

Sermon Series: Songs For All Seasons Of Life
Title: A Song of Reassurance
Text: Psalm 139
Date: April 13, 2008

Theme: God gives us His eternal and binding Word that we can never go where His Grace and Love has not preceded us.

1. Introduction – Am I significant? How? Family? Work? Community? What is my significance based on? My own works? What I do for others? Or just because of who I am? Strip away everything that we do for others or say to others and we quickly become insignificant according to the world's standards. But God reassures us that each one of us is significant to Him because of what He does for us.
2. A Song of Reassurance that God knows us and sees us at all times. (vs. 1-6)
 - God knows us so much that He knows what we do before we do it.
 - We should have no fear then, because God knows and sees what's in store for us
 - I need to be honest with God and myself, even in the midst of sin and temptation
 - Question to ask myself when facing temptation, "Would I do this knowing that God is right there?"
 - If there's a situation that we don't want God to know about, why?
3. A Song of Reassurance that God is with us always. (vs. 7-12)
 - What darkness can I go through that God is not there?
 - Psalm 23:4 – The valley of the shadow of death – We don't even have to fear death because with God, we will only walk through death's shadow into eternal life with Him
 - Jer. 23:23-24 – God's presence is everywhere, so we can be assured that even as he is with us, He is already where we are going. There's no place we can hide or escape from Him. He just "IS."
4. A Song of Reassurance that God created us exactly as He wanted to. (vs. 13-18)
 - God carefully pieced us together. Each one of us.
 - We're not an accident, but God's unique masterpiece. Science tells us that out of random chaos we became, but God tells us that he knew us from the moment of conception. And from that very moment He had a plan for us.
 - Not only did God know us even in our mother's womb, but he also know what lies ahead of us, including the very day that He's bring us to live with Him in heaven. So there is nothing we have to worry about.
 - God has given us His Spirit to guide us, and hold us accountable. – 1 Cor. 2:11
5. A Song of Reassurance that God is on our side. (vs. 19-24)
 - Because of Jesus, we can identify with our Father and His goodness (vs. 19-20)
 - Because of Jesus, we can side with our Father (vs. 21-22)
 - Because of Jesus, we are pleasing to our Father (vs. 23-24)
6. We are significant to God.
 - Nothing we do can make God love us more or less.
 - God sees all that I do, knows all my thoughts, and is present all the time. He realizes what a sinner I am, yet he doesn't leave me.
 - *Illustration: Anne Lamott's Conversion*

Anne Lamott's Conversion

After a while, as I lay there, I became aware of someone with me, hunkered down in the corner, and I just assumed it was my father, whose presence I had felt over the years when I was frightened and alone. The feeling was so strong that I actually turned on the light for a moment to make sure no one was there – of course, there wasn't. But after a while, in the dark again, I knew beyond any doubt that it was Jesus. I felt him as surely as I feel my dog lying nearby as I write this.

And I was appalled.... I thought about what everyone would think of me if I became a Christian, and it seemed an utterly impossible thing that simply could not be allowed to happen. I turned to the wall and said out loud, "I would rather die."

I felt him just sitting there on his haunches in the corner of my sleeping loft, watching me with patience and love, and I squinched my eyes shut, but that didn't help because that's not what I was seeing him with.

Finally I feel asleep, and in the morning, he was gone.

This experience spooked me badly, but I thought it was just an apparition, born of fear and self-loathing and booze and loss of blood. But then everywhere I went, I had the feeling that a little cat was following me, wanting me to reach down and pick it up, wanting me to open the door and let it in. But I knew what would happen: you let a cat in one time, give it a little milk, and then it stays forever....

And one week later, when I went back to church, I was so hungover that I couldn't stand up for the songs, and this time I stayed for the sermon, which I just thought was so ridiculous, like someone trying to convince me of the existence of extraterrestrials, but the last song was so deep and raw and pure that I could not escape. It was as if the people were singing in between the notes, weeping and joyful at the same time, and I felt like their voices or *something* was rocking me in its bosom, holding me like a scared kid, and I opened up to that feeling—and it washed over me.

I began to cry and left before the benediction, and I raced home and felt the little cat running along at my heels, and I walked down the dock past dozens of potted flowers, under a sky as blue as one of God's own dreams, and I opened the door to my houseboat, and I stood there a minute, and then I hung my head and said, ... "I quit." I took a long deep breath and said out loud, "All right. You can come in."

So this was my beautiful moment of conversion.