



Summer Song

Part 3 – Psalm 139

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We are going to dive into Psalm 139 as part of our *Summer Song* series. If you've ever struggled with acceptance, if you've ever struggled with the way God made you, if you look to others for approval more than God himself, then the message today is for you.

I have to tell you we planned this message and I was prepared the last Sunday. The message wasn't prepared, but I was going to be teaching Psalm 139 for the last two months. It was planned for today, so I don't want anyone new to Woodland Hills to think this is the Psalm we chose because of our nation's political turmoil that we've been in since Friday. Some are feeling joy, some are feeling great sadness, and we will be able to discuss that some today. I've prayed all week that the Lord would give me words that are biblical, not political. We will have a perfect place in the text to discuss that. Let's pray.

Father, it is in the name of Jesus that we thank you that years ago you called Woodland Hills Family Church to be a church that esteems marriage as highly valuable. This is not something we've come up with in the last couple of weeks or months, but for years, we have been raising the banner of a man leaving his father and mother's home and being united to his wife and the two becoming one flesh. This has been your plan. This is your plan for marriage and for our sexuality. We continue, as a church, to esteem marriage as highly valuable and we won't waiver and we won't change from that.

May our words be full of grace and truth. May they be full of love. May this not be shared or delivered in a way that anyone would think there is hatred or anger towards any person, but that there is strong anger towards the sin that is in our land. We know clearly that Jesus died for heterosexual sinners and Jesus died for homosexual sinners. We believe this and we know that Jesus died for sinners and today, as we share the gospel, may we be clear in your word. May this be a message that is biblical and not political.

It is in the name of Jesus that everyone agreed and said... Amen.

I want to make sure you know. This is not the whole message. I was concerned this week that this angst that many are feeling would overshadow the whole message, but we want the scripture today to drive us. Psalm 139 is a beautiful text. I've been looking at for the last couple of months. It's a text I've quoted from often, but we're going to look at the whole text today. So if you have your Bibles, I want to encourage you to turn to Psalm 139.

We are going to talk about things today that sometimes are out of reach for us. Maybe it's too big of an idea. Does anybody have a big idea that you've wrestled with that you just can't quite figure out? I have big ideas.

I heard this week of a couple... Tell me if this scene hasn't played out in your home. The husband leaves for the day and he gets a call from his wife that the toilet is running. This is a true story that I heard from a couple at Family Kamp this week. He told her to go over to the toilet and take the lid off the toilet and look down. There's the chain that is off the handle that goes down to the suction ball. If that's dropped...

So she goes over and she looks at it and says "Yeah, it's laying on the bottom of the tank."

He tells that all she has to do is reach down in there and grab it and put it on the handle.

She goes "Yuck! I'm not reaching down in there."

He said "Honey, it's clean water. It's like water you would get out of the sink; it has no biologicals." He's trying to explain this to her on the phone.

She goes "I am not reaching my hand in that toilet."

He goes, "Then it's going to run all day." He spent some time with her, convincing her to reach her hand down in there.

Right before she does, she gasps and says "Am I going to get electrocuted?" That's good plumbing humor right there. She scared she's going to get electrocuted. And the husband had to think for a second *Is she?* Raise your hand if that's a good question. Be honest.

So the husband said all he knew to say. "Honey, unplug the toilet before you stick your hand in there."

So we all have those moments where we're thinking *What just happened right there? What in the world? How do we process this?*

I heard another story. That first story sparked another dad to stand up and tell a story. I was teaching couples how to do comedy in their marriage, how to have fun in your marriage, and now how to turn your marriage into a comedy routine.

He said Oklahoma City had just gotten a big ice storm and snow hit. All the neighbors were out cleaning off the ice and snow off their cars and off the driveways. He was out there with his kids and they were having a good time. One of the neighbors had not yet cleaned off his Lexus and Infinity. His son who was five years old asked if he could help. The dad said sure. So the son went over to clean off the neighbor's car and he cleaned off both cars for the neighbors with a garden rake. He comes out and he sees his son with the rake, getting the snow off the car.

The ladies understand this. This is why you don't leave fathers alone with their children for long periods of time. Five thousand dollars later, not only did they have to repaint the surface of these two cars, but they had all these dings in them everywhere from the rake.

We all have these moments and that's what we are all going to talk about today. We have moments and thoughts about God. What you think about all day long, what you talk to yourself about all day long has written messages on your heart about who you are, but it's also writing messages on your heart of who God is. Today, this is a wisdom Psalm that we are going to look at. We've looked at lament Psalms. Last week, Adam looked at a repentance Psalm. Today is a wisdom Psalm and it's a song of praise. David is praising the greatness of God, but it's in a context that we can understand. It's in a context that applies to the servants of the Lord. We are going to look at the greatness of God and how it applies to each one of us.

We are going to jump right into three attributes of God. When you see these attributes, you're going to think they are big, theological terms. We don't typically know how to process them or we have very limited knowledge on how to process these. Today, in the text, we are going to see them apply to the servant and we are going to be able to see that God is not distant and angry; he's not distant and powerful. He's close and ever present.

Omniscience talks to God's all-knowing power. God knows all. We are going to see this in the first few verses of Psalm 139.

Omnipresence means he is everywhere. This is very important. Some of you may have learned a theology... and I think you really picked this up from pastors' sermons over the years of you've grown up in church, but God is the only one with this attribute. Satan is not omnipresent. That's very important to process. I think sometimes we hear sermons and we think Satan is in the room with us. Satan is in Branson this morning, but Satan is not omnipresent. God is omnipresent. He is everywhere at all times.

Omnipotence is speaking of God's great power. He is all-powerful.

These are big terms describing the attributes. He is all-knowing, everywhere present, and all-powerful, and now we are going to see this today in the context of our lives. So let's jump into Verse 1 of Psalm 139.

1 You have searched me, LORD, and you know me. You know your servant David. ***2 You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.*** God, you are aware of what I am thinking. ***3 You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.*** ***4 Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely.*** Wouldn't this be a verse we would all like to tattoo somewhere on our arm? Before I speak, the Lord knows. Before a word forms on my tongue, he knows. This is his knowledge; this is his omniscience of you and me. Verse 5 speaks of this knowledge. We begin to paint this picture of the greatness of God. Some are judgmental and condemning, but Verse 5 kind of flips that over and says not judgmental and condemning, but helpful and protective.

As a parent, you're able to discern your children. As our kids are growing older now, getting 10 and 12, discerning is becoming harder, but we can discern from their behaviors. It's not to come down on them, it's not to judge them or condemn them, it's because we care for them and we want to protect them and we want to guide them and that's the emphasis of this text.

5 You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me. This knowledge you have of me is for my good. You want to care for me. ***6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me...*** To know what you know about me... We define intimacy at this church as being fully known and fully accepted. The reason some of you have experienced such painful relationships in your life is because you've been fully known and not accepted. That's pain. But with God, you're fully known and fully loved.

This is why marriage takes a lifetime. This is why marriage requires years and years and years of building compatibility because the more you get to know a person, the greater in love you fall with them. That's how it's supposed to work. You accept and you know them. I've known Amy now for going on 20 years. And the more knowledge I get of her, the more I adjust my life around it. Does anybody know what I'm talking about? I care for my wife.

Two weeks ago, a good friend of mine, a ministry friend, a friend I enjoy spending time with called on Tuesday. He was teaching at the Family Kamp in Branson. He asked if Amy and I wanted to join them for dinner that night. I did want to, but I didn't even have to ask Amy. I knew what had been going on that week and with all the stuff going on, I knew she would not want to do it. I'm becoming the husband that doesn't even have to ask the question anymore. I don't want to pat myself on the back, but I'm pretty awesome. But you start to get that knowledge and you know she's tired. You know she's wiped out. She would go do this dinner for me, but I don't want to do this dinner for her. Do you understand how that works? You get that knowledge and you don't even have to ask. The next day she asked if we were going to do anything with Joel and I told her no.

I have two new ways of saying "No." I have to share this with you so you can kind of discern here when I say no to you. When I say "No," that means I can't. No means "I wish I could, but I can't." The new word for "I can, but I don't want to," is when I go "Nah." So I say "No" or "Nah." I said "No" on behalf of Amy because I know. God has this knowledge of you. He knows you. Why does he know you? We'll get to the why he knows you is just a second, but what does he do with that knowledge? His knowledge is to care for you.

5 You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.

God knows you. That's the first big point of the morning. Here's the other one. **God is always with you.** ***7 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?*** I'll answer that one for you and it's nowhere.

I heard one of the best stories this week. In Montana, there's a law that if it's in single digits or below zero, State Troopers have to stop for every stalled or stuck vehicle on the side of the road just in case someone is in the vehicle.

State Trooper Allen Dickson is driving down the road. There is a big snow bank on the side of the road. He sees this car off to the side and the snow is up all around it. So he walks up like an officer does. He doesn't know what he's walking up on so he's cautious. He looks in and he's got his lights going on his car behind this car. He looks in the car and there is an old man with an empty vodka bottle on his lap. He walks up to the window, but he's still kind of cautious, standing behind the window. He knocks on the window.

The knock wakes the guy up and startles him. He sees the officer, sees the flashing lights, throws it into drive, and hits the gas pedal. The speedometer reads 20, 30, 50 miles per hour, but he's not going anywhere. He's just spinning the tires in the snow bank. So the officer decides to have a little fun with the guy. He walks up beside the window and he starts running in place. That's fantastic. How did the guy respond? He hits the pedal even harder. Then the officer starts running in place even faster. Finally, the officer knocks on the window while running 70 miles per hour and says "Pull over!" The guys pull over, puts it in park, and they arrest him. You just have to picture that scene. He's getting sober back at the police station going "Do you know how fast that state trooper is? He can run 70 miles per hour." That's one of the best illustrations. Allen Dickson, thank you for that one.

But isn't that how some of us are? We see God. We know God is there. We hear him in our life. The Holy Spirit is convicting us. We put it in drive and say "I'm going to get away from this." "Ted is going to say some things in a few moments that I'm not going to like. Ted is going to say a couple of things in a few moments..." I say some things that you probably should get up and walk out over at times, but when it's biblical and not my bad joke, some of you will have the urge to get up and walk out. It will be in you. You will be like "Okay, truth is being spoken right now; I don't want to hear it. Lord, I'm feeling something and it's not what I want to feel." It may not be here; it could be anywhere. "Lord, your presence is clear. You have sent another believer my way this week and he or she continues to share truth with me. I don't want to hear it," and you take off like that guy putting it in drive going 70 miles per hour and going nowhere.

7 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? 8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there... This is wisdom language; this is beautiful poetry. ...if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, 10 even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. 11 If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," 12 even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.

This is just painting a picture of how great God is and where he is and he is everywhere and he is powerful and he is all-knowing and he knows me. "Ted, it makes no sense for you to continue to where

a mask.” I’ve had people say to me lately that I need a better filter on stage. “When you preach and teach, there are some things that come out of your mouth that shouldn’t come out of your mouth.” What’s coming out of my mouth is what’s in my heart. So I don’t want to become that pastor that... If I have an issue coming out with something coming out of my mouth, I want to deal with it in my heart, not on the stage. My heart is more important. I’ve been around guys who are polar opposites off stage from the guy they are up preaching on the stage. You probably should be kind of the same. But people tell me I have to watch it. It’s a bigger heart issue and if there is something I need to deal with, I’ll deal with it in my heart. My mouth is just a reflection of the heart.

As we dig into this, understand... Some of you have been hiding for a long time. I love when people come up to me and they say “I’d go to Woodland Hills, but I know too many people there and everybody will be looking at me.” Can I just help you with that? There ain’t nobody here looking at you. “I’ll stick out.” Look around. You ain’t going to stick out. “Ted, I feel kind of freaky.” Look around. You’re in good company. “Ted, I don’t feel like I’ll be...” That’s an issue you will have to deal with because that’s in you. You’ve been hiding for no reason. God knows you. He knows what you’re thinking. Before you speak a word, before a word comes onto your tongue, he knows what you’re going to say. There’s no sense in hiding.

I asked Corey to give me the best high resolution picture of the galaxy that he could find, so he went up and took this one for me earlier this week. Doesn’t he do a great job? I think that’s a great picture. Where are you in the galaxy? I don’t even know if our solar system is in here. At camp with one of the games, we had to put the solar system in order from the Sun and which way it revolves around. I told the kids to get after it and make it happen. They came to me and asked me what the closest planet to the sun is. Do you know? Okay, so don’t judge me. I can tell you this. It’s ain’t the Earth... for all you teachers out there.

When I think about this though... He created the galaxy. It is vast; it’s huge. I love how W.A. Criswell, the pastor at First Baptist Dallas, for years... he loved to use this illustration. When the Russian Cosmonauts went out and saw the galaxy for the first time, they came back and reported “We have looked into the galaxy and we did not see God.”

W.A. Criswell said, “Well, just take your space suit off for a second or two and then you’ll see Him.” That is a good line.

Look at what Psalm 19 says. ***1 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. 2 Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. 3 They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. 4 Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun.*** It’s the greatness of God and his creation. All of that is to set up for us Verse 13.

13 For you created my inmost being... You know me. You’re present in my life. You’re all-powerful and you created me. ...you knit me together in my mother’s womb. 14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. 15 My frame was not hidden

from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.
16 *Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.*

This week, there have been a lot of conversations about equality, about tolerance, about love, about acceptance. As I turn on the news, I heard one dad say it this week. He said, "You know, we don't get the news anymore." How many of you remember growing up with what I call the boring journalist? They just got on and reported the news and it was very monotone. Now we turn on the news today and the sole purpose is to figure out what we should be outraged about for the rest of the day. That's all the news has become. It's painful and it's confusing.

This week when I was on Facebook, I saw members of Woodland Hills Family Church putting a rainbow over their profile picture. This is where I ask you not to walk out. Definitely don't storm the stage. We have our normal security that you know of and we have some undercover ones this morning too... and they will take you out. But I would see those profile pictures change and it killed me. I wasn't mad this week; I wasn't outraged because we've seen it coming. It's not like we woke and we're shocked. But when we see people who have been under marriage teaching for five and six years... My first thought was... Here's where I should filter it. The Lord knows the word that's about to come out, so let me pause for one moment. Okay, I'm not going to say that word. But I thought to myself *man, we are not doing a good job. For someone to sit under marriage teaching for as long as they've sat under marriage teaching and then to post that...?*

We're so confused about value. We're so confused about what makes a person valuable. I have to tell you something. Your sexuality is not what makes you valuable. Your value doesn't come from your sexuality. Your sexuality comes from God. Here's where we are confused today. We've seen this equal sign all week on flags.

Value = Success. We've seen this equal sign and for some, value equals success. "Once I've made a few bucks and if I do well in my prime earning years, I will be a valuable person." The answer to that is "No." Your value as a human being does not equal success.

Value = Potential. How about this one? This was what my elementary teachers always told me. "You're not real good right now, Ted, but one day God will redeem your mouth and he will use it." Value does not equal potential.

Value = Contribution. Value is a very important subject to discuss in the church because all of our theology revolves around it. Your political views should not come from a news station. They should be rooted in the word of God. You need to ask "Where does my value come from?" "That guy across the street that I completely and totally disagree with; where does his value come from?" Now I'm not talking about values; we're talking about value. We are starting there. Our values flow from our value. "The guy waving the flag for something I completely stand against because I believe the word of God stands against it; is he valuable? Where does he get his value?" Value doesn't equal contribution.

This is the primary argument for abortion and euthanasia. "They haven't contributed; they don't have value so we can destroy their life, whether it's in the womb or at the end of life. They no longer contribute." Value does not equal contribution.

Value = Created in the image of God. Where does your value come from? It's right here and it's in the text and it's in Genesis.

Can I tell you what came down on Friday? John Piper put it this way. "It's an assault on God and his image in man." That's the root of what we saw. It wasn't that we are unloving. It wasn't that I'm unloving to a person. I believe that Jesus died for the heterosexual and the homosexual. If you are here today and you struggle with same sex attraction or maybe you're here with your life partner, I want you to hear this. I don't hate you. But I do want to speak truth to you.

This verse is not one I'm throwing out there to make a point. This is a verse we share every single month at this church. It's Genesis 2: 24 and Jesus repeats it in the gospel and then Paul repeats it in the Epistles. ***For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and the two will become one flesh.*** That is the place where a man and a woman live out their sexuality. Marriage should be honored by all. You hear us say that all the time, but the second part of that verse says ***and the marriage bed kept pure.*** How do you keep the marriage bed pure? A man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife and those two become one flesh.

This was my senior thesis at Liberty University. I primarily focused on the death penalty. This is the death penalty argument too. The death penalty is not about that state is crueler than that state. We're so warped in where we find value in our country that we don't even know how to apply justice. This is how you apply justice. I'm going to say this and if my words don't come out right, please hear my heart on this. The people who died in the Boston Marathon bombing are not more valuable than the grocery store clerk who was executed by a thief. Their life is just as valuable. I want you to just check your heart on this. Let's talk about the value underneath the surface of that issue.

It's interesting... The Oklahoma City bombing, terrorists that take down the World Trade Centers... When it's announced that they will be getting the death penalty, it's amazing how many people are on the same page with that. It's because we are saying that was horrific. Please be careful that you do not value one life more than another. All of our theology drives everything else that we believe. Then make what you believe about that, being okay with that... Now bring it into the arguments of abortion.

We believe the unformed body... Psalm 139 is the go-to text for pro-life believers, those who believe that life begins in the womb, life begins at conception. You can understand that at Woodland Hills, these are sensitive topics because there are many in here today who have had an abortion. I want you to know something. God was with you when you had that abortion. He was. He didn't leave you. He knew what you were struggling with. He knows the struggle you have today with that, judging and condemning yourself. He knows that. And do you know what he does? He hems you in. He loves you.

I can have this strong conversation. Homosexuality is a sin and as long as there is breath in my body, I will call it that. And at the same time, I can sit down and have coffee with a gay or lesbian couple and

show them the love of Jesus. These two are not at war. Christians, I didn't want today to become our counter assault on Friday. I said "Lord, let it be bigger than that. Let it be about you and your greatness and your omniscience, your omnipresence, and your omnipotence. For you are great and you are above all."

But we are created in the image of God and this gives man and woman intrinsic value. You are valuable because you are created in the image of God.

Here's the big point for the morning. **When you accept how God made you, you stop looking to others for acceptance.** I have to tell you... I'm a Christian. I would love to see our country become a Christian nation again. I would love to see that, but I don't stand on the courthouse steps and scream and yell at people, mad that they are not Christians. Have you noticed the people who do not feel accepted feel the best way to do that is to continue to fight and force you to accept them? When you begin to say I am created in the image of God...

I heard the primary attorney. He lost his husband and he was sharing this week. I was listening to his words and it was sad. He kept talking about the death of his husband as nowhere. There was no hope in his words. There's no hope because he doesn't believe he is created in the image of God. He doesn't believe that according to the scriptures, Jesus died and rose again for him. And that if he will confess with his mouth and believe in his heart, he will be saved.

When you accept how God made you, you'll no longer be yelling and screaming at the world around you to start accepting you. You'll walk in a confidence. You'll walk in strength because you know God knows you and he loves you. God made you; that's why he knows you. God made you, he knows you, and he loves you. I can walk in that confidence.

My wife gets this theology a lot better than I do. She walks with a confidence that I wish I had. I'm constantly going "Well should we do this because of what this person might think" and she's like "Nah". She is confident in how she is made. This is not just your sexuality; this is your personality. This is the bent that you have. You're different than the people gathered around you. This is your looks, teenager. Don't start reading the magazines and see all the photo shopped pictures and think that's the body you need. God made you. He made you short. He made you tall. He made you with the hair color you have and your eyes. He made you. He knew your unformed body. Accepted it and walk in confidence of it. But that's not what's happening today.

To deal with the confusion... The lady... This was months ago on one of the news stations. She's the one that's wanting to get rid of all gender lines in schools. She says we need to stop calling them boys and girls. I turn it up because I have to listen to find out what I'm going to be outraged about today. She has a doctorate and she's sitting there all intelligent. I have to come back to loving. I'm going to just tell you what's in my heart. I'm just sitting there watching. And even the news... I love watching the news people who have their interview questions ready, but their getting answers... They want to go off and flip through a book and figure out an answer real quick. "What do you tell your son when you get up in the morning? What do you do if you don't want to call him your son or a boy?" She says, "I just ask him "What do you feel like today?"

What do you feel like today? Amy can just see the smoke coming out of my ears. Church, that's not the question we need to ask our boys and girls. Do you want to be a boy today or do you want to be a girl today? NO! The question is real simple. Do you have a penis or a vagina? That's the question. I love you son. If you have a penis, you're a boy. If you have a vagina, you're a girl. Some of you are like "He's said that like three times now. Can he please stop saying that?" NO! Your son needs to hear that. God gave that to you. God made you that way; receive it and become a boy. Be a man. Go kill things. For no purpose. If you're from California and you have to eat it or release it somewhere, do that, but do something. Blow something up.

When we go by the firework stands this week... "Son, do you want to buy some explosives?"

"Yes, Dad."

That's what we want. I'm not going to ask you how you're feeling today. God made you that way; receive it, walk in it with confidence because you were created in the image of God. And all God's people said... Amen. You'll stop looking for acceptance from others.

Ephesians 2: 10 puts it this way. ***For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do.***

If you are struggling today with your identity, if you're struggling today with your gender identity, there is hope. You're mad right now, but there is hope. The only hope I can give you is Jesus, period. Call on him. Don't leave mad, looking for the text to try to prove this wrong. Call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Seek him because you were created in the image of God. That gives you value. You don't need value from a political party. You don't need to seek out value from those around you or to get a whole country turning in your favor. You need to call on only one name and that is where you find hope. He created you and he created you to do good works that he's prepared in advanced for you to do. Believer, walk in confidence of that.

17 How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them! 18 Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand—when I awake, I am still with you. You're here; you didn't leave me.

When you accept that God knows you and loves you, you stop hiding. You stop trying to be someone else. You stop forcing on the people around you to accept a version of you that's not even the version that God's placed in you. In other words, be the best version of you. Pastor Matt Chandler in Dallas, Texas puts it this way. "God is not in love with some future version of you; he's in love with you."

The new thing in our home now is saying this: "Today, I'm going to be the best TMC version I can be." That's Theodore Matthew Cunningham. Amy says "I'm going to be the best AKC version I can be today." That stands for Amy Kay Cunningham. God only made one of me and he only made one of you. Follower of Jesus, you have been created in Christ Jesus to do good works which he prepared in advance for you to do. So you don't need to hide anymore. There's just no sense in it. Be open. Some will walk

away from you. Some will not accept you. They are not who you are looking for acceptance from anyway. That's why I love the end of this wisdom Psalm.

23 Search me, God, and know my heart... The beginning started with "You search me..." and now there is an invitation. Why is there an invitation for the all-knowing, all-powerful, everywhere present God to search me? Search me because I want you to guide me. I want you to direct me. Your ways are too great for me to understand so I'm just going to walk in it and trust. ...***test me and know my anxious thoughts.*** **24 See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.**

It is our prayer that during times that we don't have all the answers and we don't know everything, we are going to trust in the one who created us. We are going to trust in the one who made us in his image and we're going to seek him. His hand is upon me. His hand is upon you. We are going to ask the Lord to guide us in the way of everlasting.

Father, it's in the name of Jesus that we thank you for our time this morning. I pray for our nation now that we would return to a core principle of men and women, male and female, created in the image of God. May this church love and care for all of those who are confused by this message, those who rebel against this message, those who fight against it. Father, I pray that you give us wisdom as we are a church that honors marriage, as we are a church that enjoys marriage, as we are a church that prioritizes marriage, that we will continue to not grow weary in well doing, but with humility.... I feel this is what we need more than anything during this time. We need the humility to love and care for those around us, even those that we disagree with. Please give us that wisdom, give us that discernment. We want to be led in the way of everlasting and you are the one who guides us.

Father, bless this time, bless families as they have conversations, as they deal as a family with decisions that are made. May we, as moms and dads, be faithful in communicating clearly with our children. May we not hide truth from them. May we not try to protect them from the reality of life.