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**Teaching: Carlon Tschetter**  
**Series: People on a Mission**  
**Message: Know God**

**Transcribed Message**  
**August 25, 2019**  
**2 Peter 3:18**

A.W. Tozer, in his classic book which I'm sure many of you are familiar with and probably read *The Knowledge of the Holy*, begins fairly early in this opening chapter with this provocative sentence: "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us." He goes on to say just a little bit after that: "We tend by a secret law of the soul to move toward our mental image of God. This is true not only of the individual Christian but the company of Christians that composes the church." Go back to that opening comment: What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. I have a feeling that in light of what Tozer says, the statement by Jesus in John 17 fits right in with that because Jesus said: "And this is eternal life, that they know You the only true God and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." To know Jesus Christ is to have eternal life. To know Jesus Christ is actually to know God.

Paul understood that the vital importance of knowing God. He starts off in Ephesians 1 and he strings together from verse 3 to verse 14 what is the longest running sentence in the Greek text in all the New Testament. He gets going and he just can't stop talking about the blessings that God has bestowed on us. Then in verse 15 he says: "For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him."

My friends I'm pretty sure that there are a lot of things that we pray for every day. I hope there are many things that we pray for every day. I hope we pray for ourselves, for our families, for our children and grandchildren, for our marriages. We pray for needs that we have in our life. We pray for health. We pray for safety. There is a whole list of good things that we pray for every day. I wonder how many times do we with the

apostle Paul ask God to give us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God.

We're taking a four-week break from our study in the book of Proverbs, and as we do that, we refocus our efforts and our energy on a particular theme that we select from one year to the next. We started last Sunday. Let's go back and take a quick look back and then a look forward. In looking back, we talked last Sunday about the fact that we are a people on a mission.

We're a people on a mission. Our mission couldn't be stated any clearer or more simply. It is to make disciples. We're a church who wants to make disciples who in turn make disciples. So we're on this mission and every day we are to live as sent ones. 2 Corinthians chapter 5. We talked about the fact that God has entrusted to us this ministry of reconciliation. This amazing privilege that He would select us to be ministers of reconciliation, to be sent ones because God is a sending God. We're like a rescue team if you will. That's a picture that the word "salvation" really underscores. Deliverance. We're like a rescue team that's going out into a lost world.

We talked about the fact that we need to see every encounter and every situation that God brings into our life every day as a divinely significant one. I hope that you have some stories even from this last week in which you saw that happen. Nothing is more fulfilling than realizing that we are on mission for God and realizing that God is bringing into our life by His sovereign purposes these divine appointments. We need to fundamentally reorient ourselves every day in light of the Lordship of Christ over our life. Forget about my story. Forget about your story. Live His story and embrace His story. That's why we're here! Yet the world so easily pulls us off course. But it's all about His story. That is what Jesus meant when He said seek first the kingdom of God and all this other stuff will take care of itself. That's what He in mind when He said that the greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your might. He is talking about living in light of the mission that God has in store for you. It is what Martin Luther said. This day and that day. We've got two days to focus on. This day, God, what do You want me to be doing today? And that day when I'm going to be giving an account for what I did this day. It's pretty simple when we understand it that way. So that was our look back.

Then our look forward. We want to know God. As people on mission, we want to know God, we want to love others, and we want to live out this amazing gospel. We're going to look at that first one this morning. If you've been at Covenant very long, you've heard that statement that really is a vision statement that we have. A vision statement looks to the future and says this is who we want to be. We're on mission for God. We're a disciple maker. Our vision is to realize that we have to know God, to realize that we've got to love other people, to realize that we have to live the gospel every day. That's what we are attempting to do. This morning, our greatest need and our greatest privilege is to know God. We want to know Him well. We want to know him deeply. We want to know him rightly. That's what Tozer is talking about. It's not just a matter of coming up with a God in our own image, in our own likeness, or a God that we can manipulate and move around to fulfill our plan and our story. It's His story. We're trying to be rightly related to Him and in so doing we get to live out this most incredible thing in terms of how He has revealed Himself.

Let's look first of all at a people who know their God. A people who know their God. One of the most pervasive themes in all of the Word of God is this study that we're looking at this morning. This matter of knowing God. It pervades the Scriptures and rightfully so. If Tozer was anywhere near the truth when he said whatever it is that comes into our mind when we think about God is the most important thing about us, then this study that we're looking at this morning has got to be right up there. It's all about what it looks like to know God. You can't worship a God rightly that you don't know. You can't love a God that you don't know. You can't obey a God that you don't know. Not in the way that He wants to be obeyed. Not in the way that He wants to be loved. Not in the way that He wants to be known. Always what we have to keep before us.

The first thing I want us to see is this amazing truth that God wants to be known. God wants to be known. I want us to look at that statement for a minute. God wants to be known. What would be one word that would come into your mind when you look at that statement God wants to be known? What would be some appropriate responses to that statement God wants to be known? Silence in 28 languages. What about the word amazing? Sobering. Incredible. Unbelievable. Those are not the words I'm looking for

though. The word I'm looking for starts with an H and ends with a G and somebody needs to buy a vowel. Humbling. It could be all of those but as I looked at that I thought this is humbling. The God of the universe wants to know me and wants me to know Him. If there's nothing else that comes to mind, it ought to be that we are incredibly humbled by that thought, because one of the first things we need to be reminded of and remember is that we're not the initiators of this. We're not the discoverers of God. He is a revealing God. He is a seeking God. He is a pursuing God.

We saw that last week. That was the whole point of being on mission. He's in the garden looking for Adam and Eve. He's the one who's coming to Abraham and sending him. We have a global mission because we have a God with a global heart. He wants a people who understand that and who take this message to the world. Here's this point All of our efforts are in vain if God does not reveal Himself to us. All of our efforts are in vain if God does not make Himself known. He has revealed Himself in creation. He has revealed Himself in the word. He has revealed Himself in His Son.

I know you're wondering what it is that you're seeing on the screen. It's actually a place in New Mexico in Socorro County. It is a place called VLA. I would've called it Very Large Antennae, but they call it Very Large Array. There are 27 of these massively huge radio listening dishes that spread out over 13 miles in the middle of this New Mexico desert. The National Radio Astronomy group spends millions of dollars and every year scientists listen to all of these radio messages coming from outer space. They're compiling this data and putting it all together. When you go to this place, you start off by watching a little video. The video is telling you about how they did this and how they set it up and what their purpose is. Repeatedly in this video there are these brilliant people – scientists and astronomers – and they're explaining all this incredible stuff. Invariably they say something like we're doing this because we want to know how all of this came to be. We're doing this because this expansive universe that we're watching and listening to we want to know it came from. How is it that all of this came into being? This same message kept being said by the scientists and I just stood up in this little theater and I said the heavens declare the glory of God and the earth shows forth His handiwork. Day to day utters His speech and night to night proclaims His glory. Now, Bonnie was the only other one in the theater, but I kid you not, that's what I

wanted to do. Well, I actually leaned over to Bonnie and said it's there. It's right there in front of them. Every day these amazing people are looking into the glories of heaven and they don't get it. They don't get it because of this. The only way you get it is if you're humbled before God who has revealed Himself to us. The fool has said in his heart there is no God, and yet here is this amazing truth.

Secondly, it's reassuring. It's not just humbling, it's reassuring. God wants to be known. I was made to be known by God. I don't know where you are this morning in your understanding of your self-worth and self-esteem and all of that, but this one truth alone ought to encourage the socks off of you to know that you were made to be known by God. He has revealed Himself to you. It is the most humbling truth to realize that God of the heavens wants to know me. All of my fumbblings and failures and starts and stops, all of that that takes place in all of our lives, all of that time the living God of the universe is reaching out to us. He's wanting to be known by us. He's opening our blind eyes. The god of this world, 2 Corinthians says, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. The Holy Spirit is the one who takes the veil away from those eyes and when we hear that gospel and when we engage that gospel it is the Holy Spirit who opens our eyes and our heart to understand to believe and to trust in Christ. God miraculously then puts within these clay vessels the very living Spirit of God. That is why every time you open this book. I've said this 100 times. I'll say it a hundred more. Every time you open this book, one of the first prayers that you say is God, open my eyes to see more of Your truth. Open my eyes to get a better understanding of who You are and who I am in relation to You. Here is this amazing truth. God wants to be known.

If that's true, then secondly, knowing God is what matters most. Knowing God is what matters most. If that is true, and I think it is, then I would suggest first of all knowing God must be a priority. Knowing God must be a priority. Paul says in Philippians 3:8 – “Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish in order that I might gain Christ.” There are so many amazing statements about this pervasive truth of knowing God in Scripture that I'm just going to be giving you one after another this morning. That is what Paul says this surpassing worth of knowing Christ and what He has done for me. Paul says I don't care about

anything else in life. My friend, reality is whatever it is that you stake your life on. When you get to that day, there's none of it going to matter if you don't know this truth. That's why Paul could say I don't need any of the approval of men. I don't need anybody to pat me on the back. I'm serving the King! Anything that I could have even thought for a moment I'm giving up to follow Christ. Are you kidding me? Don't tell me what you've given up to follow Christ. Tell me what you've gained! Paul says he's gained the world. Everything else is as rubbish in light of that. Paul says this has got to be a priority. This has got to be something that we give ourselves to.

You're never going to grow in your walk with God, you're never going to know God more deeply, more fully, more rightly in your spare time, by accident, by osmosis, by sitting here for 75 minutes a week. That's not how you're going to get to know God well, deeply, rightly. This is a wonderful way to begin our week. I wouldn't want to give it up. I wouldn't change it for anything, but it's not the only thing. Every day we have a new opportunity to draw closer to God. Every day we have a new opportunity to learn more about the knowledge of the holy. Every day there is that privilege given to us to open this book and to open our hearts to its truth and say God, show me something else about Yourself, Your work, Your desires for me.

The truth of the matter is, my friends, everybody in this room this morning is as close to God as we have chosen to be. We're as close to God as we have chosen to be. He's already told us. He wants to be known. He has revealed Himself in creation. He has revealed Himself in the Word. He has revealed Himself in His Son. So if getting to know God is not a priority, then that's on you. It's not on your husband. It's not on your wife or your kids. It's not on your parents. It's on you. It's on me.

Listen to Scripture. Psalm 27:4. One thing I have desired of the Lord, that I will seek after him, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord forever, that I may behold His glory. That's David, a man after God's own heart. What does he say? One thing I have desired. I want to just sit in the temple and behold the glory of God. That was a passion. We sang about that passion.

Someone said the greatest intellectual pursuit of the human mind is to know God. If we just left that there, it would be woefully insufficient. This isn't simply an intellectual pursuit. This isn't just learning more stuff about God. This is God's desire to be in a

deeply personal relationship with us. In simple terms, it is not any different than how we get to know one another.

There are 7.6 billion people in the world. We're not going to know very many of them in the big scheme of things. 7.6 billion people. We get to know a relatively small number of people and honestly most of the people we know rather casually. We don't know a lot about a lot of people. But then there's that smaller more special category of what we would call special friends. How does somebody get into that category? How does somebody move from the 7.6 billion of the world and get into this special category of being in a personal relationship with you or with me and get to the point where we call them a special friend? We could call at 2 AM in the morning and we know they'd pick up and they would be there to help us. How do you get into that category of people with each other? In the same way that we get into this deeper growing relationship with God. There's really no mystery to it. We spend time with each other. We talk to each other. We listen to each other. We enjoy each other's company. We seek each other out. We call each other. It is all the things that we do that make up a relationship. At the same time, we know that if we neglect that relationship we know that it begins to fall off. The end result is it's not all that special anymore. The same thing of is true in our relationship to God.

We get introduced to God through Jesus Christ. That's how we get to know Him. You want to know more about God? Jesus said to know Him is to know the Father. You want to know more about God? Get to know more about Jesus. John in his gospel chapter 1 verse 14 talks about we beheld His glory, the glories of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. You keep hearing this word in the writers of Scripture that they're beholding something. They're contemplating. They're thinking on. They're meditating. There's efforts. There's time. There's commitment in this matter of getting to know God. So first of all it's got to be a priority.

Secondly, knowing God changes us. Knowing God changes us. 2 Corinthians 3:18. "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." Truth is intended to transform. Knowledge of God is intended to change us. That's why the person who said this is the greatest intellectual

pursuit of the human mind is absolutely right. But it isn't simply intellectual pursuits that we're interested in. It is the Person behind that pursuit. It is to know God more deeply, more personally, to know Him well, to know Him rightly. This is the difference between a relationship that is fluid and transitive and growing, and one that is static and intransitive and unchanging. Here's the truth. We can encounter God's truth and remain static and remain unchanged and remain intransitive. The design that God intends for His truth as we open our heart, humble our heart, yield to the Holy Spirit, invite God's truth into our life is that it would be fluid, that we would be growing, that we'd be changed. It would be transitioning us into a totally different kind of person. That's the whole point of what Paul says. We're being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. That's the whole point of this.

That's what James says in James 1. James 1 just says would you stop opening up your Bible and looking into the mirror of the Word, seeing that your hair is all messed up and you've got smudges on your face, and then just walking away as if you didn't even look at and see what you saw. He's talking about spiritual truths. He says be doers of the word and not hearers, only deceiving your own selves. So there is that measure of embracing this truth and welcoming this truth and being transformed by this truth.

2 Peter chapter 1. I love this chapter. It starts off in verse 2 and says: "May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord." You just start paying attention as you read your Bible and you have your pen handy. Just start underlining, making notations about knowledge and transformation and how it is that this truth is intended to change. You'll be amazed at how often this appears. Here's what he goes on to say. 2 Peter 1. One of my favorite chapters. "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence, by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they



keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Do you realize how many times Paul uses the word knowledge in that set of verses? Five times. Knowledge. Knowing God. Knowing God. Being changed. Being transformed. He lays it all out for us. The whole idea of God's truth coming into our life and into our heart is that we would be changed by it. God blesses us so that we will bless others. This is transitioning. This is fluid. It's coming to us and we're passing it on to others. We're forgiven so that we can forgive others. We're loved so that we can love others. We're given light so that we can go into a dark world and be light. We're given redemption so that we can go be ministers of reconciliation. Whatever it is. Think in terms of what it means to know God. Paul says in Colossians 1:9, “And so from the day we heard we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.”

I don't need to tell you. We all know it. One of the realities of the church in America is that we're about an inch deep in terms of our knowledge of God, in terms of knowing God. That's why it's discouraging for me as a pastor, yes, but also as a believer to pick up an article or to read a blog or a news story and to hear another whole bunch of junk that's being passed around the Christian community and everybody is just gobbling it up. Ephesians 4 talks to us about what the truth is to be doing in our life, how it is to keep us being from swept along by every wind of doctrine that comes along. Paul warns in Timothy about not wanting our ears tickled. The truth of God does not tickle ears. The truth of God convicts hearts. It changes minds. That's the great need of our day that we would be changed by this truth.

Thirdly, knowing God empowers us. Daniel chapter 11 verse 32. This is another great verse. There are just a bunch of great verses in the Bible. Have you ever noticed that? Daniel 11:32 – “He shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant but the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action.” Who stands firm and takes action? The people who know their God. Another translation of this, it might be the King James actually, says the people who know their God shall be strong and do

exploits. I like that. The people who know their God will do great exploits for God. They will be people of strength. They will be people of power, of determination, of boldness.

Who wrote this verse and what was his story? How is God's story worked out in his life? This was written by a young man who as a teenager was torn away from his parents, torn away from his family, ripped out of his home in Jerusalem, carted 1500 miles across the desert and planted in Babylon as a slave to Nebuchadnezzar, a very cruel and heartless king. He stands firm. So you read in Daniel 1 you remember the king offers food to idols and then brings it to these guys. Daniel purposes in his heart that he will not defile God. He is not going to eat the steak and potatoes and all that other stuff. He is actually going to vegetables. We'll take that up another time but he would not do it because he didn't want to be defiled. Let me ask you. How does a teenager 15 to 16 years old get ripped away from his parents, hauled off to another part of the world, and have the ability and capacity to determine if he has to stand alone he will do it but he will not be defiled before God? We pray for our school staff and teachers. We need to be praying for our college young people who will be going off too, don't we? They're thrown into the lion's den and sadly there are many that don't make it in that context. But Daniel purposed in his heart because he knew Romans 8 that if God is for us who can be against us! He did great exploits for God.

Fourthly, knowing God quiets us. Knowing God quiets us. There are so many verses about this particular truth that I'm wondering if it isn't because God knows that we need this one is much as any of the others. Knowing God quiets our hearts. Let me read a few. 2 Peter 1:2. I've already read that one, but I'm going to read it again. "May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord." Psalm 46. "God is our refuge and is our strength a very present help in trouble." Verse 10 says, "Be still and know that I am God." There's that stillness again. Psalm 62:1. "For God alone, my soul waits in silence. From Him comes my salvation. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress. I shall not be greatly shaken." We haven't even gotten out of the Psalms or even anywhere near the New Testament yet and we know that Paul is going to say in Philippians 4:6 be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known to God and the peace of God will flood your heart. It will fill you up.

Here we have the people who know their God can rest and be at peace. Why? Why can you be at peace and rest in a chaotic crazy world if you know God? One of the things that you're going to know and you're going to learn very early on as you delve into who this God is is that He declares that He is the sovereign Lord of the universe. Psalm 115 – “Our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases. Proverbs 21. “The heart of the king is like a channel of water in the hand of the Lord. He turns it wherever He wills.” That's one of the things that you learn and you get that truth and you put that deep into your heart and soul and you find that you are at peace. He's actually the one who is in control and not me and not you. AW Pink said, “To say that God is sovereign is to declare that He is the Almighty. None can defeat His councils, thwart His purpose or resist His will.”

Some of you are already anxious about 2020. You're concerned about who the next president is going to be. God gave me a word for you last evening as I prepared and He actually told me who the next president was going to be. I know I don't do this very often, but He told me ... I'm not going to tell you. No, He told me it will be the next person that He chooses to be the 46<sup>th</sup> President of the United States or the 45<sup>th</sup> continuing President of the United States. He's already determined that. We can spend a whole bunch of time between now and then all up in arms, anxious, unsure of what the future holds. But the people who know their God will be at rest.

Then finally, knowing God is our ultimate satisfaction. Our ultimate satisfaction. Listen to Jeremiah 9:23, “Thus says the Lord: Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty men boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord.” Why of all the things that we could be boasting about does Jeremiah say focus on one thing? Boast in the Lord and the fact that you know Him and that He knows you. The reason is because that is our ultimate satisfaction. That is our ultimate destiny. That is the very purpose for which we have been made and created – to give glory to God and to understand this amazing truth. Knowing God is what matters most. The fact that He knows me and wants to have a relationship with me fills the void

of my life like nothing else can. That's why Augustine said, "You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds rest in You."

My friends, we're right back where we started. It's not about my story or your story. It is about living out His story and living on mission for God. Our greatest need and our greatest privilege is to know God, to know Him well, to know Him deeply, to know Him rightly as He has revealed Himself to us.

What do we take away? There is no end to the blessings and benefits of knowing God. There just simply is not. There's no end to the blessings and benefits of knowing God. Everything we need for eternity is found wrapped in this truth of our knowledge of God. Everything we need for this life is found in this truth of our knowledge of God. What in the world are we waiting for? We need to be growing. There's so many avenues for growth around this place, so many places to get connected and plugged in. Some of those we're going to be hearing about in the next couple weeks. I hope that your heart is primed to say God, in my personal walk with You, I want to go a lot deeper. I want to make this a greater priority. I hope you will also say there's other places where I need to be accountable and need to be getting this kind of input. I hope the Spirit of God will be preparing your heart because I don't know what we're waiting for but it is God's will and plan for our life that we be growing every day in our knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The first step of being a disciple and of being a follower is to believe. It is to believe what God says about us that all of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Every one of us. We are to believe what He says about how it is that we can have a relationship with Him. It isn't by working as hard as we can. I know many of us, especially if we didn't grow up in church, that's the message we heard all the time. You've got to do something for God and if you do enough for God, then He's going to let you into heaven. That's not what the Bible teaches. The Bible teaches that it is not by our works but it is by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone. That is the invitation that we offer to everyone here this morning.

Let's pray. Father God, You are gracious and You are good. You are kind and You are amazing. That You would want to have a relationship with each one of us, Father, is beyond our ability to fully grasp and appreciate. We are indeed humbled by

that truth. I pray that Your Holy Spirit will do something in the life of this church that only You can do, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, that You will awaken us and enlighten us and bring us to a greater and greater understanding of the glory that is Jesus. In His name we pray, amen.