



Columbia, Missouri
The Worship of God • July 31, 2022



THE SCRIPTURE
Psalm 139:1-18

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.*

*My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.*

*Your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your book were written all the
days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed.*

How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!

*I try to count them—they are more than the sand; I come to the end—I am
still with you.*

"Everything"

BY ALANIS MORISSETTE; 6TH ALBUM, 2004

I can be a nightmare of the grandest kind

I can withhold like it's going out of style

I can be the moodiest baby and you've never met anyone

As negative as I am sometimes

I am the wisest woman you've ever met

I am the kindest soul with whom you've connected

I have the bravest heart that you've ever seen and

You've never met anyone as positive as I am sometimes

You see everything, you see every part

You see all my light and you love my dark

You dig everything of which I'm ashamed

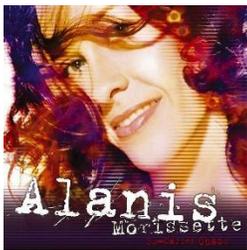
There's not anything to which you can't relate and you're still here.

THE MESSAGE
“Then Sings My Soul: Everything”
Terry Overfelt



In hearing the Scripture of David and the song “*Everything*” by Alanis Morissette, I can’t help but feel that I am reading to my darlings the story of *The Runaway Bunny*, by Margaret Wise Brown ...where the little bunny cannot escape the unconditional love of his mother, “If you run away, I will run after you.”

David, Alanis, and the Bunny...there we have it.
I come to the end – I am still with you! Have a carrot.



This is Alanis Morissette, singing and walking down the road of life.

Two of her songs were folded into the surveyed selections suggested as having secular and sacred applications in our lives. What a fascinating series this is. Maybe you, like I, have been moved to tears and tapping nostalgically with the devotionals! We are, indeed, *Finding Sacred Hope in Secular Music*. Here’s the spin for the day.

Alanis Morissette’s sensational career took her to nearly instant success as a phenomenal lyricist and musical artist.

This song, “*Everything*,” is true to her form of holding raw, honest, crass, and conflicted content, as is within the nature of all of us...as positive and negative as we are...sometimes.

Playing this song alongside a psalm of David, strikes a kindred sentiment that is undeniably parallel even beyond the runaway bunny.

Like David, Alanis, too, has her rock ability; hers being **indie rock** and David’s the throwing sort. These rocks cast them each into the spotlight at a very young age. This can be hard on a child’s sense of self. Alanis called it being “parentified” when a child is forced to take on the role of an adult and get into developmentally inappropriate situations. The result is often workaholism and over- or underdeveloped ego.

Born in Canada, 12 minutes after her twin brother, Alanis is the middle child of three. At six years old, she shows prodigy piano playing abilities. She becomes a child actress in the Sliming Series: *You Can’t Do That on Television*. With her earnings there, she creates her on record label and publishes her first original single at 13. By the age of 15, she is picked up by the Maverick Label of Madonna fame, produces her

first album, and hits the road. She is thrust into the wild and notoriously frenzied world of touring musicians. She is underage but living and presenting herself as a grown woman and consequently is abused. Because, as she says, a 15-year-old cannot give consent. Today, part of her crusade is to educate and mentor other young female artists who enter the music industry.

David, born in Bethlehem, was the shepherd boy also cast into greatness at a very young age. He is the youngest of eight brothers. Once he volunteers to go to battle with the giant, Goliath and defeats him with a rock and a sling, he is in fast favor with King Saul. David is a musician, too, and he was often summoned to the palace because he had the ability to calm the anxious and troubled mind of the king. He is anointed to be king from his boyhood. He becomes the second king of Israel. David, himself, is known to have written more than half of the 150 Psalms.

So, Alanis and David have some similarities in their catapulted careers. Their writings have similarity, too. Both demonstrate vulnerable, real, and raw creativity that reveals the complexity and contradictory emotions. Both can turn a tirade into praise in back-to-back phrasing because they are so honest.

Beautifully, both Alanis and David affirm that they are courageous enough to claim their personal paradoxes because, at their core, they know themselves completely seen and unconditionally loved. This is the redeeming hope found in their life songs.

Alanis sings... *You see all my light, and you love my dark.*

David...even the darkness is not dark to you.

What is the darkness? Why is it sung out, cried out, called out and significant? Because it is what we are quite often afraid or ashamed to face ourselves yet are discovered and named by others. Any shame that we resist to name, persists in tormenting us. When we can fully know our fears and our joys, it changes everything.

For both David and Alanis, their music is confessional and there is freedom in bringing what is hidden into the light or admitting it even in the dark. There is a loosening of its grip in the in the naming it and calling it out. Therefore, their material is so powerful; it resonates with all of us. Their moodiness is ours, too.

Take last week for example. The recycle truck came down our street early at 7:10, and I didn't have my blue bag out! Jeff heard it coming, and I ran to put it on the curb anyway...just in hopes... but they were four doors up and I was in my pajamas. I left it and went furiously inside and told Jeff, sometimes they come back. "They won't come back." He spoke. Then, it started to rain, and I had to go back out and get that wet

cardboard. And Lo! They had come back! I wanted to sing of how much *I loved the recycle guys, they came back!* Really? This was my turn about day maker?

The person who suggested this song, “*Everything*” to be considered in the series says, “*We all have contradictions inside us. Named by many things-good and evil, flesh and spirit, light and dark, healthy, and unhealthy. It’s human. This is our nature. Nature given by God, nurtured here on earth. Sometimes it depends on the people, situation, the time, the day, and the rawness of the words the truth of some phrases. The good of this- we have beauty inside us, even at our worst. God sees all of us. God became human, experiencing all of it. God loves us-just us, the mix of everything we are.*”

So, even our dark is of intimate interest and the invitation for God to enter, not in the schadenfreude, pleasure derived by another person’s misfortune, sort of way. God is not capable of that. But God delights in where we are, how we are, how we got there, and where we will then go. God has no intention of punishing us in the dark, but of crawling into the dark to be with us as it teaches us, holds us, quiets us, whispers, and sometimes hides us as we explore all of what we are feeling and processing. We squint harder to see in the dark.

My friend told me she sometimes therapeutically goes to a place in her mind where she feels safe. For her it isn’t any regular place she knows. But she remembers what she experienced in the cave of Mary Magdalene, in France. The cool, damp, darkness that echoed and even showed her breath, the walls that were the earth itself...stilled her soul to listen, center, and drink water from a rock.

Last week, Elijah heard the whisper of God, in the cave. David sought refuge in a cave. Sometimes, we just must find a cave and crawl in.

Alanis creates altars, “For rituals and breathing and being hyper present; to take breaks in a moment, to drop down, hide in a bathroom or closet to find expansive spacious stillness. To ask why we are here and why it is interesting to stay.”

What would that darkness reveal to us in its still and undistracted hold? Would we face our innermost selves with someone else there who can see in the dark? Is this why we often close our eyes to pray, to kiss, to cry, to sleep?

King David, like Alanis, is singing his darkness. David, who has an illicit affair with Bathsheba and then sent her husband, Uriah, to the front lines of battle where he was killed. David who took Bathsheba for his own wife. She was one of his eight wives along with his ten concubines! Really?

David, who did not do justice for his daughter Tamar when his son, her half-brother raped her. He protected the abuser rather than the victim.

David tells his dark stories, and still he is celebrated, forgiven, repentant, redeemed, and known as a man who was after God's own heart.

David, whose life so full of light and darkness, whose songs through Psalms wrestle with the truth and often cry destruction over his enemies of which he has many.

David's name is mentioned in the Bible more than any, other than the name Jesus.

David, also called Messiah, anointed for his people.

David who laments, repents, and knows God's runaway bunny steadfastness throughout Psalm 139:

*Sit down and rise up,
On the path and lying down,
Heaven and hell,
Wings of the morning, the farthest sea!*

Is it in this realization and the confessional writing of it (See Psalm 51) that David can apologetically face his own treachery and know himself forgiven and not cast away by God? Is it in this deliverance that he praises God, comes through the grave transgressions, and then sings again of God's ways so that others will turn to God!?

I come to the end—I am still with you.

Alanis, too, faces her darkness. She lives a life of glory, fortune, passion, fame addiction, eating disorder, and heartbreak. Her brilliant lyrics launch searing attacks on deception, anger, frustrations, fears, passion as her debut album goes platinum.

How often it is that the artist and especially a child will not allow the angry, confused, vulnerable parts of herself to be seen? Be a good girl. Win first place. As a child, she would write poetry to express her anger and crumple it up until she found her voice, and her fans went wild.

Alanis was mentally drained, disillusioned, and physically exhausted. By age 20, she was filling stadiums, but the fame felt like disillusionment and failure. Shell-shocked by her success, she was a shadow of herself, and she dropped out of the rock scene to find peace. She needed not to be the super star for a little while. She went on a pilgrimage of discovery – even to India.

The other song one of you suggested came out of this time... *“Thank U,” thank you terror, thank you frailty, consequence, and silence. “How’bout remembering your divinity and not equating death with stopping?”*

In her second album, she identified as a “stream of consciousness” writer where something was channeling through her, and she could say how hard it is to be a kid. She could give raw, emotionally charged energy. Her album, *Jagged Little Pill* was made into a Broadway musical where relationships, human connection, and catharsis drove the storyline.

Today, she has seven Grammys.

When Alanis spoke her new truth, to her surprise, her loved ones accepted it unconditionally. Her fans were again fanatical, and her songs became anthems.

A friend, who I love, was on an AA retreat. They found the courage to do a face-to-face confession with a priest. “What I resist, persists...” They were compelled to tell the whole, regrettable truth and named all their torment. The priest took a breath, looked deeply, and said, “I thought you were going to tell me something I’d never heard before.” Absolved and free. I can hear David and Alanis...you’re still here.

Alanis comes back into the talent she was born to express. She creates a new album for peace rather than suffering. She creates a lyric-less album of meditation music.

She says, “You don’t have to suffer to create, you don’t have to suffer to learn, I know now that I can evolve faster without suffering...and that’s big.”

We are not only as good as our productivity. What about the fact that you just exist...in relationship with God, with others and with these parts within self?”

How many loved ones have we lost because of the darkness they were bottling up and not expressing? It doesn’t even need to be a confession. Maybe you have been startled by a revelation that needs to be spoken aloud for healing to begin. God is with us to *dig up the thing of which I’m ashamed and love what we resist.*

What if Judas had been able to return to the upper room with the apostles and cry on their necks for the shame of his betrayal?

It wouldn’t have to be a confession. Maybe it’s only a startling revelation that needs to bounce off the cave walls.

Against the empty tomb, Mary Magdalene cried anguished tears when she couldn't see the body of her beloved!



Then an angel, maybe with Jesus looking over her shoulder, asked her why she was weeping. The angel *knows* why she is weeping. But maybe the power is in getting Mary to say it aloud. "They have taken my Lord, and I don't know where."

Then Jesus calls her by name, and she recognizes he is... still here.

Amen.

"Everything"

ALANIS MORISSETTE, 2004

What I resist, persists and speaks louder than I know
What I resist you love, no matter how low or high I go.

You see everything, you see every part
You see all my light and you love my dark
You dig everything of which I'm ashamed
There's not anything to which you can't relate and you're still here.

Song of Focus

"Yours"

WORDS AND MUSIC: MICHAEL TATUM

1. I lose my way sometimes,
but hope shines inside misshapen rhymes.
Gotta fight to hold the truth,
Gotta find a way to get back home to you,
in search of something more
than empty promises and padlocked doors.
Gotta channel all this pain
into the God that holds my heart
and calls my name.

Pre Chorus:

So here I stand, before you again,
broken but I am...

Chorus:

Yours, in my laughter; yours, in my grief;

yours, in the good times and the sorrows I meet.
Yours, in forgiveness and the grace that I seek,
but I'm not quite there, seems I'm stuck in repair.
Broken, but I am Yours.

2. Beyond the setting sun
is the warning call that darkness comes.
And in the grieving of the light,
I find the God that draws me close
and holds me tight.

So, I surrender all to you;
sing my brokenness and weary blues;
'Cause pain is all I've known.
Now I give all to you, my heart, my home.

Pre Chorus:

So, here I stand, before you again,
broken but I am...

Chorus:

Yours, in my laughter; yours, in my grief;
yours, in the good times and the sorrows I meet.
Yours, in forgiveness and the grace that I seek,
but I'm not quite there, seems I'm stuck in repair.
Broken, but I am Yours.

Bridge:

Won't you take me as I am, O Lord
and hold me in your heart.
And when my doubt creeps in, O God,
remind me I am Yours.

Pre Chorus:

So, here I stand, before you again,
broken, but I am...

Chorus:

Yours, in my laughter; yours, in my grief;
yours, in the good times and the sorrows I meet.
Yours, in forgiveness and the grace that I seek,
but I'm not quite there, seems I'm stuck in repair.
Broken, but I am Yours.

BROAD HEARTS BROAD MINDS BROAD REACH