“Dear Child of God”

Psalm 139

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Dear Child of God,

I wonder if you know how loved you are. You are not even born yet, but your world is filled with unbelievable love for you. Mommy and Daddy have searched their hearts, hoping to have enough love to offer you. In these past 9 months, we’ve seen that love grow more and more each day, making the anticipation of your arrival so much sweeter. How is it possible that such a small creature could stir up so much affection and emotion from others? You’ve hardly made a stir in the world outside your current habitat, and yet, you are rocking our world already. With each kick of the ribs, you remind me that you are there. This could be a nuisance, but I’m just glad you’re moving around, stretching those limbs and gaining strength. Each time we hear your heartbeat on the monitor, our hearts skip a few beats. Such a strong rhythm, we give thanks for a healthy heart. As we count down the days until we hold you in our arms, our love for you grows more and more. Hard to believe that love will grow even more once you arrive.

But you know what’s amazing? This incredible love that your parents have for you hardly compares to the love that God has for you. As excited we are about the role we’ve played in creating you, we’re just a small part of that. God is the one that created the one of kind design you’re made to be. God is the one who planned a life for you from the beginning. Maybe you already know this, since you’re still in that nebulous realm between heaven and earth. Perhaps you understand God’s love better than us. It’s quite possible. But in case you don’t realize this, I hope the words of Psalm 139 show you just how much God loves you.

God has searched you and knows you. Better than anyone else, God understands you and loves you. With each movement you make in the womb, God is aware. Even when mommy can’t feel those subtle kicks, or hear your heart beating so fast. God is aware. God is aware of each thought that is on that tiny, developing brain of yours. All of the complicated pieces you’re putting together? They’re known by God. God knows what your personality will be like, before anyone else does. God knows what your first word will be. When your first tooth will emerge.

God has hemmed you into this world, a miraculous addition to creation. Even though billions of people have come before you, God knows each and every hair on your head. God has special love just for you, just like God has a special love for every other person on earth.

Dear child of God, did you know that there’s no where you can escape from God’s presence? This might be a frightening thought for you, if you’re an introvert like your parents. But don’t worry, God’s presence isn’t a scary or exhausting thing. It’s a comforting presence. A presence that is with you through all of the sad and scary and confusing times of your life. When things start to look dark, God will be there to get you through, because darkness isn’t dark to God. Each step of this journey you’re embarking on, is accompanied by God. God will never get tired of you.

There may come a time when you think your life was a mistake. You may have a George Bailey moment, looking over a bridge into the icy depths, wishing you’d never been born. When you have those thoughts, dear child, remember that God knit you together in your mother’s womb. Each and every inch of you has been created by God, fearfully and wonderfully made. Never doubt that God had a plan for your life, even before you were a thought on the minds of your parents. God was writing your name in the book of life, making plans for your presence in the world. A unique, child of God amidst billions of other unique children of God. The Holy Spirit was there from the start, weaving you together. Making a plan for your life. Remember this dear child, God doesn’t make mistakes. You are here for a reason.

Dear child of God, you’re already making waves and you probably don’t realize it. With each new life, the world is reminded of just how precious creation is. Those of us who are bit along in years, are given this chance to look back at our lives. To think about ourselves as infants, fresh and new to the world. In you we see a reflection of who we are created to be. We remember that we too are created in God’s image. We too are precious and unique. Loved by God in profound ways. Thank you for that reminder, dear child.

For this gift you have given us, we all hope to return a gift to you. Your church family, is already making a promise to help raise you in the faith. To teach you about God and the story of the world that you fit into. These wonderful people anticipate nurturing you as best they can. Reading Bible stories to you, so you become better acquainted with God’s story. Telling you about their own faith and how it has gotten them through life.

Dear child of God, you’ve already heard more sermons than some people do in their entire lives. Each week you’ve been a passenger in the pulpit, soaking in the Word of God. Hearing about these people and events that unfolded throughout time. I wonder how much you absorbed from where you are. I wonder if the Holy Spirit somehow delivered the Word to you in utero. Eventually you’ll move to the wiggle mat up front and then later you’ll find a seat in the pew. I imagine you’ll have an easier time understanding these stories when you’re older. But still, you’ve been exposed to a lot in your short little life.

You’ve heard about Noah and his family building that big boat and surviving the flood. You’ve heard about that rainbow promise God has made to us, to be faithful and have grace even when we don’t live as we should.

You’ve heard about Abraham and Sarah, father and mother of all generations. Through this couple, the people of God have prospered and filled the earth. You’re a part of that story, dear child. Don’t forget it.

You’ve heard about Joseph and his difficult time in Egypt. The struggles he and his family had remind us that no family is perfect, even ours. But keeping faith in God got him through some painful times and eventually his family was reunited and healing was found.

You’ve heard about the Israelites wandering in the desert, and the Red Sea parting. I hope you are struck with awe by this story, just like we are. It’s a good reminder that God will help see us through those times when we think we’ve hit a dead end.

You’ve heard all about Joshua and David and Solomon. Those leaders whom God worked through to lead the people. They weren’t perfect, but as we’ve learned, no one is. God still has a way of working through us and our imperfections. It’s an act of grace that God doesn’t give up on us! Then there were the prophets, Micah, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. Their voices spoke truth into the world about God’s hopes and dreams for the people.

And then we moved into Advent and Christmas. For the first time, you got to hear the birth narrative, the incredible story of God entering the world in the form of a little baby. I imagine you can relate to that child. I hope you won’t be born in a manger, surrounded by barn animals. But you know what it’s like to be a vulnerable baby, experiencing a lot of firsts as you grow and develop. Isn’t it remarkable that God would choose to enter this world as a tiny baby?

Since Christmas, you’ve heard the Gospel according to Matthew. We learned about the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, when he was baptized and when he called his disciples. We heard his Sermon on the Mount, filled with words of encouragement and guidance. We heard a few miracles and parables. Some were weirder than others, but all of them were filled with the Gospel message.

In the coming weeks you’ll hear about Jesus’ journey toward Jerusalem. The fateful events of Holy Week. There will be a beautiful moment of fellowship on Maundy Thursday, and then a painful moment on Good Friday. But Easter will be close behind. That’s when the good news of this whole gospel comes together in one victorious event. The resurrection of Jesus is God’s triumph over death and evil. We find that hope and joy on Easter morning, knowing that we are included in God’s resurrection plan.

The story will continue as the early church organizes. You’ll hear about Peter and Paul and the others who led the church after Jesus returned to heaven. You’ll hear about their courage to keep going to church, even when it wasn’t popular or safe.

Dear child of God, you’re going to hear this grand story of the Bible year after year. It may seem repetitious, but it is such an important story, it is worth hearing every year. It’s important to be reminded of where we’ve come from. The Old and New Testaments are filled with our heritage, which we must remember, we must read year after year. We must examine how we fit into that grand narrative of the Bible. We continue this story as we gather today. The Church keeps the message alive.

I hope this helps form a base for your faith. That you’ll be solidly grounded in Scripture, with the help of others in the church who can impart their wisdom unto you. Ultimately you get to decide what you want to believe. You have the choice to follow Christ or not. I hope you’ll choose to believe and trust. I hope you’ll find comfort and encouragement from our friend and savior. I hope you’ll find peace which surpasses all understanding. I hope you’ll find strength in this faith which offers a steady footing, when so much in the world is shaking.

Dear child of God, I look forward to growing in our faith together over the coming years. I have no doubt you have a lot to teach me. I’ll do my best to keep my mind open and try to not be so set in my ways. You’re going to have a fresh perspective on the world and on faith. Your generation is going to be different than mine, just as my generation is different than the ones before. Hopefully we find a way to learn from each other. To teach each other. To continue being the body of Christ together, in whatever form the church turns into over the next century. It’s a grand adventure, this Christian faith. I’m so excited that you get to participate in it.

Just remember, whenever you are unsure about this journey, go back to the words of Psalm 139. Be reminded that God created you with love and precision. Be reminded that you are a created in the image of God, a joy and gift to the world. And remind those around you that they too are a joy and gift to the world. That they too are beloved, precious children of God.

With love, your mother and companion in faith