

**Psalm 139:1-12**

O Lord, you have searched me and known me.  
You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away.  
You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways.  
Even before a word is on my tongue, O Lord, you know it completely.  
You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.  
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it.

Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?  
If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.  
If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,  
even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast.  
If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light around me become night',  
even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you.

**Psalm 139:23-24**

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

**Romans 8:12-25**

So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

**“The First Women President”****Rev. Charles Schuster****July 13, 2008**

At General Conference about eight years ago I got into Cleveland and the Director of music had the choir for General Conference up there and they were practicing one of

their pieces, and all of a sudden Cynthia Wilson stopped everything, said, "Everybody be quiet," and then she had everybody sit down. Then she said, "Now, I want the sopranos to stand up. Now, would everybody tell them to wake up and be part of the group?" They couldn't do what our sopranos just did, I can tell you that.

What is this world coming to? Where do we find the power to be disciples of Jesus in a world like this? And if we are disciples of Jesus in a world like this, how is it that we're supposed to transform the world, which is what our job is? What are people doing, and why do people do what they do? What motivates them? Human motivation, what are their motivations, what are their motives, what is going on? I mean, you've got a school board member in Jefferson County who's been asked to resign because he's pleading guilty to slapping his daughter. A school board member. Iran files missiles into the ocean and the price of oil goes up even more. What's the world coming to? There's a guy in Las Vegas who's selling calendars featuring shirtless Mormon missionaries. Come on. And there's a pastor from Kentucky who's been arrested because he's collecting poisonous snakes to be used in religious services. That's why I left Appalachia. And what in the world is Jesse Jackson thinking? What motivates people? What's the world coming to?

James Moore has a friend in California. When they first moved to California, this friend played golf with a guy named Tom. They stopped playing golf together, and his wife said, "You ought to call Tom up and go out and play some golf." I guess you get to a point, in a retired state, when your spouse needs you out of the house. And he said, "Well, I have to ask you a question. Would you play golf with somebody that kicks his ball out of the rough onto the fairway? Would you do that? Or somebody who takes countless Mulligan do-over shots when nobody's watching? Would you play golf with that person? Would you play golf with somebody that keeps hitting the wrong ball, and when the put down the score on the scorecard, puts it down wrong, and keeps hitting ball after ball into the lake?" And his wife replied, "No, I wouldn't." He said, "Well, Tom wouldn't either."

What's the world coming to? Human motivation, why do people do what they do? There's a woman whose motives were questioned. She was the first woman president of the United States. That's what I said. She was the first woman president of the United States. Her name was Edith. She came from Virginia. She was descended from Pocahontas, and also Martha Washington. Her father was a judge. She married Norman Galt. He was a prosperous jeweler. They were married about twelve years. They had a wonderful life, traveled widely, made plenty of money. Then suddenly, Norman died. Edith continued to manage the business. She was a smart businesswoman. Woodrow's first wife, Ellen, also died suddenly. Woodrow Wilson had been president, and Ellen died of Bright's disease after they had been in the White House only one year. Woodrow and Edith were grief-stricken and then they met, and it was romantic, but it was also a bit of a national scandal. People talked. Advisors told them "Don't marry," but love overcame gossip, and they did. The time was the First World War. Through that war, to the end of the war, and Woodrow Wilson wanted to be sure that was the war to end all wars, and he tried to establish the League of Nations so that nations could talk out their differences. What a concept. And he traveled all over Europe, trying to get the leaders of Europe to

agree, and they did. And then he went all over the country here, trying to get the people to respond, and they were about to, and then he had a stroke, and that's when Edith took over. She made his decisions, she determined what he should know and what he should never learn. People were never told how sick the president was. Cabinet members, members of Congress, the ambassadors who wanted to speak to the president, had to consult with Edith. Her critics called her the "Petticoat President" and blamed her for numerous diplomatic failures. The press called her a woman of narrow views and formidable determination. They questioned her motives. What was she doing? Why was she doing it? She defended herself. She called her role stewardship. She said that her motives were pure, and that the doctors had forced her to take this course. She claimed she herself had never made a single decision, but that she knew her husband's mind so well that her decisions, made for him, were his.

Human motivation. This past week I got a call from a group that put to me an interesting question. Somebody named Zack said in the telephone call, "Reverend Schuster, you have been identified as a leader in the Fort Collins area who is guilty of having a big heart. On April 5 we want to come and arrest you and take you to the Melting Pot restaurant where you will be served gourmet bread and water, and you will be locked up for an hour. Now, you can call church members to pay to get you out of jail." And I said two things. First of all, you're wrong. I don't have a big heart. Secondly, I would never shamelessly beg for money, except in my church in the summer when the cash flow is down. Which, by the way, it is. This is just a fundraiser for some organization. No thank you." And Zack said, "Do you have three friends you'd like to see locked up?" And I said, "Yes, but not for that purpose." I questioned their motives. What's the world coming to? Human motivation.

Truth is, the only motives you and I can question are our own. It makes us wonder about other people's motives, but the truth is, and this is truth that will set us free, the only human motivation we will want to be sure of is our own. The only motive we should question is the one that lurks behind our words and deeds. Disciples of Jesus know the best way to transform the world is to begin with ourselves, and that Psalmist had it right. "God, you've searched me and you've known me, you know when I sit down, when I stand up. Search me, O God, know my heart, know my thoughts, see if there's any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

George Will wrote a book about baseball, entitled *Men at Work*. He writes, "Umpires – they are carved out of granite. They are professional dispensers of pure justice. Once when Babe Pinelli called Babe Ruth out on strikes, Ruth made a populist argument. He reasoned, fallaciously, from raw numbers to gain moral weight. He said, "There's forty thousand people here who know that last pitch was a ball, you idiot." And Pinelli replied with measured stateliness, "Maybe so. But mine is the only opinion that counts." Edgar Guest said it, I love that poem, "I have to live with myself and so I want to be fit for myself to know." Paul said it. "The good that I should do, I don't. The bad that I shouldn't be doing, that's what I do." It's natural to question other people's motives. That's what this world's coming to, but the best we can do is question our own. It really doesn't matter what other people think of us as long as we are congruent with ourselves.

It makes no difference that our motives are questioned as long as we understand the importance of the struggle to determine what it means to continue to ask those questions of ourselves. What am I doing, and why am I doing it? What is this world coming to? O God, you have searched us and you know us. If there's any wicked way in us, lead us in the way everlasting. Human motivation. Let us be true to ourselves.

What's this world coming to? You've got to take into account holy momentum. We explore our own motives, that helps, but there's something way beyond us that's going on. What's the world coming to? Tell you what – we don't know. But it isn't what we think it is. The apostle Paul wrote to the people of Rome in a very dark time in their history, "I consider the sufferings of the present time not worth comparing to the glory that is to be revealed in us." Who has hope in what they see? It's in what we don't see, wherein resides hope. Creation waits with eager longing. The whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until, in hope, we're saved. Holy momentum. Who knows what's coming? We can expect the unexpected. God will surprise us. We can be prepared, but only for the unexpected, which you and I never know.

Edith Wilson lost a child, two husbands. Her life was sad, in a way. She watched her second husband's dream of the League of Nations fail, but for the remainder of her life, she continued to work on the vision of world cooperation. She lived long enough to see the United Nations be born, and she lived long enough to be at the inauguration when a young president said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." A young president who said, "We will walk on the moon." We never know what's going to happen. We never do.

Woody Allen was asked once, "What would you like people to say about you, a hundred years from now?" And he looked at the person who asked the question and said, "I'd like them to say, "Well, he looks pretty good for his age." Holy momentum takes us places we've never been, if we're open to it. Now, I know there are parents in the congregation who currently feel, or have felt, as parents, what I felt as the father of a teenage daughter. It's been fifteen years, but I can remember as if it were yesterday, feeling that I must protect my daughter from the predators who would show up at our house with less than honorable intent. And more than once, I would run them off when it seemed to me the evening was over. Remembering what my grandmother said, that nothing much good happens after 10:30 at night. And I viewed these awkward-looking klutzes, these boys, and was pretty sure nothing much would ever come of their lives. I recall this one kid, a big kid, seemed kind of goofy to me. Came in, said he was an artist. A six-foot-six artist, right, was there in our home. He and our daughter were designing the logo t-shirt for the senior class at Arvada West High School. Sure. Big kid, an artist. I gave him a couple of solid stares a time or two. Then there was this kid named Roy. Roy was a basketball player. I had some sympathy for Roy. I played basketball in high school myself, tried to show the lad some dirty tricks I'd picked up on the hardwood a few years before. Our daughter was a softball pitcher. She could wing the ball. I've got some arthritic fingers and some fingers that are broken because of trying to catch her pitches. One evening, Roy and some of his buddies showed up to watch our daughter pitch. I questioned to myself why they were there, but they were, and frankly it was a relief to me when at the end of

the game they all piled into their own car and went home. Roy seemed more interested in our daughter's pitching form than I thought was healthy, and he really never picked up on the tips I gave him as a basketball player. Roy and Casey were nice young men, Wendell didn't marry, she married Andy, and I like him a lot, but I figured Roy and Casey wouldn't amount to much with their lives, I was pretty sure about that. This week however in the newspaper I read about both of them. Casey Malone is headed for China, where he's going to throw a discus in the Olympics. He was a star here at CSU. Some of you may know him. He's now a track coach at CU. Casey Malone. Roy has changed his name. Never made it as a basketball player, I was right about that. If he'd listened to me he'd be in the NBA right now. They call him Doc, Doc Halliday, they call him. He pitches for the Blue Jays. He's won the Sy Young award, that's major leagues's best pitcher in the American League. He'll be headed for the All-Star game this Tuesday. He currently leads the major leagues in complete games. I never knew. I never would have guessed. That's holy momentum. What's this world coming to.

Sue Monk Kidd, in one of her best pieces of writing, it's in her book *First Light*, which is some of the early writings, she's kind of embarrassed about that, but I think that's some of her best writing. Talks about Beatrice, she says "It's my husband's grandmother. She finished a pink dress. She held it up for all of us to see. I told her it was beautiful. She announced that she would be wearing it to church. I couldn't help thinking about the interminable hours she spent pedaling that ancient sewing machine. She draped the dress over the ironing board. The iron was old and overheated, and in seconds a large brown scorch seared into the skirt. With a sigh, Beatrice pulled out her scissors and cut the dress into small squares and tucked the little pile of squared into her sewing basket. I knew she meant them for a quilt. On cold nights, when I draw up that quilt, the pink squares warms my bed, I sometimes sometimes think about the little pile of disappointments that I've stored away and wonder how can I patch them together into something new?" What goes wrong doesn't have to stay that way. What seems dark may only be a stillness before the dawn. It's holy momentum. We can't know it, we can't predict it, it's God's surprises.

Dorothy was a little girl. She was visiting her grandmother. Dorothy Minick is her name, and she said she was looking at the garden and there was a rosebud and it was so long a time before it would unfold, she'd watch it day after day and she grew impatient, wanting to see the color and beauty so, she said, "I thought we ought to do something about that, and I appealed to my grandmother and she told me I could unfold the petals and I was thrilled. After the petals were unfolded there was no beautiful full-blown rose such as I had envisioned. I had destroyed its beauty. The rose quickly withered and died. Grandmother then explained, that's the way it is with things. You have to let them unfold in their own way and in their own time."

Paul said it: "Creation waits with eager longing. In hope," he said, "we are saved." What's this world coming to? There's holy momentum. It's God's surprises. The Exodus always leads to the Promised Land, but sometimes it takes some time to wander, and when you do, you feel a bit lost before you find it. And every resurrection is preceded by a tomb, and the question is always asked, "Who's going to roll away the stone?" And every rainbow has to have a storm before the colors begin to shine. Now, we live in

difficult days. Four dollars and more for a gallon of gasoline, the housing market collapsed, the mortgage lenders, the decline of the dollar, the fall of the stock market, bad health, bad luck, and a whole lot of other things that just aren't so good. What's this world coming to? Whom can we believe? Human motives. If each of us would take the time to explore our own motives and ask, "What am I doing, and why am I doing it?" that truth would set us free. Holy motivation and momentum, if all of us would just let life unfold and ask ourselves, "Where's God in this? What's God doing?" hope would lead us forward. How do we be disciples of Jesus in a world like this? What's this world coming to?

Once upon a time there were two Kentucky farmers, and they were talking over a picket fence, and one of them asked, "Anything new happen today?" and the other responded, "Nothing much. Oh yeah – baby was born over at Tom Lincoln's place. Nothing much happens around here.

Once upon a time, there were people in Nazareth and one of them said to another, "Anything exciting happen around here?" and the other one replied, "Nothing happens here. Oh, some of our people had to go to Bethlehem for a census. Oh, and guess what. Mary finally had that baby. I expect he won't amount to much." What's this world coming to? It's coming to a place that's better than it's ever been before, and we get to help make it so.