

# ***Reflections from a United Methodist Pastor***

*November 29, 2020*

*Lesson 13*

## **Created, Loved, Known**

### **Genesis 1:27; Psalm 139:13-18**

It's hard to believe that it is already the first Sunday of Advent! The months leading up to this holy season have been marked with uncertainties and stresses. This week's texts offer us some assurance that God still has joy and salvation for us.

You may have run across the theological term *imago dei*. That is simply a classic Latin translation of what we translate into English as "image of God." Genesis 1:27 boldly claims that we human beings are created in the image of God. That puts us into relationship with God, relationship to one another, and relationship with the whole created order. The next verses, 28-30, show how God wants that image to be expressed: with care for the whole created order.

In writing about Psalm 139:13-18, biblical scholar J. Clinton McCann, Jr., said, "Certainty is elusive." Some of the Hebrew words appear only in this passage, so it is difficult to get a solid grasp on their meaning. Are the psalmist's reflections universal truth or personal experience? Is God to get the blame/credit when a human life is packaged with physical or mental limitations? What plans does God have for me that I have misunderstood? Do you see why Dr. McCann has said "Certainty is elusive"?

One thing is clear in what the psalmist wrote: Human beings are not freelance creatures; we are intended to reflect God's multi-flavored presence. No, we are not God, although we may try to be. God is still beyond our comprehension (verse 17), but we are born to reflect the love and justice and healing and joy that God's presence expresses.

I am left to wonder: Where has my life besmirched the image of God? How does God use my life to touch the world with God's presence?

**Prayer:** As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Thank You, Lord, for me."

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