

**Sermon Title:** “Who Are You Kidding?”

**January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany**

**Text:** Psalm 139



**Theme:**

**What's in it for me?**

**Sermon Text:**

Grace and Peace to you from our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

I can remember when my children were very young and I had a desire to be the “cool” Dad and we stopped into Wendy’s for Frosties, with the admonishment that every foolish father utters to his children, “Don’t tell your mother.” I bet you can guess what happened next. My children really enjoyed their Frosties and as soon as we got home, they got to utter their favorite words, “Guess what Dad did.” As delicious as those Frosties were, it was even more fun to get Dad in trouble. Now that my kids are older and have cell phones, things are a little different. Now I get a text from my wife wondering what we’re doing at Burger King, while we’re still in the Drive Thru. I guess there’s just no fooling my wife. My mother didn’t fall for it either when my Dad tried it too.

I mention this story, because it relates to our appointed Psalm for today. The author of Psalm 139, and I recommend that you read the entire Psalm, is contemplating the Divine nature of God. He is omnipresent and omniscient (all-knowing and all-present). God already knows what you’re going to say before you even think of it. God knows even more about your daily routine than Google, Apple, Fitbit, or Garmin. The author marvels that God is present no matter if he travels to the place of the dead (Sheol) or the tallest mountains. God is present here and everything in between. Nothing is too dark or difficult for God.

The author goes on to marvel at what a work of art it was when God created us. I had that same feeling when I gazed into my children’s eyes for the first time. Last week we were visited by a young couple with a really cute 4-month-old baby and many of us were thinking the

same thing, God has done something wonderful here. I know, I'm a sucker for babies, but I know a lot of you are too. Guess what, God is too.

Psalm 139 mentions one other thing that I want to bring to your attention today, namely that God leads us by the hand. His wisdom goes far beyond anything we can even remotely comprehend, but even though we can't always understand God, we trust Him. That sounds a lot like faith, doesn't it?

So, with all of these wonderful platitudes about who God is, why do we kid ourselves into thinking that we can fool God or hide from God. It didn't work for Adam and Eve, it doesn't work for us either, so why do we even try? Who do you think we're kidding?

God is there and He knows when you are committing that deep dark sin. You know, the one that you do, when know one is around; the one nobody knows about. God knows. God is also there when you drive up to that homeless guy on the street corner and give him a warm blanket or a meal. God is there for that too. One of the fraternities at Oregon State used to go down to the local senior homes (prior to Covid-19) and dance with the ladies living there, but they didn't want anyone to know that they were doing that. God was there for that one too.

Even though we think we are really sneaky, there is just no fooling God. Wives always find out, God already knows. Even then, God still loves us despite our foolishness and sent Jesus to die for us to wipe out our sins. He also sent His Spirit to take our hand and guide us.

So, with this knowledge, how should we respond? What can we take away from today's message? This Sunday we reflect on how our bodies are a Temple for the Holy Spirit. Because the Holy Spirit dwells within us, we should live a life that reflects it. We do that when we take the time to reflect on all the blessings God has bestowed upon us. We do that when we reflect

on all of the wonderful people God has placed in your lives. Most important of all, we do that when we come to Church and receive God's Word and Sacraments.

This all sounds wonderful, but how come I keep messing up? Yes, it's true, we all sin daily in thought, word, and deed. Know this, no matter what deep dark thing you've done. Jesus always has His hand out leading you back home, as it is written beginning in verse 7,

*"Where shall I go from your Spirit? \**

*Or where shall I flee from your presence? <sup>8</sup> If I ascend to heaven, you are there! \**

*If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! <sup>9</sup> If I take the wings of the morning\**

*and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, <sup>10</sup> even there your hand shall lead me, \**

*and your right hand shall hold me. <sup>11</sup> If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, \**

*and the light about me be night," <sup>12</sup> even the darkness is not dark to you; \**

*the night is bright as the day,*

*for darkness is as light with you."*

This last year has been a very challenging year for our congregation, but despite losing our Pastor and dealing with a global pandemic, ugly political season and aftermath, we can still see God's Hand guiding us through it all. I didn't know why God was calling me to be a Deacon back in 2015, but I trusted Him. I guess we now know why, but it isn't just me that God calls.

In case you hadn't heard, last month we voted to extend a divine call to Pastor Greg Strand. A couple of weeks ago, he, his wife, and daughter all flew out here to see firsthand what that call would be like. When I saw Diana Stand grabbing the Mexican food truck's business card and then ordering her meal in Spanish, I knew they were going to accept the call. Then when Audrey Strand texted her mother that she too felt that God was calling her to be here, that confirmed it in my mind. Great job, Riley. I see God working through you making that young lady feel welcome and at home here. Sometimes God guides us to do big things and other times its small things, but they all matter.

In our low points and our high points in our lives, God has always been there. He is our shoulder to cry on when we have no one else, and He's our biggest cheerleader when we reach those high points in our lives. This last year, we hit a low point in our congregation. God led us

through it and now I am really excited for the future with Pastor Greg coming to Faith to lead us as God's next under shepherd. There is something really familiar about the Strands, almost as if we already know them, and I am excited about the next chapter in Faith's journey. I think that we will be able to better minister to not only our members, but I see greater opportunity to interact and reach out to more members of our community. As both Pastor Greg and Diane are fluent in Spanish, English won't be a limiting factor in sharing the Gospel with our community. Pastor Greg also brings a vibrant youth ministry background that will help us reboot our youth ministry building on the amazing things we have done in the past.

I see God's handiwork in all of this, and like the author of today's Psalm, His handiwork simply amazes me, even when I don't fully understand it. I guess that just makes life's journey even more rewarding and amazing, knowing that God is with us every step of the way. That's even better than being the "cool" Dad. Your Heavenly Father is the "coolest" Dad of all.

In Jesus name,

Amen.

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