

## SEARCH ME, O GOD

<sup>23</sup> *Search me, O God, and know my heart;  
Try me and know my anxious thoughts;  
<sup>24</sup> And see if there be any hurtful way in me,  
And lead me in the everlasting way. (Psalm 139:23-24)*

Beloved in the Lord,

Life is often referred to as a path along which we walk. This way of describing life is very prevalent in the Holy Scriptures, The Bible. Life is a journey along a path that leads to eternity. Where we will spend eternity is dependent upon which path we take, whether we are on the right path or not.

There are only two paths along which we can travel in this life – one leads to The Father’s house in Heaven and the other to death, hell, eternal separation from the Father in total isolation and darkness. Every single person is on one of these two paths. Jesus clearly stated: “He who is not with **Me** is **against Me**; and he who does not gather with **Me** scatters.” (Matthew 12:30) Jesus does not offer a third alternative, because it does not exist. We are either with Him or against Him. Jesus is the only true path and His way leads to blessing and a glorious life in Heaven.

He stated: “**Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”** (John 14:6)

When we are in Jesus, when we live in faith, that is when our lives are fully surrendered to Him, then we are on the right path. We are walking in truth. This way or path is narrow and if we are not careful, we can easily stray from the path and find ourselves lost. Very often in life we come to a fork in the road and are presented with a choice. We are offered an alternate route, that looks easier, is more enticing, and offers a more enjoyable journey. If we are not heedful, then we can easily stray off God’s path and without even noticing it find ourselves distant from God, and out of His will and blessing.

I mentioned last Sunday, that we live life in a spiritual battlefield. We have a powerful enemy, who works day and night trying to dislodge us, trying to get us away from God’s plan for our life. His temptations are often subtle and sound good. He causes us to doubt God’s ways and offers a seemingly good alternative. He keeps whispering in our ear that God is too narrow and His path is too restricted.

It is of utmost importance that we resist the devil and that we do not enter into discussions with him. It is vital that we keep our eyes firmly focused on God’s Word, on Jesus Christ.

The Psalmist wrote about God’s Word in Psalm 119:1-6:

<sup>1</sup> How blessed are those whose way is blameless,  
Who walk in the law of the LORD.  
<sup>2</sup> How blessed are those who observe His testimonies,  
Who seek Him with all *their* heart.  
<sup>3</sup> They also do no unrighteousness;  
They walk in His ways.

<sup>4</sup> You have ordained Your precepts,  
That we should keep *them* diligently.  
<sup>5</sup> Oh that my ways may be established  
To keep Your statutes!  
<sup>6</sup> Then I shall not be ashamed  
When I look upon all Your commandments. “

This passage makes it clear that if we are to be blameless in our walk, then we must walk in the Word of God. In order to do that we must know what God's Word says. We will only know what His Word says if we diligently read and study it.

Before you can get your driver's licence, even before you can get a learners permit, you have to pass the driver's knowledge test. This examines your knowledge of the road rules. It is very important that we have a clear understanding of the rules before we can drive, because if we do not, then an accident is around the corner.

Life is not easy. Our walk is by no means a stroll in the park. God has given us His Word as a guide, as a road map, or directory, so that we can orientate ourselves and walk a blessed walk.

The Bible is of absolutely no use to us if we do not read it, or study it. Just owning a Bible is not enough. We need to read, study, meditate upon God's Word. We need to obey and apply it to our daily walk. We must let it take root in our hearts.

That brings us to today's text. David ends Psalm 139 with this prayer:

***“<sup>23</sup> Search me, O God, and know my heart;  
Try me and know my anxious thoughts;  
<sup>24</sup> And see if there be any hurtful way in me,  
And lead me in the everlasting way. “***

This is a prayer that God answers positively and joyfully. He is blessed when we pray this prayer, and he will show us what needs to be changed in our lives. He will never scold or berate us, but will prod, encourage, remind. He will forgive all our errors and sins if we truly ask Him too. He promises that. We read in 1.John 1:9: ***“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”***

Praise God! If we confess our sins, then for the sake of Jesus and with the blood of Jesus we are cleansed and made righteous. We are justified. (Just as if I had never sinned). This is why Jesus came. He came to redeem us from sin and death. We cannot cleanse ourselves, we cannot make ourselves righteous, we can barely improve ourselves or break habits. Only Jesus can do that. If we are open and honest with Him, and confess our sin from the heart, He always forgives.

David knew from bitter experience the horrible consequences of sin. His biggest straying from the path was his adulterous affair with Bathsheba. After he was confronted with his sin, and he understood what he had done, he repented and sought forgiveness and God forgave him.

I believe that David often prayed the text we are looking at today. I believe that he often prayed: ***“<sup>23</sup> Search me, O God, and know my heart;***

***Try me and know my anxious thoughts;  
24 And see if there be any hurtful way in me,  
And lead me in the everlasting way. "***

David no longer wanted to stray from God's way. He knew what tragic consequences sin wrought.

We are now in the season of Lent. Lent is a good time to take stock of our lives. It is a good time to reflect upon the path we are taking. To take a deep look at our life. Dig deep into our heart. Check out our thoughts and motives. Assess our actions and attitudes. It is a good time to look in the spiritual mirror and ask: "How do I look? What sort of impression am I leaving? What is my footprint?" A good way to do this is to use Psalm 139. Read the whole Psalm. It begins with these words:

<sup>1</sup> O LORD, You have searched me and known *me*.

<sup>2</sup> You know when I sit down and when I rise up;  
You understand my thought from afar.

<sup>3</sup> You scrutinize my path and my lying down,  
And are intimately acquainted with all my ways." (1-3)

The Psalm goes on to say that God knows absolutely everything about us, our thoughts and all our ways, even before they occur. God is everywhere and in all things, He knows it all.

So we see that before David prays that God would test his heart, He acknowledges that God knows all things. This means that God is in the best position to try or test our heart, because He knows us better than we know ourselves. He understands our every thought.

When David prays: "Search me, O God, and know my heart" it is not that He wants God to find something out. God already know it. This prayer is that God would reveal to Him, what needs to be known and for help to change what needs to be changed.

We heard in the reading today that Paul wrote: <sup>1</sup> Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us *instruction* as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you excel still more." 1 Thessalonians 4:1

Paul is encouraging us to excel still more! This means that we are not satisfied with where we are, but that we seek to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. We should never be satisfied with the level of our faith, but seek to grow daily. We should seek to know God better every day. As we do our love will grow.

The starting point is here in our text: <sup>23</sup> ***Search me, O God, and know my heart;***

***Try me and know my anxious thoughts;***

<sup>24</sup> ***And see if there be any hurtful way in me,  
And lead me in the everlasting way. "***

***Amen.***

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.