

We Know That We Know Him

March 3, 2024

- One of the saddest marks of this generation, especially the church, is that we fail to fully capture or spend any time contemplating what our eternal future looks like.
 - We are so wrapped up in the present that we have sacrificed much of what our future lives could look like.

- I do not think I would get any disagreement that all of us are destined to die one day.
 - Short of being Raptured, it's a certainty that we will.
 - As I get older, I look through the contact list on my phone and I have quiet a few people in there who have died.
 - The certainty of death is ever present.
 - For the Christian, death is the victory line we cross after we have ran our race here on earth.
 - For the unbeliever, they receive the just reward given to a person who has lived a life opposed to God.

- There is nothing more certain in our bible than the reality of Heaven and Hell.
 - There really is no gray area concerning this subject, although the devil has spent a great deal of energy having us believe there is.
 - Because of the harsh reality of both and what it takes to get there, we readily accept the softening of both to make us feel better.
 - Soul sleep, Purgatory, or even the concept that we die and that is it, are all designed to lessen the consequences of our actions.
 - As teachers of God's word and as Christians, every Pastor, teacher, Evangelist, Parent and even a friend,

should feel the pressure to instruct others on the realities of heaven and hell.

- One of the principal reasons we don't is that we aren't taught these things in church as a whole any more therefore, we do not grasp what God's word has to say concerning His expectations for us and the consequence of not listening and obeying Him.
- Today, I wish to talk about our relationship with God and a bit about Heaven and Hell
 - How you can get to one and stay out of the other.
 - My goal is that by the time you leave here today you are absolutely certain of what your eternal destiny is.
 - You should be able to say when we are finished, one of two things.
 - Based on God's word, I am absolutely going to heaven
 - Or, based on God's word, I am in real trouble.
- **1 John 2:3-6**
 - *Now by this **we know that we know Him**, if we keep His commandments. He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.*
- The standard here just became very defined and very convicting.
 - Does everyone in here believe that God takes His word seriously?

- If you are unsure, allow me to share some of His thoughts about His word.
 - **Psalm 138:2***For You have magnified Your word above all Your name*
 - **John 8:47** *He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.*
 - **John 1:1** *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

- In our original text in 1 John 2, we see the words, "we know that we know Him"
 - The word know, used twice here and 23 times in this 5 chapter letter means that we have the knowledge and recognize it.
 - It means that we have familiarity with or a relationship with someone. Like "I know them in a personal way".
 - Said in a different way "I am fully aware that I have a relationship with that person."
 - In context it is saying "I have a relationship with Jesus"
 - John has to say it twice here to dismiss the notion of someone who has just casually heard of Him.
 - Said only once, indicates nothing of a relationship, just the fact that a person can know He exists.
 - There are plenty of people who will acknowledge there was this person named Jesus as an historical figure, and that is it.

- How can I really know that I have this relationship?

- Now using the Word of God, we can rightfully understand what John has said concerning sin.
 - The purpose of this letter was to correct some really bad thinking on the part of these churches in Asia minor.
 - The people here had claimed to know God although that knowledge had no bearing on their moral behavior.
 - They claimed to know “God” through mystical enlightenment or what we call Gnosticism.
 - We might give them a little bit of a break because they didn’t have all of the tools that we have to understand the true relationship between man and God.
 - I have found it to be true that someone without biblical knowledge, or partial biblical knowledge, (Both extremely dangerous) will make up what they want their relationship with God to look like.
 - They will make up all the rules and be able to change them as they see fit.
 - They will worship a God made in their own image.
- So, John comes in and tells them you can’t claim to know God and live in opposition to who God is.
 - Our relationship with God should drastically change who we are.
 - We do testimonies on a regular basis at this church with the Men and Women groups.
 - Each person that shares their testimony describes someone they used to be and the completely different person they are now.
 - Each person here, that calls themselves a Christian, should have their testimony ready to go describing how God saved them.

- If you got “saved” and your life doesn’t look any different than it did before, you have reason to doubt your salvation.
 - To paraphrase the point that John was making, “If you say you have a relationship with Him (Jesus) yet you are not obedient to Him, then you are lying to yourself.
- If I can say that Jesus is my Lord, that makes me His servant.
 - It is interesting that after the resurrection of Jesus, that those who were closest to Him, only addressed themselves as bondservants of Jesus.
 - These are guys that hung around with Jesus for three and a half years before Jesus died.
 - They could have chosen words like friends or even brothers in the case of a couple of them, but yet they chose to be called slaves.
 - Does a slave get to exercise his own will?
Absolutely not.
 - A bondservant is someone who freely gives up his own will to serve his master.
 - If that is us, then we must be ready to do the same.
 - After that, anytime I exercise my own will, I steal from my Master.
- Now you may be thinking, can I sin or not sin?
 - John address this earlier in this book in chapter 1 verses 8 & 9
 - 1 John 1:8-9 *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

- Clearly John is saying that you are going to sin.
 - It is impossible for us to live in this flesh and not sin.
 - Therefore, perfect obedience is not the requirement.
 - But yet, He asks for our obedience to His call on our lives.

- So, John is speaking of a sinful lifestyle.
 - A choice that you make knowing the right thing to do and not doing it.
 - What does that look like?
 - Adultery, alcoholism, drug addiction, theft, murder, hatred, selfish ambitions, envy, etc. are all things we willfully participate in.
 - There is no such thing as a sin that is outside of our control, including things that the world may categorize as a disease.
 - God does not tell you to stay away from sin then make it impossible to do so.
 - 1 Corinthians 10:10 states that no temptation can overtake us that God hasn't made a way of escape for it.
 - If you find yourself in a bad situation, pray that verse to God and watch Him work it out for you.

 - Have you ever heard people say things like:
 - "Well, God is just going to have to forgive me."
 - "I'm human, I can't help it."
 - "Why shouldn't I be happy?"

 - Especially things we see in the media like:
 - "God gets us"
 - Which is totally opposite of "We need to get God"
 - Yes, He made us and knows our weaknesses, but that doesn't excuse our sin.

- We hear the “Love is love” mantra.
 - Love can be love if it is practiced in a biblical manner.
 - Who are you to tell me who to love?
 - I am nobody, but I can tell you that the bible has given us His definition of marriage and love and anytime we go outside of that, we are sinning against Him.

- “My Body; My Choice”
 - I will grant them this one.
 - It is their body and their choice what they do with it.
 - Once that choice involves another body, namely a baby, there is no longer a choice.
 - Disposing of another life removes their choice.

- All of these and many more are lies that are designed to excuse our own sin with the presumption that God will overlook it.
 - The harsh reality is that God wouldn't be God if He just overlooked sin.
 - His love and justice requires that He deal with sin.
 - It would not have been necessary for His own Son to die if He could just overlook it.

- Let's look at some other areas that may present a problem.
 - There is the thought of once saved always saved.
 - The idea here is that once you have given your life to Christ, you can never be plucked out of the Father's hand.

- There is plenty of scripture that gives us this great hope.
- There are many times I have personally rested on this promise.
 - **Romans 10:9** tells us *“that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”*
 - **John 3:16** *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*
 - As a Christian, those verses bring me a great deal of comfort!
- Now let’s throw in a little tension into that.
 - There are verses that could cause us to question the Once saved, always saved thought.
 - **Galatian 5:19-21** *Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*
 - That is a long list and I can tell you at times in my life I have practiced some of those to my shame.
 - **1 Corinthians 15:1-2** *Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by*

*which also you are saved, **if** you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.*

- To paraphrase something that Chuck Smith said on the subject of “Once saved; Always saved.”
 - If he stayed close to Jesus, he did not have to worry about his eternal destiny.
 - I can tell you that if we are connected and striving to please the Lord, we don’t have to worry about it either.
 - There is a key phrase in the Galatians text that I read earlier and is the theme in all of these verses: “If I practice such thing”
 - That word “Practice” refers to a lifestyle, or a common participation in a way of an individual.
- This brings us to the next subject of those who at some point may have answered an alter call, but their lives do not look anything like a Christians should and never have.
 - All of us either know someone like that or we are or have been like that.
 - Those who can live like hell and expect heaven as their reward.
 - Do they fall into this category of once saved; always saved?
 - I honestly do not have the answer for that.
 - Here is what I do know.
 - The only times in my life I have ever questioned my salvation was when I wasn’t doing what God wanted me to do.
- Our ability to participate in a sinful lifestyle without regard to what it does to God is a real problem.
- I can remember growing up as a little boy how important it was for me to be pleasing to my parents.

- I did not want to embarrass them or bring shame to them in any way.
 - As I relate that to my relationship towards God, I never want that to be the case either.
- If I can undertake sinful actions without regard for how it displeases God, I again need to examine my salvation.
 - So, I do not leave you thinking that you have no chance, all sin is forgivable.
 - Our confessing these sins to the Lord and repenting of those sins is an absolute must.
 - Repentance is a big deal.
 - Repenting is not confessing or even telling God how horrible I feel.
 - It is the taking action to not participate in that sinful act anymore.
 - Turning away from it, removing it from your life.
- Next, we have those who I would call “Christians by association.”
 - They grew up in a Christian home.
 - Go to church every Sunday.
 - They may even tithe to the church.
 - But they are nowhere close to having a relationship with Jesus.
- Do you remember the rich young ruler coming to Jesus and asking Him what he must do to inherit eternal life?

Mark 10:17-22 *Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, “Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” So Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not bear false witness,’ ‘Do not defraud,’ ‘Honor your father and your mother.’ ”*

And he answered and said to Him, "Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth."

Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me."

But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

- This man did all the right things.
- By all accounts, this man was living a good life.
 - He knew the rules and played by them.
 - He would have been considered to be an outstanding citizen.
 - Mom would have been very proud of him.
 - This man checked all the boxes of things that he had not done in order to satisfy his religion.
 - But what did this man lack?
 - Do we think Jesus' point here was concerning this man having money?
 - Absolutely not!
 - The thing that defined this man's life more than his religion was his money.
 - We are to love God with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our mind.
 - God will not take second place to anyone or anything.
- So how do we apply that to our lives?
 - Let's make this personal, shall we?
 - Are you a good person?
 - Doing the right things, for the most part?
 - You show up for work on time.
 - Maybe you have been successful in your career.

- You have provided for your family.
- You do not steal from people, you don't cheat on your spouse, haven't killed anybody lately and you treat your parents well.
 - These days we would consider that as the upper echelon of our society.
 - But what is it that you lack?
- **2 Corinthians 13:5** *Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.*
 - In order for us to determine what we lack, if anything, we must take inventory of ourselves or test ourselves.
 - How many of us have ever left the house and got a couple of miles down the road and remembered that we left something at the house.
 - Important papers or your phone or even put on clothes that didn't match.
 - That would be me!
 - These things can be very frustrating, but they do not have near the consequences of us not having the right spiritual inventory.
 - Allow me to give you a biblically based spiritual inventory list that you can use to know if you are on the right track.
 - In the book of Matthew, one of the lawyers was testing Jesus concerning the greatest commandment of the law.
 - Jesus answered the lawyer in Chapter 22:36-40.
 - **Matthew 22:36-40** *"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love*

your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

- So, we have the test question.
 - Loving God with all our heart, soul and mind.
 - Jesus is repeating something here that was told to all the Israelites immediately after receiving the 10 commandments.
 - Why was that important?
 - Because God knew that it would be impossible for us to do what was asked of us if we didn’t completely love Him.
 - He knows that we have this proclivity, or we are drawn towards a sinful life.
 - The Love of God tells us not to have any other God other than Him.
 - The Love of God tells us to not make an image of God and worship that image.
 - The Love of God tells us to not use His name in vain.
 - The Love of God tells us to remember the Sabbath and keep it Holy.
 - (Some people think that Jesus eliminated the sabbath but he didn’t, He expanded it to make every day Holy.) (Holy means to set apart, so we are to set apart every day unto the Lord)
 - The Love of God tells us to honor our father and mother.
 - The Love of God tells us to not murder, lie, steal, commit adultery or to covet.
- When we do not love God, all of these are easy to do, and we do them on a regular basis.

- The test would be, are you doing any of these things?
 - How about the sins we mentioned earlier in Galatians 5?
 - Such as drunkenness, fornication – which means sex outside of marriage, anger, jealousy, even envy and more.
 - Can you look at this list and say, none of these apply to me?
- If you are participating in any of these sins in any way, and you say you love God, then stop doing those sins immediately.
 - If you do not, then as John says you are a liar and the truth is not in you.
 - Remember earlier when we talked about all sin is something you choose to participate in?
 - You don't have to sin, but when you do, your actions are saying you love the sin more than you love God.
- At the very beginning of this sermon, we talked about the realities of Heaven and Hell.
 - Jesus taught that hell was a real place, and that real people go there.
 - Jesus taught that people go there who reject God's invitation of heaven.
 - If you reject fellowship with God, then the only alternative is eternal separation from God and that's what hell is.
 - Jesus described hell as a place of torment, regret, pain and weeping and gnashing of teeth and also as outer darkness.
 - I don't think we have enough horrible descriptives that could fully take in how bad hell really is.
 - The point is you don't want to go there.
 - You don't even want to play around with the possibility that you might go there.

- All of us should be very serious about examining our lives.
 - Not looking for the minimum standard that it takes to get in but getting in with the maximum effort so we can be secure in our eternity.
- In the scope of things, we simply don't know as much about heaven as we do hell.
 - I will summarize what we think we know.
 - Heaven will be where Jesus is.
 - It will be a place of indescribable Joy.
 - There will be no more tears.
 - No death
 - No crying
 - No sorrow
 - No pain
 - Everyone will have beautiful hair
 - Maybe even a little taller
 - All bad things will be gone for the former things have passed away.
- Men – be the Spiritual leaders of your families.
 - There is not a man in here that would be ok with their wives or children ending up in hell.
 - Playing a sport or a musical instrument or preparing for a successful career is not anywhere close to making sure they know Jesus, they understand the gospel message and know how to use the full armor of God against the battles they are going to face.
- Women – Support your husbands in this effort. Even if they choose not to participate that doesn't free you from the responsibility of doing it yourself.
 - You would never let your child play on a busy freeway.

- When we don't train up our children in the way they should go, we are leaving a huge door open for them to entertain the Devil.
- Children – You may have parents that are not honoring God. You may see faults in them that you don't like and wished it were different. Your responsibility is to honor your parents while still loving God.
- To everyone – love your church, use it for all its worth. Participate in helping others grow in their walk. Seek help when you are struggling in your own walk. Serve fellow Christians in their needs so you don't spend too much time serving yourself.
- Psalm 139:23-24

Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me, and know my anxieties;
And see if *there is any* wicked way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting.