

Sermon Notes: He knows my name – 20/09/08

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I have a great marketing idea for a CD collection – which I think others around my age might relate to... I think I would title it "Hymns that haunt me!".... having grown up in the church, I have this vast reservoir of hymns and choruses – which echo in my mind... I'm hoping this doesn't eventually lead to madness – but let's see.

I joke about this – but I do agree there are some songs which are timeless, that express some central truth for us – that connect with a particular emotion, or a moment in our lives when something shifted, changed or became clearer ... and for me, some of those songs are Hymns.

This came home to me in recent months... it's no secret that I was going through some pretty tough times earlier this year. As I felt I was sinking, I was able to grab hold of some of God's words of life – which became treasures for me... and sometimes they came through a hymn from my childhood – which would just help me in that day to remember that truth and be anchored by it.

The other day I woke up with this old hymn on my mind "Search me O God and know my heart today... try me O Lord and know my thoughts I pray"... etc.. and it prompted me to seek out this word from Psalm 139: 23, 24 (NLV)

"Look into me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts. See if there is any sinful way in me and lead me in the way that lasts forever."

As I pondered that I realised one of the deep desires of my heart is to know – and be known. To know God and to be known by Him, to know people and be known by them.

In these days at NationsHeart we have been exploring more deeply what it means to walk a path of pain with our God – and it has again brought us to a place of realising our great need for intimacy.

Intimacy is characterised by "acceptance", "belonging" and "value"... intimacy is achieved when we are known, and when we know.

We sang a song today "He knows my name"... and following the haunting hymn, this was the other song which came to mind for me that morning. It is such a simple song, which helps express this simple, yet deep desire to be known.

God knows our name.
God knows our every thought.
God sees each tear that falls.
God hears us when we call.
God knows our name... let's think about that for a while. How many of you are aware of what your name means, and perhaps the story behind why your parents chose that name for you? Or perhaps you can share why you chose the name you did for one of your children...?

Name egs.

We know for the Jewish nation – names were SO important. It wasn't chosen because it sounded cool, or because no-one else had it – but each name was assigned a meaning, and sometimes people's names were changed because their lives had changed.

My theology dictionary puts it this way;

'In contemporary Western culture a name rarely possesses significance beyond that of a highly sentimental, perhaps aesthetically conditioned response on the part of proud, doting parents to the intoxicating joy of a new arrival. Not so in the Bible. There a human name typically reflects character and mission anticipated in life, which may turn out for either good or ill. It may embody the spiritual vision of parents for their child's future. In other instances, it is prophetic of future outcomes or events. On the negative side, it may typify a life come to ruin...'

I wonder when my Mum chose my name – whether she gave me the mission in life to become 'pleasant'....? Which is what my name means.... Still working on that one.

But think about some of the other examples from the Bible;
"Samuel" – "asked of God" – we know Hannah pleaded before God for a child, and then dedicated him back to God's service

"Yeshua/Joshua/Jesus" – "Jehovah is salvation"

David – "well-beloved"

Simeon – "that hears or obeys; that is heard"

Peter – "a rock or stone"

Daniel – "judgment of God; God my judge"

Think about some of God's names – and how they express who he is. One of my fav's is "I am"... I just think this says it all "I am" – I always was, I always will be – I am. You don't need to create me, or be able to explain or understand me – I exist whether you acknowledge me at all – I AM!!!

In our culture – I guess names are a bit different. Although some of us have a story behind our name, many of us don't – and we may not relate to the meaning assigned to it by others.

Never-the-less the principle remains the same – we want to be known... not just our name – that doesn't tell the full story, but really who we are. We want our friends and our family, our partners to understand us!

This is another way of explaining that need for intimacy. I know some of us are comfortable with intimacy – and others aren't. Some of us wear masks as a general rule, and take them off only for some people – others never take them off. The thing is no matter what games we play – in our hearts of hearts we want to be known.

Hebrews 4:12-13

For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable.

Christ Is Our High Priest

Hebrews 4: 14-16

So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.

The question for us all though – is if we desire this intimacy so much, if we really want to be known – why do we hide???

What are we afraid of?

The truth is that most of us experience intimacy in incomplete ways – we might develop intimacy – then back off ... we get push and

pulled in this desire to be known ...we run towards and then we run away when it becomes too much or overwhelming...
This is what happens in our relationships.

What happens in our relationship with God when we pull away from him?

He stays.
We can run – but He comes with us.
He waits.
We can try to hide – but He still sees us.
He knows my name. He knows your name.

And this is what makes our relationship with God the most healing, the most complete, the most sustaining relationship which we can ever experience.

He will never die and leave us alone.
He won't walk out the door when he's tired of trying.
He won't play games with our emotions.

He is solid.
He is steadfast.
He is true.
He is never too busy.

And so within this safe relationship – we can be known and we can grow to know him more. And from that point of security we can take risks in our other relationships, because we always have this safe place to return to. A God who will never turn us away.