

Known

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[0 : 0 0] This week I was listening to a podcast as I like to do to try and stay trendy. It's quite hard. And I was listening to Dr. Craig Aaventer who was a pioneer in sequence in the human genome and he was saying that from the smallest skin cell or even a bit of your hair that he could know you from that. He said that he could get his computers at work and print down your DNA letter by letter which would fill more than half a million pages. And from this he said I would know that person. And this got me thinking is it possible to know someone from their DNA? Take the person that's sitting next to you on your left. If you got a book of their DNA and you read those half a million pages could you save that person next to you. I know you now. I know what your favorite color is.

I know what food you like. I know what ticks you off and makes you happy. I doubt it. If you all could get the book of Chris my DNA which I'm sure would be a riveting read. Would you say at the end you know my hopes and my fears? Of course not. You wouldn't. We have to make a distinction between our physical makeup ourselves and who we are. Our character, our essence, our soul. You want to get to know me through this book. We are far more complex. We are more than the sum of our parts. We have depth. And we have as the Samus says here in his words we are fearfully and wonderfully made. And to be known is a human desire. We want to be known. We want to be seen, heard and understood as we go about our lives. We long for a closeness of relationship where someone sees the real you. Maybe the you that sings in the shower dances in the kitchen. We long to someone to know us on that intimate level. But sometimes we can feel pressure to put a veneer on our lives. To suppress or to hide or to put on a false face every day. And there's pressures in the world to do that from advertisement to media. To try and make us subtly conform and to fit into a mold. These subtle pressures daily can make us hide our true self. But yet under the surface bubbles this desire to be known and to be loved. Sam 139 is the text we're going to look at this morning. It was written by King David and the King is pointing out here that we are known completely by God here this morning. Luke tells us that God knows every hair on your head. You are completely known. Look at verses two to four. You know when I sit down and when I rise up you discern my thoughts from afar. You set out my path, my laying down and are acquainted with all my ways.

Even before a word is on my tongue. Behold, oh Lord, you know it all together. Then 13 and 16 for you formed my inward parts. You netted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works. My soul knows it. The soul knows it well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was being made in sikha. Intrigal woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance. In your book were written every one of them. The days that were formed to me. When as yet there was none of them. The beauty of this Sam that David is trying to communicate to us is that we are known fully and completely. God knows your thought, your form and your substance here today. This Sam acts as a double-edged sword in one capacity. You know that we read this and we can take encouragement. The Lord knows your weak that you're having. He knows your fears, your hopes. The worries for your children, the worries about your work are known to him. But also on the flip side of this sword, a double-edged, is that you are known by God. He knows your character. He knows the secret parts of your heart. The things that you wish no one else could see are known by him. I was thinking of like asking Ali to flash some things up on the screens about like maybe that we could all connect with. But I was worried that that would empty the room. You know like secret sins that were all partial to that we would die if anyone else knew about. Actually God knows you completely and knows these things. So I have two points this morning that we are completely known and the beautiful gospel truth that we are completely loved by God. So let us begin with the main drive of this Sam. We see it in the very opening where

David leaves us in no doubt of his intention. Verse one, oh Lord you have searched me and know me. This is not like a cursory Google search. Like when you put your name in Google and it comes up with loads of stuff. This is a searching to the matter, to the depths of your heart. God is looking at you and can see the real you. This searching and knowing means that God knows the very heart of his people. It is not unlike the words in 1 Kings 839. Then here in heaven you're dwelling place God and forgive and act to your people according to their ways.

Those hearts you know for you alone know the hearts of all the sons of man. That's all people. God knows the hearts and being known by God is an amazing truth.

[6 : 33] David is in complete office. Don't we see this in verse six? If you look at verse six, such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is high. I cannot attain it.

Through the Sam, the depths of God's knowledge of you is flushed out so completely. Like God knows your actions, your coming and going, knows your thoughts.

That's why we can pray without speaking. God sees that and hears that and knows that. Your situation, what's going on around you, that's the part towards the end. It talks about those who seek to take his life. God knew David's position and substance. What character of person you are is completely and utterly known by God. In the ancient world they had a real desire to be known from China to ancient Greece. There's one of the Delphi aphorisms that says know yourself. It's one of the key Greek philosophies to know yourself would make you a truly complete man or human as they thought in the ancient world. Unfortunately for us, the Bible teaches us that this isn't possible, completely possible because sin.

We were told in the Bible that sin blinds us. There's actually elements of ourselves that are cut off. We see that when sometimes our behavior surprises us.

We think to ourselves, where did that come from? That reaction, that mood, that tone. Sins that we thought would never ensnare us, suddenly we were caught by. It shocks us because we thought that's not like who we are. There's an element to us that are unknown because of sin. I recently went to see Christopher Nolan's new movie Dunkirk. It was really good but there's one thing that fascinated me about that movie. Christopher Nolan's a great character director. He flushes out characters well. In the movie you see people, you know, are they covered? Are they brave? Things got revealed to you as the story went on. Each character developed. It got me thinking, I didn't really know much about Dunkirk so I watched a few programs after that on the Victoria Cross winners which is the highest award in the British Army for valor and bravery. One guy was saying that on this show you would go into a field of battle and you'd look around and you think the big strong guys are going to be courageous or stick with them.

[9:17] And then before you know it, most of them are crying in the corner looking for their mum. And it's the wee, wee guy that you didn't want to sit next to who's charging the front line. Character, something that was brought out that was unknown to everyone around them. Josh Wheaton, the director once said you can live next to a man for 40 years. Share his home, his meals. Speak to him on every subject. Then tie him up and hold him over a volcano and maybe on that day you will meet the real man. So certain situations can bring out things that are hidden within us but the reality of sin is when we never truly know ourselves to that depth, to the depth where we are whole. Because Christians believe something rather simple. But it has profound and complex implications on our lives. And that is sin has broken humanity. It's broken you and me. We are disjointed in ourselves and we are disjointed from one another. And we can see that throughout our culture.

It was fascinating this week that BBC had an article online. I don't know if anyone noticed it about an MP calling for people to get to know their neighbours. Such a weird thing to ask people to do. But 61% of people don't know their neighbours in Britain anymore. Don't know their names. It was something like 75% wouldn't trust them with the key to their house. We're becoming more and more disjointed, more and more isolation from each other. Our culture communicates this and the songs that we listen to, the disjointedness of our own souls.

Lana Del Ray, who's a singer-songwriter, has a song called Right. Where she sings, I was always an unusual girl. My mother told me I had a chameleon soul. No moral compass point in June-Ort. No fixed personality. No inner decisiveness. I was so indecisive that it was wide and as waving as the ocean. So we know there's a brokenness. We know there's a disjointedness. People don't function together. People are singing about it. Sin has blinded us to realms of our self that we cannot know. But there is no cure in and of ourselves. That's what the Bible teaches. We see this in Jeremiah chapter 17 where he writes, the heart is deceitful above all things. Beyond cure. Who can understand it? As Jeremiah's plea. Sin perplexes us even in our self. Our brokenness means that we cannot truly connect our pieces back together. But Jeremiah in the same chapter goes on in verse 10 and says he speaks the words of the Lord. I the Lord, search the heart and examine the mind to reward each person. What we're being told here in

Jeremiah and Psalm 139 is that you may not know yourself completely but God does. They are completely known by him. Heart, head and soul. Tolstoy once wrote that if we start rummaging around in our souls that we often dig up something that should have laid unnoticed. But the reality of the Bible's truth is that most of our soul, if we're rummaging around in it, goes unnoticed. We don't really know.

We can't really comprehend the extent of our brokenness. We need the light of the gospel to shine in our lives before we actually truly see ourselves. And this leads me on to our second point this morning, that beautiful truth that we are known and still loved. And for this point is really, as Timothy Keller writes in his book on the meaning of marriage, he says to be loved but not known is completely superficial. To be known and not loved, sorry, to be loved but not known is completely superficial. To be known and not loved is our greatest fear. But to be fully known and truly loved, well it's a lot like being loved by God. It is what we need more than anything. It liberates us from pretense, humbles us out of our self-righteousness, and fortifies us from any difficulty life can throw at us. Sam 139 communicates this reality this morning, that we are known and loved by God. God in his love is pursuing you today. He's seeking you with his grace and he'll never give up. Look again at

[14 : 28] Sam 139 verse 7. It says, where shall I go from your spirit or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there. If I make my bed and she'll, you are there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the utmost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me and your right hand shall hold me. If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me and light about me be night, even the darkness is not dark to you. The night is bright as a day, for darkness is a light with you. The Sammet highlights here that our sinfulness, our brokenness, once it drives us in a sense to try and escape God, to flee from God. Because his light shone in our lives is uncomfortable because he exposes every part of our being before him. Verses 7 to 12 describes the effort of us, the Sammet describing the effort of a sinful man trying to escape God, so that God can't see his true self. The brokenness of this man drives him to hide, try to hide in heaven, try to hide in sheol, which is like the depths of the earth, almost the core of the earth. It's not unlike that song by Nina Simone, Sinnerman, you know the words it says, Sinnerman, where are you gonna run to? Where are you gonna run to on that day which has been Jesus comes back? Are you gonna run to the rock and shout, hide me rock? And the rocks cries out, I can't hide you. The running Sinnerman in Psalm 139 turns within a second in these verses to being led by God in verse 10. Well the Sammet, what

David is describing here is the wonderful beauty of Christian conversion. May you may run, we may hide, but God is pursuing, God is after you, God wants to know you as they say, works in all. He wants you to live in the light of his gospel. God knows you completely yet still loves you, he loves the broken, hurt, angry, frustrated person that you may be. He loves you completely, holy. He loves you so much that his son Jesus Christ gladly, gladly went to the worst death imaginable on the cross. Hebrews 12 2 says, looking to Jesus the founder and perfecter of our faith, for who the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Yes being known by God is uncomfortable, it can make us feel like we want to run, but when we know we're loved as well, it's such a safe place to be.

It's a place of rest being in the hands of Jesus. Running from God can exhaust us. It's great, there's an element of comedy within this Sam here that sometimes doesn't get flushed out in sermons, you know. It's like one of those cartoons, you know, you open the door and the guy's there and you shut the door and they run up the flight stairs and open it and there's the person again. Sam is to say, I'm going to heaven and you're there, so I'll go to the depths of the earth, you're there, I'll try and flee, you're there. He is pursuing you with his grace. And the thing is as we run in our sin, it becomes exhausting and crippling under the weight of the weight of our sin, which is unseen and clings to our souls. Hebrews 12 talks about this again, let us lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely. One of my favorite books ever written and I tried to read it at least once a year. I find it every time I read it, I love it more and more. It's Pilgrim's

Progress. I'm sure many people have read it. If you haven't gone by it, it's written by John Bunyan. He masterfully uses illustrations to drive home points with Christian message. And it tells the fictional story of a man called Pilgrim who was tormented by his sin. The soul was in anguish, we are told, at the start.

And the first quarter of the book is all about Pilgrim trying to find the king to set him free of this burden. So he sets his course to go to where the king lives, as you would, which is the celestial city within John Bunyan's book. In the book, after dealing with a bog that was called the sloth of despond, and being deserted by his pal, Pliable, each name represents the character of the man. After nearly being led to his death by a worldly wise man who said to him, you can live a life without God. Pilgrim finds himself alone on a wall, and the wall's name was salvation. And as Pilgrim was walking alone, reflecting on what had happened to him, how he had got so lost in his life, he looks up and sees an empty tomb. So what Pilgrim does is he naturally goes over to investigate. And as he goes over to investigate, he looks up and sees a cross of Jesus Christ. And at that moment, the straps on his back snap, and the burden falls away. And he hears a voice say, peace be to you. And he looks up and sees the angels, and Bunyan gives us the name of the angels. He says the first angel's name was the Angel of

[20 : 42] Dawn, and he proclaimed to him that his sins were forgiven. The second angel was the Angel of Daybreak, who clothed Pilgrim in new shining garments. The third angel was called the Angel of Dusk, who gave to Pilgrim the scroll that directed him to the celestial city, who guided him on a safe route, and who would give him entry into that great kingdom. And what John Bunyan is doing here, masterfully, is illustrating to us the atonement, the work of Jesus on the cross. What we have on the cross is God the Father pronouncing us just, that our sins are forgiven because of Jesus Christ. We have Jesus, the Son, clothing us in his righteousness. They shine in new clothes. We have the third angel representing the

Holy Spirit, who indwells us, who gives us wisdom in this life to guide us through it, gives us insight, who helps us to know ourselves fully and realized before God, who is healing us and making us more like Jesus every day. That's what we have in the great story of the Bible, like we have the creation of Adam and Eve, two perfect human beings who knew themselves completely and who knew God completely. And then what happens when they sin and they fall? They are broken, their relationship no longer works we ease, there's parts of them that are broken, and they are disjointed from themselves and each other because of sin. And what we have here is Jesus coming to heal us, to restore us, to make us new in him so that we can know ourselves and know him fully. That is the beauty of the Gospel. I was watching on YouTube this week, something that was called optimistic nihilism, which I found fascinating, I almost found it a contradiction. And nihilism is a worldview that basically everything is pointless, meaningless. Frederick Nietzsche came up with it and it nearly drove him mad, well did drive him mad. And then we have someone who comes up behind him, like Camus, these existentialists who came up with absurdism, which literally means that yeah everything's absurd in the world, but let's kind of get on with it. And now we have this new movement called optimistic nihilism. The guy was basically saying that we are a collection of cells, pieces of dust, on a ball of dust, circling a dying star in a universe that is going to one day either freeze or snap back. And he was trying to say that we should be optimistic in amongst all this. That's hopeless. What is the point in pursuing knowledge if he's one day just going to be lost? What is the point of knowing ourselves? What is the point in beauty, love, right in music? It is all lost under that view. We are far more than chance, time and matter. What the Sam says is that we are, it made in the image of God, formed by him. That we have value and dignity. What we do matters. We are fearfully and wonderfully made. We will not be forgotten once we are placed in Jesus hands, the minute we trust in him.

How could he forget you? He went to the cross to die for you. He loves you so much that he could never forget you. Martin Luther, the great reformer once wrote, I have held many things in my hand and have lost them all. But whatever I placed in the hands of God, still that I possess this morning, the minute you place your hope, faith, trust in Jesus, there is no way that that can be removed. You are his.

So this morning, if you're struggling, if you're hurting, if you feel the brokenness in yourself, take heart from the Sam that you are known and that you are loved. But yeah, again, the double edged shard comes into play. That you are known by God completely here today. He knows the secret parts of your heart that you wouldn't dare expose to anyone. He knows you intimately. The Sam enables us, forces us to come before God honestly and openly, knowing that as verse 15 says, our frames are not hidden from him, that nothing is secret to him, not even the depths of the earth. So again, Kellers quote so beautiful, to be loved but not known is comforting, but superficial. To be known and not loved is our greatest fear. But to be fully known and truly loved. Well, that is the most beautiful thing. Today, that is the position you stand in that you are known and Jesus is offering himself to you so that you can be fully loved. Let us pray. Dear heavenly

Father, we do thank you for the wonder of this Sam that we are known and loved. Lord, it is our greatest fear for us to expose ourself to you in fear of rejection. But we thank you for the Sam today that teaches us that is impossible because you know us. Help us Lord, be honest before you. Help us surrender our all to you. Lord, we thank you for that wonderful truth that Jesus died for us in mind. Lord, that there is no power principality, no dominion or authority that can remove us from your hands. So we pray Lord that you would send your Holy Spirit to make us more like Jesus, the one that we love above all. Lord help us live our lives in the light of you. In Jesus name, amen.