

**Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
Des Moines, WA
March 2, 2014**

God Knows

- 1. Before he formed Jeremiah, he knew him**
- 2. Before he formed Jesus, he knew him**
- 3. Before he formed you, he knew you**
- 4. Before he forms anyone, he knows them**

**Hymns: 234 (vv. 1-4) – “At the Name of Jesus” –
Distribution: “Lord of Life,” 56 - Closing: 234 (v. 5)**

All Scripture quotations from NIV 1984

Have you ever said to yourself, “I just knew that was going to happen!”?

Perhaps it happened when you were watching a big game. Maybe it looked bad for your team and things weren’t going well for them, but you just had this feeling they were going to break out and win. When it finally happened in the last minute with a remarkable play, you told yourself, “I just knew that was going to happen!”

Or, maybe your husband had a bit of a hair brained idea for home improvement that you had your doubts about, but you agreed to the plan and let him dive into the ambitious project. However, when the plumbing burst or the temporary wall collapsed you ended up saying (to yourself, of course), “I just knew that was going to happen!”

Today on Life Sunday, we can attribute this phrase to God. He just knew it was going to happen. Let’s look at a few places in Scripture this morning and see how this phrase is very fitting for him.

1. Before he formed Jeremiah, he knew

We read in Jeremiah 1, *“The word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I*

set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.’ ‘Ah, Sovereign LORD,’ I said, ‘I do not know how to speak; I am only a child.’ But the LORD said to me, ‘Do not say “I am only a child.” You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,’ declares the LORD. Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, ‘Now, I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant.’”

Jeremiah didn’t ask to be a prophet. Jeremiah didn’t want to be a prophet. But God made him a prophet anyway. God had vital reasons to make him a prophet. A message needed to be spoken. The Old Testament nation of Israel had gone terribly astray. They had worshiped other gods, and had forsaken the true God who had brought them out of Egypt and had given them the Promised Land. Their idolatry and immorality had them in danger of exile, due to his righteous wrath. They needed to be warned – sternly!

Not only that, but the Savior of the world that God had promised throughout the Old Testament was still coming. God needed faithful prophets to continue to point his people to the coming Savior and keep their faith focused on him. Jeremiah had a vital role that God chose for him. Therefore, the Lord revealed to Jeremiah that he had appointed him for this privilege and task even before he was born. God knew Jeremiah’s days.

The Lord, therefore, knew that Jeremiah was going to preach during very troubled times:

- He knew that by the time Jeremiah came along, the nation would be nothing but a pawn in a never-ending power struggle between the larger empires around them – Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon.
- The Lord knew that he was going to lose the one person in power on whom Jeremiah could rely – King Josiah, who

died on the battlefield during one of those power struggles.

- The Lord knew that when Jeremiah's God-given words would be heard by one of the head priests, he would have Jeremiah beaten and put in stocks.
- The Lord knew that in a time before word processors or printing presses – when precious books were written by hand – that a hateful king of Judah would take the book that was Jeremiah's life work, rip it to shreds as he read it, and throw it piece by piece into the fire.
- God knew that when Jeremiah would continue to preach his message to the people of his day, the king's officials would seize him, throw him into a cistern, and he would sink down in the mud, in danger of dying.
- God knew that when Judah would fall, Jeremiah would have to flee for his life to Egypt.

Before he formed him in the womb, God knew these things.

But God also knew how he would carry Jeremiah through all of those troubles. He knew that despite the tough love that he had to carry out during Jeremiah's days, a Messiah was still promised who would still come into the world. He knew that Jeremiah's sins would be forgiven, not because of his great deeds as a prophet, but because of this Savior to come. And the Lord knew that Jeremiah's sufferings and hardships would lead to rejoicing with his God forever in heavenly joy. God knew the end of Jeremiah's days. No matter how hard life on earth might have been for him, right now Jeremiah is eternally grateful for what God worked through his life.

Before he formed Jeremiah, God just knew what would happen.

2. Before he formed Jesus, he knew him

God knew more. We also read in Isaiah 7: *"The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel, which means*

God with us." Later in Scripture, we read in the New Testament, *"This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.'* All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: *'The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel' - which means, "God with us."*

God the Father also had a gracious, loving plan for Jesus. He didn't wait until Jesus was hanging on the cross and then say, "Hey, I might be able to do something saving with that death." The Father had the life, suffering, and death of Jesus all planned out in advance. Hundreds of prophecies in the Old Testament attest to this fact.

God the Father knew that Jesus would do many positive, marvelous things in his ministry. He would heal people. He would preach powerful sermons. He would counsel sinners with God's truth. He would show love and compassion more perfectly than anyone who would ever live, for he was the sinless Son of God.

Yet God the Father also knew the troubles his Son would encounter:

- God knew he would get into trouble for speaking the Lord's word.
- He knew that he would be rejected in his own hometown of Nazareth and have his life threatened.
- He knew that Jesus would have no home to call his own during his ministry.
- He knew that the important leaders of Jesus day – his own people – would

reject him as God's ambassador and would scheme to murder him.

- He knew that the crowds that gathered so quickly during Jesus' popularity would desert him when his message struck a wrong chord with them, and they would eventually reject him too.
- God knew that his own disciples would flee from him.
- God knew that he would be arrested, tortured, and crucified.

Yet God the Father also knew that Jesus' death and resurrection was the Way he would keep us sinners from spending an eternity in hell. He knew that Jesus would take up our sins and carry our iniquities, suffering the death and hell that we deserved when he hung on the cross. In the greatest loving act ever committed, God knew that he would save you through Jesus so that through faith in him you would have eternal life in heaven.

God just knew it.

3. Before he formed you, he knew you

But there's more. In the opening of our service today, we read, *"You created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you 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."* These words tell us that we can say the same about you. God knew that your precious life was going to come about.

Now we have to be honest. God knew before you were born that another terrible sinner was going to be added to the human race. One more name would be added to sinful humanity, which was already totally corrupt. And God had every reason to give up on you, to wash his hands of you and all humanity, and to simply scrap this world that he had created so

well. But instead of deciding to abort you, he decided to adopt you.

Before you were even conceived, God knew exactly how he was going to bring you to faith. Maybe it was when he adopted you by water and the Word when you were baptized as a baby. Perhaps you were visiting a church when you heard the message about Jesus your Savior. Maybe someone simply told you about how Jesus died for your sins on the cross. Maybe as you're sitting in your seat today, you don't even remember when you first came to faith. It doesn't matter. God remembers. He had it all planned out. Before your parents' eyes ever fell upon each other across a crowded room, he knew. Before your grandparents ever met each other, he knew how he was going to bring you into this world and make you his child by adoption.

Now he also knows the days he has planned out for you. Ephesians 2 tells us that *"we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do"* (v. 10).

God also knows the end of your days, and he knows the perfect timing of how he will bring you safely to his heavenly kingdom.

4. Before he forms anyone, he knows them

Those words – "I just knew it!" – that were spoken to Jeremiah, to Jesus, and to you, could be spoken to every child who has ever been conceived. God has a unique plan for every child he has ever formed in the womb.

Sometimes we think of abortion, euthanasia, and assisted suicide as political issues. Some even think of them in such pure political terms that they feel they have no place in the pulpit of a church. If these issues were purely political issues, that would be true.

But God's Word has something to say about abortion, euthanasia, and assisted suicide. These may be legal in some of the courts of our state, country, and world, but they are not legal in God's court. Forty-one years ago, on January 22, 1973, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that unborn children were not persons "in the whole sense." How different

this is from the way that God had spoken to us about life!

Peter Singer teaches bioethics at Princeton University. He has taken this logic a step further. He argues that for at least the first month after their children are born, parents should be able to put to death any child who is born with any type of "defect." If you accept the Supreme Court's argument that we humans can set an arbitrary time when a child becomes a "whole person," Mr. Singer's argument makes perfect sense. Why not argue that we can extend our arbitrary judgment out to a year? Or two? Or more? We should not be surprised that on February 13th Belgium's parliament passed a bill that allows for the euthanasia of children.

Some people say that it isn't right to bring a child into the world when you know from the start that the child's life is going to be troubled. Well, Jeremiah's life was troubled from the start. And nobody had a life more troubled from beginning to end than Jesus. But the Lord who formed them in the womb used them to do mighty things that he had ordained in this world. Abortion was common in the first century A.D. We'd be in a sorry state if Mary had chosen that supposedly easy way out.

Every once in a while you hear the slogan, "Every child a wanted child," suggesting that we want to make sure no child comes into this world unwanted. Well, no child does come into this world unwanted. A lot of Christians would be willing to care for that child. There are many in our country who would love to adopt, love, and raise that child. There are parents, here in our own congregation, who have adopted children into their family. But even if there weren't a single one, God wants that child. The One who formed that child in the womb wants her or him so badly that he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross, just so he could have that child and the rest of us sinners.

What can we now do, hearing these words of our God and realizing the depths to which our culture has sunk around us? We will not all

let our light shine in the same way. There are various ways we can react:

1. **Your voice can be heard.** You can use your voice to personally speak up in conversations. You can use your voice to counsel a young lady who has "gotten herself in trouble," and encourage her to at the very least have her child and allow it to be adopted by a caring family. You can use your voice to speak up in conversations that deal with end of life issues, expressing trust that God knows the end of our days and reserves the right to end those days, despite those who want to take upon themselves the right to end life through assisted suicide and euthanasia. You can use your voice to speak publicly. You can participate in rallies and demonstrations that are law abiding. You can let your voice be heard in your community. As you get educated on the various issues at stake in elections and weigh them, you can certainly include the issues of abortion, euthanasia, and assisted suicide in your decision.
2. **You can be involved in our synod's agency that speaks up about life issues, called "Christian Life Resources."** This agency has a thorough website with numerous articles and updates on life issues from a Scriptural point of view. Get educated! It also supports a home in Denver for single mothers who have chosen to have their babies called "New Beginnings." All of CLR's ministries are funded by offerings directly given to them, not by our synod's budget. Consider supporting their cause. Keith Kriewall of our congregation is on their governing board.
3. If you'd like to get involved by personally counseling pregnant women, we do not have a WELS pregnancy counseling center in our area. However, an agency called Care Net,

who shares our views on conception and pregnancy operates eight centers in the Puget Sound area. **Perhaps you could lend your individual voice to their efforts.**

4. **And most importantly, you can proclaim the gospel to those you know and meet.** You and I get to tell people about the forgiveness of sins and eternal life that Jesus Christ has won for us all. You can even proclaim this forgiveness to women who have chosen to abort their child, for with repentance comes forgiveness for this sin too. This message has changed all of us from doomed sinners to adopted children of God!

Today, we rejoice in the fact that "God knew." And he continues to know. As we consider all of this on Life Sunday, may we take comfort in God's plans for life and salvation. And may he use us as his instruments in this world to let others know that God knows! Amen.