

**Weekly Devotions
South Holburn Church
15th September 2020**

READINGS

O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. You know when I sit or stand. When far away you know my every thought. You chart the path ahead of me and tell me where to stop and rest. Every moment you know where I am. You know what I am going to say before I even say it. You both precede and follow me and place your hand of blessing on my head.

Psalm 139:1-5 (Living Bible Translation)

If anyone belongs to Christ, there is a new creation. The old things have gone; everything is made new! All this is from God. Through Christ, God made peace between us and himself, and God gave us the work of telling everyone about the peace we can have with him. God was in Christ, making peace between the world and himself. In Christ, God did not hold the world guilty of its sins. And he gave us this message of peace.

2 Corinthians 5:17-19 (New Century Bible Translation)

"There is tremendous relief in knowing God's love to me is utterly realistic, based at every point on prior knowledge of the worst about me, so that no discovery can disillusion God about me."

J.I. Parker



REFLECTION

In the days of lockdown, loneliness has been a constant worry for many people, with The Mental Health Foundation indicating that in a survey it carried out in Scotland nearly 25% of people admitted to feeling lonely. The Mental Health Foundation also indicated the biggest rise in loneliness was among young people aged 16-25. Loneliness affects all ages in our society.

Loneliness is a feeling of being alone and unwanted. It is feeling as if you are unknown. No one knows your name, and no one cares for you. Loneliness can affect us all, even without lockdown or social isolation.

The Christian faith declares that we are never unknown. Not a one of us is ever forgotten. And there is not one person alive who is regarded as without value. As our readings today show, the Bible constantly reminds us that each of us is known in the most intimate way by God. No life is ever forgotten, no person goes unnoticed by God. God never turns his back on any of us (though we can turn away from God). No matter what there is one who is always with us

God knows us as we are, warts and all. The things we would like to keep secret, the words and actions we hope no one ever finds out about, God already knows in full. But rather than judge and turn away in disgust - because of Jesus, the cross and the resurrection - God only looks on us only with love.

Not only then are we never forgotten, not only are we never alone, we are never, ever unloved. As J.I. Packer says, God knows the worst of you and still loves you enough to give everything for you. That's how precious you are to God.

PRAYER

Ever present God,
All knowing Lord,
You are the one who sees our hearts,
You hear our unspoken cries.
You are comfort in every trial,
You are company in every day.

However we are feeling, we turn to you,
Knowing that you welcome us,
Without condition, without reservation.
Thank you for your presence in our lives.

Make us ever aware that you are near,
Give us the will to speak with you,
Even when the world threatens to overwhelm us.
Bring your comfort and your love into our lives,
Bring your peace and your hope into our outlook on the world.
Grow in us the courage to share your presence with all whom we meet
In Jesus name,
Amen

