**Philippians 3:10-11**

**January 12th, 2025**

**Paul’s Aim / Knowing the Living Christ**

**READING THE TEXT**

**10My aim is to know him, to experience the power of his resurrection, to share in his sufferings, and to be like him in his death, 11and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.**

**INTRODUCTION**

Paul begins verse ten with the most important goal that a human can have, “to know him.” Paul wants to know Jesus and that is his highest aim. To know Him. Not to know about him or to do things for him then demand a reward. Knowing Jesus is the aim. Then Paul gives us more information about what it is like to know Him. The question we all should ask as we work through this passage is this; “do we know Him.” How do we know that we know him? Let’s take a deeper look at this wonderful passage.

**PREACHING THE TEXT**

**MY AIM…..**

TO KNOW HIM

 How important is it to “know Jesus?” Matt 7 reveals the importance of knowing Jesus.

**Matthew 7:21-23 ESV**

**21“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ 23And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’**

 If you want to get to heaven and be with Jesus when you die, knowing Jesus Christ is everything. And the result of knowing Jesus is that we do His will. Another thing to notice is that it is Jesus alone that decides who is allowed into His heaven. It is he alone who says, either; depart from me or enter in. Let’s ponder that for a moment.

Heaven belongs to Jesus and He gets to set the rules about who can enter. Many people seem to feel entitled to heaven. They have the mindset that they can set the criteria for who gets into heaven. One says; “I think all it takes to get into heaven is to be a basically good person.” Another says; “God would not banish anyone to hell, that would be cruel” so everyone gets to go to heaven. And at almost every funeral I hear people say; “well at least they are in a better place.” That is even said of people who live like hell and think not one thought about God their entire lives. Let me share an analogy related to who decides which persons go to heaven.

(**story/ illustration** of someone crashing your thanksgiving dinner) (POINT = Jesus decides who comes into the heaven that he created and owns)

Trusting Dramatic Displays Instead of Knowing Him

 Jesus said the basis for entry into heaven is to “know him.” Some trust dramatic displays like prophecy in His name. ***“Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name?!”*** We can assume this refers to people who claim to have prophesied in his name but did not know Him. This could be someone like the prophet Balaam who had a gift of prophecy in the Old Testament but sold his gift for profit. We see plenty of people selling their spiritual gifts for money.

In our day many so called prophetic ministries claim they can teach anyone how to be a prophet. In one of these classes the leader tells the attendees to just speak the first thing that comes to mind and God will turn it into prophesy. The truth is that you cannot teach a gift of prophecy. Spiritual gifts are distributed by the Holy Spirit as He sees fit and they are not handed out by the teacher to class or workshop attendees (for a fee of course). The spiritual gift of speaking in tongues is treated the same way. Just speak gibberish and God will turn it into a spiritual gift. Where do we ever see this in scripture?!

 I’ve attended meetings led by so-called prophets who told person after person they will have a worldwide ministry and growing influence or a fresh anointing that will affect many. Real prophets often say things like “it will not rain for 3 years except at my word” and it happens! Or “you will leave here in chains if you stay,” and it happened. It would have been more believable if this so-called prophet would have told someone at the event; “you will be a janitor the rest of your life, but your faith will be a blessing to others.” Someone must be the janitor and do it for the glory of Jesus. But no! The false prophets appealed to the ego and told everyone they would have a worldwide ministry.

 Some of today’s false prophets use mass hypnosis techniques of the mentalist to get people to fall over and writhe and race about and they call this wonder working. Wonder working is striking a rock in the desert and having water pour out of it. Wonder working is calling down fire from heaven to eat up the fire of the false prophets. Wonder working is raising people from the dead or healing leprosy or having people who are lame from birth immediate leap to their feet.

 God still knows how to do miracles, and we pray and sometimes God heals people miraculously. He does, and I have been blessed to experience many things that I think are miraculous. All of us probably have stories of times that God broke into our lives and did something miraculous. We need to be open to God moving and pray earnestly for him to do so. But He decides when he will do a miracle, not us!

But today we have many who talk mostly about the power of the Holy Spirit as if it is some force we can use for our wishes while they speak little about Jesus’ death and resurrection. Real believers talk about Jesus and think about him most. False believers treat the resurrection like it is old news that has become boring to them. They need an exciting show and talk about amazing things they have supposedly seen in their minds or a heavenly realm.

 Those who arrive on judgment day and stand in front of the Lord and want entrance into heaven will rely on their mentalist tricks and use that as their reason of why the Lord should let them into his heaven. Others will rely on the fact that they have spoken in tongues despite the fact that it was gibberish and not a true spiritual gift.

 What Jesus requires is that we truly know Him personally and then, out of love for Him, do His will. It is not enough to know about Jesus, but we must have a personal relationship with him which begins with trusting Jesus that He is who he said he was. He is Lord, Lord of the universe and we must declare, and act, like he is Lord of us. And we trust him as our Savior because saving us is what he came to do. We must have friendship with the Lord and a personal relationship with the Lord on his terms. We must repent of taking the role of Lord of our own life and give that role back to our creator. We turn from the self-directed life to the God directed life. And those know Him are given the Holy Spirit who will help us live for God and walk in His power and holiness.

 Now Paul talks about what it is like to truly know Jesus.

TO EXPERIENCE THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION

**Vs 11 Resurrection**

 Those who know Jesus personally have the resurrection life of Jesus at work in them. This verse is about people seeing who have been raised from the deadness of their old lives, and we live the raised life of Jesus. Our new lives are a preview of the resurrection as a living witness and illustration while we live among those who have no hope.

 We have life and hope and holiness and an eternal perspective and endurance that comes from the resurrected Christ at work in us.

**STORY:** I recall what my mindset was before I came to know Jesus Christ. I was filled with rage and had revenge on my mind. I was caught up in trying to prove that I measured up to others. Many rejections damaged my sense of self-worth. I was striving to prove I was okay. Life was hard, and I faced many obstacles. I was depressed, angry and striving for approval.

Then I was tricked into going to a church picnic. And there I saw a lady that was filled with and radiated the resurrected life of Jesus Christ. When I saw her, I saw the raised life of Jesus radiating from her. She wasn’t putting on a show. She wasn’t perfect but I saw the resurrection of Jesus in her. And that day, because of the resurrected life of Jesus flowing through her, I came to faith in Jesus Christ.

 I knew that she knew Jesus. She knew the living Christ and I wanted what she had.

TO SHARE IN HIS SUFFERINGS AND BE LIKE HIM IN HIS DEATH

 Another result of knowing personally Jesus Christ is that we share in his sufferings not with crossed arms and frowns and complaints, but as a great honor.

When believers suffer for their allegiance to Jesus, they are participating in the sufferings of Christ. For Paul, suffering for loyalty to Christ is not a sign of divine abandonment but of the reality of the believer’s relational bond with Christ.

Becoming like Christ in his death involves taking on his mindset of caring more for others than for self and renouncing the benefits and honour of high status. This mindset of Christ is the pattern that the Philippian believers are to follow (2:2, 5) and is the paradigm that Paul himself emulates. - *Jeannine Brown*

TO ATTAIN THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD

The final reward of a life lived for the glory of Jesus Christ is that we are granted eternal life. We are raised from the dead just like Jesus. Paul lives like he is raised from the deadness of his old life without Christ. He lives like he knows and loves Jesus and trusts that he will be raised from the dead like Jesus was. That is the promise of Jesus to those who know Him.

**SUMMARY / APPLICATION**

 The most important thing we learned today was that we must know Jesus. Many are hooked on displays of power and the dramatic. But it is possible to do dramatic things and fall prey to mentalist tricks but never know Jesus. And the greatest miracle that God gives us is that we have a new desire to please Jesus and overcome the temptations of the world. Is that enough for you? Is walking with the living Christ enough for you? Do you love Him? Do you know Him?

**TAKING IT HOME**

1. Does your life look like you have been raised from the dead?
2. Are you willing to go by God’s demands to get into heaven instead of using your own terms?
3. What are ways that God is calling you to share the sufferings of Jesus Christ?