timing and the fact that the doctor was not going to have time to get there before baby showed up. The delivery room was not going to be used as the child decided that the world needed him now!

And yes, these are partial stories of the births of our three children, but my mom and dad had a story for me and each one of my siblings as each of us entered the world on our own terms. You may recall for yourselves either the birth of children and grandchildren, or the story of your own birth.

I remember speaking to an elderly couple when I first arrived in Thunder Bay. Visiting their home there were pictures all around their living room of great-grandchildren. Their words were that grandchildren were wonderful, but it was in great-grandchildren that you knew that something of you would continue in the world long after one had passed on.

When I think of pregnancy and birthing it is Psalm 139 that for me is so poignant, at verse 13 we hear, "For it was you who formed by inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made...My frame was not hidden from you when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. 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."

To be fearfully made is not about being fearful or afraid, it is more about being reverently made. One writer said it “encompasses a larger meaning of awe, reverent respect, and honor. It appears in the Hebrew Bible as a synonym for “love” (*’ahab*, Deuteronomy 10:12); “cling to” (*dabaq*, Deuteronomy 10:20); and “serve” (*’abad*, Deuteronomy 6:13; Joshua 24:14).”<sup>1</sup> Think about it, you... everyone of you, is reverently made.

The writer goes on to say, “wonderfully” comes from the verbal root *pala’*, which means to be different, striking, remarkable – outside of the power of human comprehension.”<sup>2</sup>

I think these are important things to ponder as Canada celebrate Pride month. It is a time to consider the generous, creative, and beautiful diversity of humanity. We live in a time that has come to understand that people are complex, from our cultures, to our skin tones, to our abilities. We have come to understand that human beings are created more on a continuum rather than as polar opposites. It is here that Psalm 139 so beautifully affirms the intimacy of God at work in the forming of each and every individual.

We also live in a time and a world where not everyone is accepting of the diversity of God’s creation, including the diversity of humanity. It is easy for anyone of us to want to hide who we are from ourselves, from others, and from God. We are layered with guilt and expectations, challenges, and desires. But all of this is laid bare before God. The middle of this Psalm speaks to the complexity of being human and the darkness that can be a part of our existence. Still the Psalmist asks, “Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?”

In her commentary on this Psalm, Nancy deClaissé-Walford share the following,

In a book titled *Tales of the Hasadim*, Martin Buber, an early twentieth-century Jewish philosopher, offered these words concerning the relationship between God and humankind:

Where I wander – You!  
Where I ponder – You!  
Only You, You again, always You!  
You! You! You!

When I am gladdened – You!  
When I am saddened – You!  
Only You, You again, always You!  
You! You! You!

Sky is You, Earth is You!

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<sup>1</sup> [Nancy deClaissé-Walford](#)  
[Commentary on Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18 - Working Preacher from Luther Seminary](#). Accessed June 1, 2023

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

You above! You below!  
In every trend, at every end,  
Only You, You again, always You!  
You! You! You!<sup>3</sup>

There is no getting away from God, which can be both beautiful and frightening, even exasperating. When we wish to be unknown, hidden, that just cannot be. The God of love never lets us go. We are always God's creation, God's children, and it doesn't matter how you identify yourself, what you think of yourself, who you are. God shows up. God is present and with us. God's love includes everyone.

In the reading from 1 John, we hear about the God of love, with the words, "Beloved... [Did you hear that? You are Beloved] ...Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love."(v7-8) I encourage you to reflect on that whole scripture throughout the week. There is no defining who God loves, each of us is beloved. Each of us created in love and because of love. This is a love that is about God and comes from God. This is not about the circumstances into which you were born. This is a love that surpasses anything you may have experienced from another human being.

This love is for all. It includes everyone. Still today we consider those who are particularly at risk, hated even by some. Those who do not fit gender moulds we have created. Those who have struggled to love themselves because of the judgement and lack of regard from loved ones and society. Today we choose to love. We chose to bring wholeness and healing to those who have been harmed.

Last year the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada adopted a confession to God and to LGBTQI people.

Hear the preamble on the meaning of Confession as found on the PCC website.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.