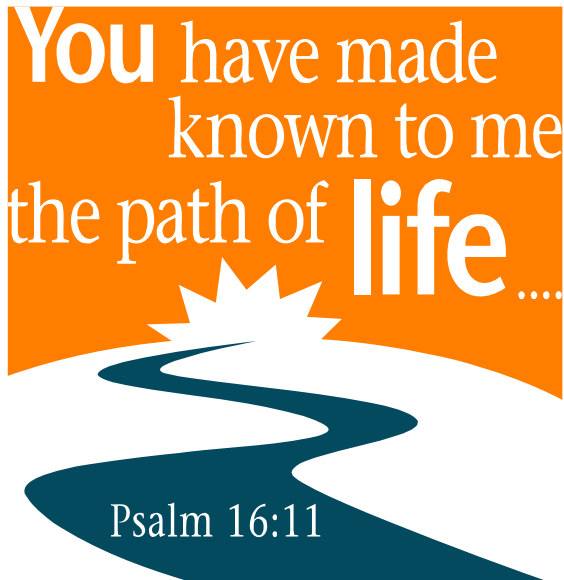


## ONLY HUMAN 2006

Dr. Fred Fourie ~Sunday, October 29, 2006



### Psalm 139

### The Inescapable God

1 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. For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. **I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.** Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.

### Psalm 8

### Divine Majesty and Human Dignity

O LORD, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. Out of the mouths of babes and infants, you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger. When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; **what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor.** You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas. **O LORD, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!** <>

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Have you ever tried to explain your behavior by saying: **"I am only human?"** Most people seem to believe that - being human - means to be weak and vulnerable - prone to excusable errors - powerless! **"I am only human"** is often our way of justifying ourselves **for not** reaching our targets ~ **for not** being up to standard ~ **for not** living up to expectations of ourselves!

However, I believe that we need to rethink that worn-out excuse! From the time-tested pages of Scripture comes a different, **contradictory** understanding! What does the Bible say about "being human?" Our scriptures today already gave the secret away! **It means** to believe that God created us in God's own image. **It means** that we have God's own breath within our lungs. **It means**, in the words of the Psalmist, **"You have** made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. **You have** given them dominion over

the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet ..."

In the bruising battles of life, it is so easy to forget who we really are. The Psalmist calls us unique creatures fashioned in the image of the Creator. It is not possible to call yourself a Christian without also carrying the image of a loving and forgiving God deep within yourself. Our attitudes and actions are to reflect God and God's purpose in action! We can and should mirror God's love, character and purpose. When you and I say, "I am human, only human," we also say something about God's intentions for us. Only human -- is a marvelous thing to say about us!

As far as we know and understand Creation only humans have the capacity to dream great dreams. Have you ever thought what a great gift the ability to dream is? We should rethink our tendency to divide people into "Either dreamers or doers."

Dreaming is just another name for thinking, planning, devising, great things. Holding steadily to a dream ideal, plus a sturdy will determined to succeed in any venture, can make any dream come true. Use your mind and your will. They work together for you beautifully if you will only give them a chance! We have the ability to dream. We have the ability to imagine. Every worthwhile step forward has begun with a dream, a vision, and a bright idea.

The French physician Rene Laennec remembered how he signaled to his childhood friends by tapping on a hollow log. From this memory, he conceived and eventually invented the stethoscope. During a trip to Canada, Clarence Birdseye ate some fish that had been naturally frozen and thawed. He borrowed the idea from nature and the frozen food industry was born. Ben Franklin got tired of changing from one pair of glasses to another. He wondered, "Why not combine them?" The result was the invention of bifocals. Imagination can be a wonderful thing! To dream dreams is a marvelous ability. Only humans have that ability!

We have the freedom to determine our own destiny. Am I the way I am because of circumstances or are circumstances my master because of me? Those are two powerful questions. If we believe that we are what we are because of circumstances, we will excuse ourselves for everything and stay the way we are. We are only human, but we can take command of our lives and do something good about it. We can choose the attitude with which we deal with life

I love the story about the attitude of the hillbilly, during the time of the second World-War, who was walking near a draft board office. A neighbor said, "You had better stay away--you are liable to get drafted." The hillbilly said, "Well, I always figure I have got two chances: I might get drafted and I might not. And even if I'm drafted, I still have two chances: I might pass and I might not. And if I pass, I still have two chances: I might go across and I might not. And even if I go across to the war, I still have two chances: I might get shot and I might not. And even if I get shot, I still have two chances: I might die, and I might not. And even if I die, I still have two chances! ☺ The hillbilly may not have been very smart, but he knew enough not to let fear and negative thoughts defeat him.

To be human is to be able to choose to believe in a God who cares about us deeply. In the all time classic, The Pilgrim's Progress ~ John Bunyan depicts the truth about humanity in his image of a man with a muckrake. Here is a stooped figure of a man, preoccupied, with raking through the muck and mire at his feet so that he might perhaps find a morsel to sustain his life or a trinket to brighten it. All the time, poised over his head is a glittering crown, the symbol of a nobler life within his reach. However, he never sees the crown because he is too

busy raking the muck.

A loving God does not intend us for mere muck and mire. Jesus, saw people **not as they are but as they can be**. Remember the disciple who was impulsive, a coward in the face of danger – an unknown fisher from Galilee? What did Jesus name him? Just the opposite of being a coward! **Petros. Peter; the Rock**. Christ named him not for what he was but what he could become. Boy, and did he live up to those high expectations!

I believe that God intends us to be serene, confident and cheerful. He sees us not as pathetic victims of life, but able to **master** the art of living; not **wanting** sympathy, but **imparting** help to others, and therefore **thinking** less of ourselves and more able to **love** and **laughter** and a **desire** to serve.

There is **joy in the biblical message** of hope and encouragement! You and I are challenged to be human – human indeed - and to be as we are intended to be! We have the ability to dream dreams, the liberty to choose our own meaning, to find our own happiness, and to become what God intends us to be.

**Am I only Human?** Thank God, Yes!

AMEN