

A song to sing or to read: O God You Search Me

O God, you search me and you know me.
All my thoughts lie open to your gaze.
When I walk or lie down you are before me:
ever the maker and keeper of my days.

You know my resting and my rising.
You discern my purpose from afar
and with love everlasting you besiege me
in ev'ry moment of life or death, you are.

Before a word is on my tongue, Lord
you have known its meaning through and through.
You are with me beyond my understanding
God of my present, my past and future, too.

Although your Spirit is upon me
still I search for shelter from your light.
There is nowhere on earth I can escape you
even the darkness is radiant in your sight.

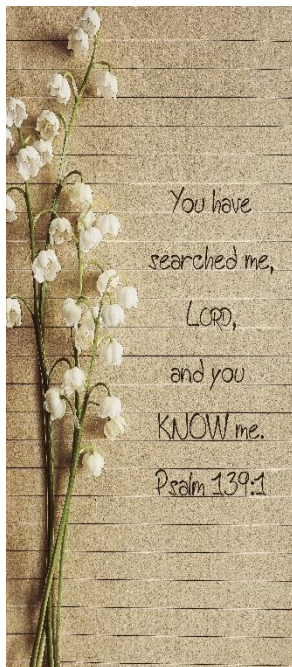
For you created me and shaped me
gave me life within my mother's womb.
For the wonder of who I am, I praise you
safe in your hands, all creation is made new.

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Closing Prayer

May God be the light on your path, the breeze on your back
the music in your ears, the song on your lips
the curiosity in your mind, the happiness in your heart
and the peace in your spirit. *(Bruce Prewer)*

With thanks to Ian Sharp for preparing today's reflection



Church in a Bag

19 July 2020

Dubbo Uniting Church



A Gathering

May God's peace be with you
as your hearts are opened to His love.
In this quiet space
remember all those who have come before us
the way they have handed down
stories of their culture
and ways from generation to generation.
This land is part of God's truly wonderful creation
and we especially acknowledge the elders
past, present and emerging
of the lands where we worship.

Preparation

Creator God, you are light, love and joy!
In a difficult to fathom world with all different kinds of people
we sometimes get lost.
Please, once more, open our hearts, eyes and ears
to your grace and to all the differences around us.
Set us free from narrow vision
and a love which is sometimes held back.
We pray that your Spirit may once again be enlivened
and free us from our inhibitions.

Amen



Reading: Matthew 13:24–30, 36–43

Reflection

Jesus shares with us another parable and by using stories he can teach at a number of different levels. There are also layers of meaning in these stories and I wonder if it sorted out those who simply came to see miracles and be entertained, from the serious followers who really wanted to understand Jesus' teaching. Jesus also told his stories to the crowds but kept the explanation for his disciples.

Carolyn, in her reflection last week on the parable of the sower, spoke about change and I wonder if this week's story/parable calls on us to think about a different outlook on life. We are human, and in that respect we are apt to make decisions that are not helpful – it is hard to distinguish between what serves as life (wheat) and what is damaging (weeds). In our communities and the world there is unfortunately so much hate and hurt. There seems to be so much division of "us and them".

I recently chose to be part of an email group to reflect on the anniversary of the reconciliation march. Each day of the walk included a reflection from an Indigenous Uncle or Auntie from all parts of Australia. The reflection "Walking Together with Vision" was one that really spoke to me.



The focus scripture was Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future". And I quote "Our Heavenly Father has plans for all of us, but do we know what they are?"

What a question and a challenge. The Uncle in this case spoke about seeking God, listening to his heartbeat and staying close to Him so that we can see the clear vision He has for us, not only this year, but beyond as well.

I believe the gospel reading for today calls for us to share love and that our errors of the past (thistles) will perish whilst the good seeds that are life-giving and healing will help with building a future where compassion, hospitality, peace and love will flourish.

What a vision to help change the world! Amen.



A Prayer

God of Creation.

We give you thanks and praise
for all the wonder and beauty that surrounds us
for your constant never ending presence among us
helping us on our journeys
and giving us the courage to face the tough times.

We acknowledge that we sometimes offend those around us
and are sorry for these times.

We know too that you are a loving caring and forgiving God
and for that we give you thanks and praise.

Amen