

February 1, 2017

Dear Open Door Family,

My grandmother lived through the depression and that made an impact on her all of her life. Even after she had become a doctor and finances were not really an issue she still saved and kept everything. One of my favorite things to do when I visited grandma was to sneak away into some of the rooms and look through the drawers and closets. I would spend hours sorting and looking and wondering at all the stuff. Much of it was new and still in boxes. One time as I was exploring I came across a beautiful pocket watch. Without thinking too much about it and without asking I stuck the watch in my pocket and took it home. I had the watch but I never showed it to anyone because they might ask where I got it. After a number of years being hidden away I lost it. Years went by, and I seldom thought about it. But then when I was 19 years old I went into missionary training and then on to Ecuador to serve for a couple of years. During this time God was doing a serious work in my heart. I remembered the watch and was overcome with guilt. I tried to ignore it. After all, nobody knew what I had done; there was no way that anyone would ever find out. Yet the quiet inner voice of God kept on speaking to me in my conscience and would NOT let me rest. Finally I wrote grandma a letter telling her what I had done and asking her forgiveness. She wrote back a gracious letter telling me she forgave me. She went on to say that the pocket watch did not matter but a clean conscience did. The fact that God knows everything and is everywhere present is both **terrifying** and **comforting**. Let's look at some verses from Psalm 139.

Psalm 139:1-4 (NLT) O LORD, you have examined my heart and **know everything** about me. [2] **You know** when I SIT down or STAND up. You **know my THOUGHTS** even when I'm far away. ...[4] **You know** what I am GOING to SAY even **before I say it**, LORD.

David tells us that **God knows** everything we DO as well as everything we THINK. We are reminded that **God knows** every single WORD we say BEFORE we even say it. That is the TERRIFYING part of this. When I sin in thoughts, words, or actions I am sinning in God's presence. He knows about it. I cannot hide my sin from Him. God KNOWS all things and we cannot hide anything from Him.

Psalm 139:5-6 (NLT) **You go** BEFORE me and FOLLOW me. **You place** your hand of blessing on my head. [6] Such knowledge is **too wonderful** for me, too great **for me to understand**.

God has all knowledge and He is present everywhere. So these words can be a COMFORT to us. I believe that the Lord is saying I will go in front of you LEADING and guiding you. And I will also go behind you PROTECTING you and keeping you safe. Further comfort is found in the imagery of God placing His hand of blessing on our heads. That God would care for us even when He knows where we have been and what we have done it absolutely remarkable. Yet God extends His Mercy and Grace to us even though He knows how sinful our motives and actions really are.

PRAYER: Lord God, thank You for Your quiet voice of conscience. Thank You for the guilt that you bring when we have sinned. Lord God, thank You for the Comfort of Your Mercy and Grace. Thank You for the Comfort of Your presence even when we wander away from You. Thank You that Jesus came to Save, NOT to Condemn us.

Pastor Mark Kieft