

Uniquely You, Uniquely Loved (Psalm 139:13-18)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 21 September 2025

Preacher: Albert Tang

[0 : 00] Hey church, feel free to keep praying if you're in prayer, but in a second I'll be reading from Psalm 139. You might have also noticed we didn't do our memory verse this morning, but we'll spot it about halfway through the psalm, so I'll stop there, we can read the two passages together and then I'll carry on with the rest of the psalm.

For the director of music of David, a psalm. You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise.

You perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down. You are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue, you, Lord, know it completely.

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

Where can I go from your spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go to the heavens, you are there.

[1 : 13] If I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me.

Your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, surely the darkness will hide me and the light will become night around me. Even darkness will not be dark to you.

The night will shine like the day. For darkness is as light to you. And, yeah, here's a memory verse, verses 13 and 14.

So feel free to join me. As I say, for you created my inmost being. You knit me together in my mother's womb.

I praise you because I am beautifully and wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful. May I go so well. My frame was not hidden from you.

[2 : 20] When I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

How precious to me are your thoughts, God. How vast is the sum of them. Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand. When I awake, I am still with you.

If only you, God, would slay the wicked. Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty. They speak of you with evil intent. Your adversaries misuse your name.

Do I not hate those who hate you, Lord? And abhor those who are in rebellion against you. I have nothing but hatred for them. I count them my enemies.

Search me, God, and know my heart. Test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me. And lead me in the way everlasting.

[3 : 25] The word of God. Thank you, Daniel. I think everybody has their own favorite psalms.

And yeah, one of my favorite psalms is 139. Okay. Uniqueness. I think it's good that we try to understand mental health.

At times we are, we can be pretty depressed at times. And sometimes we do have friends and families who are actually suffering from that.

And somehow we, you know, as Chinese, we normally like, oh, we don't want to talk about it. Just pretend it doesn't happen. But pretending doesn't solve any problems.

Okay. So I think it does remind us that God is with us. And I think the antidote for combating depression or mental health is like uniqueness.

[4 : 36] Right? I'm unique. And I think often when we are depressed or we, if, if we have been through, or we know somebody been going through mental health, I'm nothing.

I'm nobody. You know. But if I know, if I hold on to the truth that I am special. I'm not, I'm not like perfect, but I'm special.

God has created me in a very unique ways. Okay. Say, somebody's birthday. Okay. Abraham. Would you like to receive a cake?

That is, that is one of the thousands that's produced in Pack and Save. Right? Or you want one specially made for you.

You probably don't like flopsy. Right? But something, you know, yeah, Jedi or whatever. Especially Abraham. Right?

[5 : 33] Right? Or especially you. I think it makes a difference if you receive something that's uniquely you. Right? And this is exactly what Psalm 139 says.

Right? I'm just sharing verses 13 to 18. It was good that we had the whole Psalm read to us. But in verses 13 to 18, I have a title.

Actually, Pastor William helped me with that in English. It's uniquely you, uniquely love. And for Chinese, that's the special love to that unique you.

That's the straight translation. Right? It was actually a song. Have you heard about that?

No. You're too young for that. Yeah. I mean, the guy who sung that is around about 60 something now. So, it's too old for you. Okay? But it is true.

[6 : 37] It's unique. We are unique when God created us. And this Psalm, you know, the Psalmist was both amazed and grateful for God's greatness and goodness in his life.

Now, God is good. God is great. We all know that. But how much if we actually connect that into my circumstances? If I feel good, everything going right, you know, relationships going well, my job's going well, yeah, God is good, God is great.

But if we are stuck emotionally, right, mentally, physically, when we still declare, God, you're great. God, you're good. It takes some faith. Of course, it's not our faith that saves us. It's God's faithfulness that we can hang on to. So, while we are not too bad at the moment, do sing this into our minds.

And once we, you know, you don't know. We don't know what emotional or mental states we can have, you know, in the waves of life that come to us.

[7 : 51] But while we are healthy, we're stable, please let the word of God sink into us. Let the Holy Spirit affirm that into our lives.

So, I think this Psalm is a constant reminder for us to trust a good and great God, whether in good times or in bad times. Okay?

So, the whole Psalm, it was like, I preached that two years ago right here. Yeah. So, I preached the whole Psalm then, but I'm just focusing on the verses 13 to 18 today.

So, there was three contemplations and two petitions in this Psalm. Three contemplations, one, one to six, omniscience, that's God's all-knowing.

Verses 7 to 12, omnipresence, God's everywhere. And verses 13 to 18, God's power in creation, omnipresence. And because of these three contemplations, he was there to pray and ask God, God, destroy my enemies.

[9 : 01] Can you? Can you pray that way? Well, he did. We're not encouraging you to, like, you know, curse others, but it shows the psalmist's earnestly in his situation.

He had no one to turn to. That's why he would turn to God, right? And he asked God to guide his hearts. I think it's quite an amazing psalm, right?

So, let us look at this particular verses 13 to 18. I give it to two things we want to share today.

One is his greatness in creation, especially me. Secondly, his goodness in preservation, my life. I want to share a little bit of my testimony as well.

So, his greatness in creating you, right? Look at you. Look at you. You are different. You are special. See?

[10 : 05] There is no one in the entire world that's exactly the same as you. Just look at that thumb. Just look at it. Just this tiny little space.

There's only one thumbnail that belongs to you. Right? That's how special we are. And your teeth. I mean, nothing good looking at teeth. I mean, I feel for those dentists, you know, or the oral health technicians. All the time you open your mouth, oh, look at those, oh, those yellow, those stuff, you know.

I need to clean them. I need to repair them, you know. But you know what? They can identify you with just a teeth, one tooth.

That belongs to you. That's how great God's creation, how unique it is.

[11:04] So, let's look at it. His greatness in creation. Now, notice that the psalmist took so much expression in describing God's works.

Created. He knitted. He made. His works. He woven. Look, the psalmist really, really want to express that I was somehow God's masterpiece.

Right? Right? He wanted. He used so many verbs to describe how God created him. His physical body.

His inner being. His thoughts. His heartbeats. Right? This is how special and how great in God's creation in you and me.

He said, And I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Now, what does it mean? What does fearfully and wonderfully made?

[12:19] If you create a picture, if you want to draw a picture, if you want to create something, how would you fearfully do it?

How would you wonderfully do it? Obviously, you won't be using AI. Right? You will have to deep in your thoughts all the creativities that God has given you.

Right? And just to make that. If you want to create a card for your loved one for his or her birthday or something, you just don't want to use AI.

Oh, just type in his name or her name. And then, and then, and then, and then, and you send the card. Now, who's guilty? Who's guilty of doing that?

But God, God's not like that. There is no mass productions. Right? He created you in a very unique, very special ways.

[13:24] From conception in my mother's womb to an embryo to a fetus took 10 months.

And the time came, the baby was born. See, it's quite marvelous how, how a baby was conceived in my mother's womb.

How, that's how unique you are. There's, there's a lot of mystery. But it's very unique. And it's very intimate.

It described, the psalmist wanted to describe these three things in, in, in, in verses 13 to 13. How wonderful, how fearful that I was created.

And you say, I'm nothing special. I'm nobody. I don't think God creates rubbish.

[14:40] And I don't think God would just put in all the data in the computer and just make copies 2,000. And you're just one of them.

I don't think God does that. God created you fearfully and wonderfully. I was reading a, I was reading a, I was reading a, I was reading a, I was reading a, I was reading a commentary and this particular, uh, Bible commentator.

He described something like this. Just, just looking at the human body alone. You know, you know, not talking about your emotions, your deep inner being.

Just looking at the physical body alone. It's so intricate, so complex. And he says something like, the body is like, it's exquisitely composed of bones, muscles, centers, arteries, arteries, arteries, right?

Uh, veins, nerves. I don't even know how they work, right? and all other parts all framed with such wonderful skill that even heathen upon the contemplation of the human body in all its parts and observing how admirably they were formed for beauty and use have broken forth into admiration and adoration of the creator.

[16:11] Just looking at me, this body, you know, even if just one nerve will kind of stuck onto the other, in Cantonese we call qi sin, right?

And then we are dysfunction, right? This is how unique, how complex, how God created us, right? You are wonderfully and fearfully made. And Psalmist, when he looked at the heavens, the moons and the stars, that how God has set it in place, and he just exclaimed, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?

You know, when you put God's work, when you see it out there, and when you see it in people, how great is God's creation?

and how much it cares for you. This particular verse in verses 13, 14, especially in 14, I praise you because I'm fearfully and wonderfully made.

[17 : 47] Your works are wonderful. I know that full well. It was at one stage, it really, really meant, and kind of God used that to really convict me, right?

There was a time when I actually left home from, yeah, I would, you know, when I first came, I was in Dunedin for 10 years, right?

And somehow God called me to leave our business and shift from Dunedin to Auckland. And then within a matter of two months, I ended up in the Bible College in New Zealand, staying in a dormitory with 200 other students.

They all came from different walks of life. There was doctors, there was lawyers, there was architects, there was accountants, and there was some extra addicts, and there was some, they said they came from gangs, and white gangs, you know, and I was, wow, I was really open my eyes, right?

But I was very confused. I didn't know where I put myself, okay? The worst was because I never studied, I dropped out of school in fifth form, that's year 11, right?

[19 : 03] So you guys don't drop out, just keep going, all right? It took a long way for me to, you know, to have to make up for it. But when I was studying, the first semester was horrible, horrible, okay?

And in the Old Testament, it was, I thought I knew the Bible, right? But when I went to, it was so, so little that I knew.

And the first subject was creation, okay? The creation, and then they were assigned a book. I still remember the author was Claus Westerman, all right?

And the title was Creation and Chaos. And I thought, that's me. I'm pretty chaotic at the moment. And the worst thing was, like there was a lawyer brother who was actually just, and his store was next to me, his room was next to me.

And, you know, and there was other professionals. And they took the book from the library, and in the morning he borrowed it, and in the evening he said, oh, I've finished half of it.

[20 : 20] I said, what? I had that book. It's a small one, but it's about that thing. And a whole week, I couldn't even go through the first 10 pages.

And I thought, oh, have I got it wrong, God? Did I actually just assume that you wanted me here? But this verse, and somebody actually gave this poster of a little baby, a very lovely baby, a sweet baby, with this verse, I am wonderfully and fearfully made.

And that, every time I came back from my lecture room, every time I came back from the library, I was so frustrated, and then I went into my room, I looked at the poster.

Is it true, Lord? But somehow, God, through this particular verse, told me, yes, you're different, but I am with you.

And that brought me through. And praise the Lord, the second semester was much better. And because I did not, I did not have to compare.

[21 : 35] I did not have to prove myself. I am me. And God created me that way. Right? I'm not as good, a fast reader. That's all right.

So I don't need to compare with others. So we're all different. Don't compare yourself with another. Otherwise, we get very frustrated.

I am created. I am wonderfully and fearfully made. And secondly, it's goodness and preservation of my life.

Your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days. All the days. Not just in my mother's womb. Okay. He saw my unformed body in my mother's womb.

All right. But, up to now, all of my days, it was written in his book. He knew it. He recorded it. And his thoughts, for me, are precious.

[22 : 42] I couldn't even count all of them. When I wake, when I sleep, when I wake up, I am still with you. This is how the psalmist was conceiving God's preservation in his life.

Look, the psalmist would not be young. And in all circumstances, he knew that God preserved him. Look at, look at the verses after.

Verses 19 to 12, 22. You know, when I first read the psalm, I thought it would pretty good end up in verse 18. But why? 19 and 22. It's so different a story, right?

If only you, God, would slay the wicked. Away from me, you bloodthirsty men. So, really, life is not just sweet and smooth.

Lives, lives have oppositions, difficulties, dangers, enemies. Of course, in Psalms, a lot of the time, the enemies, they were not just people.

[23 : 52] It was the evil one. Okay? But, but the psalmist really want to express that God's preservation is not just in our smooth and nice days.

God's preservation really made apparent through all those dark and terrible times. people.

They were wicked people. They were sinners. They were bloodthirsty men. They were the ultimate enemy of God, Satan.

And, somehow, mental health presented as enemies. We're kind of trapped in it. We cannot run away. Now, I praise God I haven't experienced that, but I know a lot of people have.

And, no matter how we want to encourage, how we want to support, they're trapped in there. It was good that Jess was willing to disclose her experience.

[25 : 05] Right? But, I think nothing can stop God's love for us. I came from a broken family, too.

Broken in a way, my parents not divorced, but they were separated. But, separated not because of relationship. Separated because of life circumstances.

Because, dad was a, mom said he was one of the high-ranking officials in the national army. All right? And, China is run by communists now.

So, not national. Okay? So, because when the communists came, he was actually arrested because he was an officer.

So, he was deported way, way in the wop, wop, wops. I don't even know where that was. And, my first time seeing him, he was, I was 21.

[26 : 11] From three to 21, I never saw my dad. So, when I first saw him, he was old and bold, and it was, yeah, it was in his 80s. And, mom, because taking the family, because life was hard in China, so he took the family, she took the family, went out to Hong Kong, Macau, and then they came over.

But I, because I was of a different father from the rest of my brothers and sisters, so my surname was different. So, New Zealand would not accept a different surname to come over.

So, I was left behind with my uncle in Hong Kong for 10 years. So, I, I was kind of somehow mistreated.

I was, I was, yeah, it was a painful childhood. Okay. So, when I went to, and then when I came back, came to New Zealand, we joined my mother, that was horrible, you know, because she was my mother, but here she was a stranger.

And she was so tough, and I, I was so, I had gotten in so much trouble with her, okay. And it was really horrible, yeah. So, after, after 10 years or so, we were running the business, but in a way, God really saved us, because me and mumbo came to, came to the Lord.

[27 : 38] And I believe the gospel, the gospel really saved us, and united us together. And when I first, in the Bible college, we ran through this personal growth seminar, and this particular lecturer, she's still here, she's a spiritual director, and she read my story, and she said, Albert, it's pretty amazing how God has preserved you.

You don't have any mental problem. I didn't even realize that. I think I was too simple to analyze myself. But, God preserved me.

The fact that I can serve in my brokenness is really him. It's not how much we do.

So, no matter what you are going through, brothers and sisters, let the word of God affirm in you. He created you. And he preserves you in his greatness and his goodness. Maybe you say, this is my life.

[29 : 00] It's like everybody dumps their rubbish onto me. I was growing up, I had no choice. I think during the camp, I share that. Some people just dump the banana skins, some just dump the rubbish, and this is my life.

It's not a closed lid. The lid is open. I had no choice. People just treated me badly. And this is me. I believe we have choices. If we come to Jesus, we have a choice. We can allow Jesus to empty those rubbish and put his gospel of love to change my life.

I believe we can. It's matter whether we want it or not. stand up.

we can. A bit of my continue my story. Okay. I was in that kind of situation. And God did not let me go, I tell you.

[30 : 32] I was a pastor then, but I still had that kind of brokenness, unforgiveness in me. I didn't know. I didn't know.

But once, at once, during this pastor's retreat, retreat, if you heard that story before, I want to honor God because it's really all his doing.

Okay. During this retreat, yeah, I just felt God really touched me. Okay. I don't normally have this kind of visions or it was actually, it was motion picture.

Okay. I think it was only once it happened. Okay. You don't need to pray for this and I don't need, oh God, give me this, give me this three deeds. No, don't need that.

But in his mercy, because he felt that I needed that, so he gave me that. It was during the conference and the pastor was preaching out the front, asking God to really take us out from this self pityness, this, this, this, and the past hurt, you know.

[31 : 44] and I saw this picture. It's like, this is like those break waters, okay, and the wave was pounding, and this was me.

I was struggling, okay, I was struggling trying to climb up onto those rocks, and otherwise the waves would just sweep me back, and I could see instantly that I knew, I'd identified myself, that was me, okay, and as I was climbing up on those rocks, because, you know, infants, skin's very delicate, right, and because those sharp rocks just cause bleedings, and each time the fingers and the foot, the feet bleed, and the little one cried even more, and I was crying, okay, and I was crying, and I said, nobody cared for me, I looked at my life, my mother dumped me, my dad left me, that actually it was not a fact, they did not intentionally, they did not do it intentionally, they were in pain too, I couldn't imagine my dad was being deported 20 years, almost 20 years, can you imagine, I was, all this time, I was just caring for myself, I was, I was, I was, yeah, nobody cared for me, I was self-pitying, and as I was crying, I felt something, not physical, but something, I felt it was a hand, a pair of hands, that was kind of pushed me up, because I was climbing away from the, from the waves, I was climbing up, I was tired, and I was, I was fearful, and somehow I felt the pair of hands was helping me, lifting me up, up to the, to climb up to the rocks, and it was a gentle voice, and the gentle voice, hey, Albert, why all this self-pitying, didn't you even realize it was me that was holding you up, and then I cried even more, and that sobbing, that crying, that weeping was not self-pitying anymore, it was my own sin, my own self,

I realized my own self-pitying, I was not receiving the love of God, I was unforgiving, and then I cried, and somehow, it was so amazing, my, my supervisor at the camp, he came and put his arm around me, and I was, I was just broken down, and then I realized I had to repent, sorry, Lord, all this time I was focusing on, onto myself, I was blaming others, I was blaming you, Lord, I repent of my own sinful self, and from then on, I sense that healing in my heart, God, I don't know what might be going through you at the moment, if there is this kind of self-pitying, this kind of unforgiveness, yes, we can't change what people have done in our lives, but we can allow God to change my attitude, my mentality, so that we can, we can have this healthy attitude in facing life, in loving God with loving others, how precious are your thoughts, oh God, how vast is the sum of them, where to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand, when I awake, I am still with you, is that you?

[36 : 20] At times, but if we realize his greatness in creating me, his goodness in preserving me, and we realize the cross of Jesus into my life, I am sure it should make something different, we have hope, because in Christ, we are a new creation, the old has gone, the new is here, let's pray, Father, I pray that your spirit, through your word, will touch our hearts, it may be a long journey to forgiving, to forgiveness, long journey to, yeah, to come and be healed, but Lord, we know there is nothing can separate us from your love, because this love of

God is in Jesus, we see the cross, we see your love, so may your spirit help us, convict us, renew us, heal us, in Jesus' name, Amen.