

***Imago Dei***

Psalm 139:13-16

January 17, 2021 a.m.

HDBC

**Psalm 139 is one of those *feel-good* passages in the Bible that teaches us deep doctrinal truth without making us feel **that we've been in class**. Instead we walk away from this chapter knowing that we've had an **personal encounter with our creator**.**

**When you read it, you feel** the sense of wonder expressed by David as he looks at himself and his creator. He expresses his sheer wonder that he has been personally designed by the same one who created the universe. The God who made the continents and the mountains, the oceans and rivers, the stars and planets, the zebras and daffodils, **has done His most creative work in him!**

**And then you realize** that this is not just about David. This is a statement about each of us. When you look into the mirror you are looking at **a unique masterpiece**, designed by God. You may not think of yourself as a masterpiece, but you are. Regardless of what you may think, in God's eyes . . .

**You count! You are significant! You are important.**

Not because the **culture** says you are.

Not because your **momma** says you are.

Not because of what you have **accomplished**.

Not because of your **looks, talents or abilities**.

**But because God has placed his image in you!** Imago Dei (Latin)

Revealed in Gen. 1:26-27

*Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the <sup>10</sup>sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." <sup>27</sup> God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*

Again in Gen. 9:6

*Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed,  
For in the image of God, He made man.*

**You are made in the image of God.**

That is the foundational principle that undergirds what we find in Psalm 139. Three things in this chapter we learn about God's relationship with you. He **Knows** you. He **Made** you. He **Keeps** you. Focus on 2<sup>nd</sup> this morning.

**He made you.** What was true of David is also true of every human being. As one who has been created by God, **you bear His image** and therefore have infinite worth. Every human being bears the image of God (Imago Dei) and has immeasurable worth. This is clearly taught in the Bible but is **not reflected in our culture**.

**Whether it is** abortion, euthanasia, or attitudes toward those with physical or mental challenges, our culture has minimized the value and sanctify of every human life. **This is wrong!** It dishonors God and is a growing stain on our nation. Not only is this a stain because of the impact that it has in our land, but because of the influence we have over other nations around the world.

**This morning** I want to declare the value, dignity and sanctity of every human life from conception to natural death. I want to clearly stand against the ungodly practice of abortion in our land, along with every other practice that demeans or destroys the sanctity of human life. I want to speak on behalf of the unborn, the weak, the powerless. Every human life is precious to God and should be valued and protected!

**I am not preaching** this to condemn anyone who has had an abortion. I want to say clearly and lovingly that God offers grace and forgiveness. He loves you! He has or can forgive you! You may still carry spiritual scars, but you are loved and forgiven by God, and not judged or condemned by me or this church.

**Even as I** am Biblically compelled to condemn the horrific practice of abortion in our land, I do so with love and compassion toward those who have experienced this in your past. With that in mind, let's read the text.

**Read Psalm 139:13-16**

Note three things when it comes to the beginning and development of your life. God's involvement, God's creativity, and God's knowledge.

## 1. The involvement of God (13)

This passage makes it abundantly clear that **each person is handmade by God**. It reveals just how carefully you have been made and just how intimately God has been involved in that process.

**This passage** offers one of the most insightful revelations in all the Bible. Remember that it was written by David in a day **when anatomy and embryology were relatively unknown subjects**. Yet, here in this ancient song the **prenatal stages** of development are described with simplicity and phenomenal clarity. But the point of the passage is that God was intimately involved in designing and forming us.

**Verse 12** speaks of **darkness and of hidden places**. Even in those types of places God can see with perfect clarity. But verse 13 takes it further. It brings God into the womb. **It is here that the songwriter builds his case for the sanctity of every human life. *You formed by inward parts*** (13)

**You** is in the emphatic position. You, yourself and no other, **personally** did this. This process in the womb is not left to nature or chance. **It is God alone who works there**. Some things God will send angel to do. Not this.

**Form** carries with it the **idea of origination**. God invents, devises and designs our inward parts (literally kidneys) and weaves them all together. In ancient times the **kidneys** were symbolic of all our vital organs. Would include kidneys, lungs, heart, liver, etc.

***You wove me in my mother's womb*** (13)

**Wove** is a word that suggests knitting together like an interwoven mass of materials which forms a single unit. God takes all the individual organs, cells and systems and interlocks them together in such a way that they work in conjunction with each other and form the human body.

## 2. The creativity of God (14-15)

David breaks out into praise and wonder simply because He was created by God and given life. Every abortion denies God the praise and thanksgiving

that He deserves and desires. An aborted baby has no ability to offer praise and thanksgiving to God.

Note David's statement . . . ***Fearfully and wonderfully made***

***Fearfully*** translates a word that speaks of **being afraid because of a sense of our own weakness**. Realization that something bigger, greater, more powerful is near us and that we are powerless to defend ourselves.

***Wonderfully*** – comes from a word that means to separate in order to distinguish. God has made us in a way that is **absolutely distinct** from every other part of creation.

**The human body** is a phenomenal combination of strength, beauty, coordination, grace and balance on the outside. But the real complexities are hidden beneath the skin.

***My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made it secret*** (15)

***Frame*** – refers to bony substance. Here it clearly refers to our skeleton. Our skeletons are hidden from us, but not from God.

***The depths of the earth*** (15)

This is an **idiomatic expression** for a protected, concealed, safe place. As one may hide his treasure by burying it. This **secret place** is clearly a reference to the womb. Should be safe from violent intrusion!

***Skillfully wrought*** – literally means variegated, like a multicolored piece of cloth. **This is the picture of a skillful artist who knows just the right colors and shades, just the right strokes, just the right brushes, just the right pressures applied to the canvas.**

The involvement of God in each human life

The creativity of God in each human life

### 3. **The knowledge of God (16)**

Each person has been known by God before their birth.

***Your eyes have seen my unformed substance*** - Original word meant something folded up or wrapped up. Here it means “embryo.” In early days after conception while he was in embryonic stage, God was watching over David. Even at that moment God sees the days of a person’s life.

**Talk about a case against abortion!** Even while a baby is ***wrapped up*** in an embryonic state, God is concerned enough to watch over that life. **Every abortion is an interruption of a masterpiece** being created by God!

**The verse then moves into the future**. Not only is God working intimately and creatively from **conception to birth**, but also from **birth to death**. From His vantage point, God can see all of the days that we will live. Even before I lived my first day outside the womb on March 18, 1957, God already could see each day of my life and even ordained them.

**Ordain** was used in the O.T. of a **potter forming the clay**. God has formed our days in just the manner that He desires. He has a plan and that plan often involves bringing good out of that which is bad. Some abortions are justified because conception came out of a bad situation or heartbreak.

**Every abortion denies the opportunity** to see God **bring good** out of heartbreak. God can bring good even out of horrific circumstances that lead to pregnancy. Abortion denies God the chance to show what He will do. **The great singer Ethel Waters was conceived when her mom was raped at the age of 13. Broadway performer singing the blues and jazz. She would go on to sing the great song, *His eye is on the sparrow and I know He watches me*. She would say with David, I praise you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.**

**What David declares** in this song is affirmed throughout the Bible: the baby in the womb is **fully human**, **bearing the image of God**, deserving all the dignity and respect that comes with personhood.

Ecclesiastes 11:5 tells us that the ***spirit comes to the bones in the womb***

Samson’s mother was told her son would be set apart ***to God from the womb***.

Psalms 22:10. ***You have been my God from my mother’s womb***.

Isaiah and Jeremiah state that God called them from the womb.

John the Baptist leaped in his mother's womb at the arrival of pregnant Mary.

Human life is a gift that should be celebrated and protected. Abortion does just the opposite. The fact that it is legal and defended adds to the stain on America.

**May we join** with King David in affirming and defending the sanctity of every human life.

**May we join** with King Jesus in affirming and defending the sanctity of every human life. So precious was every human life that He gave His own life to offer forgiveness, salvation and eternal life to all who would trust Him.

**May we never** be satisfied until every human life is protected, defended and honored in our land . . . for each one has been

***Fearfully and wonderfully made . . . in the image of God!***