

# Know...

## Philippians 3:7-11

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### Philippians 3:7-11

Last week we talked about the fact that God often forces prayer (or the need to pray) into a situation, because it brings us to Him.

- It changes things, yes—it changes us, yes
- But at its core, it brings us to Jesus

Jesus draws us into Himself—and sends us out to the world

- Centripetal / Centrifugal action
- Constant

But what is central, what is most important, is that we yield continually to the centripetal action

- That we let Christ draw us near
- That we do draw near
- **And that we learn to enjoy Jesus**

Maybe we need help identifying the centripetal action

- Scripture/the Holy Spirit, longing, restlessness, dissatisfaction
- Know the counterfeits/substitutes (too many in our culture)

The Apostle Paul says here in Philippians that the most valuable thing he knows of is **knowing** Jesus Christ our Lord

- To actually know Jesus

The gift that has been given us through/in the Gospel, is God Himself

He has given Himself in love

- Isn't this what we do when we are "in love" and committed
- Cf. Marriage ceremony and the rings (my life is no longer my own)
- Cf. The Bride and the Holy Spirit

This passage is telling us that there is nothing better than knowing Jesus

- When Paul uses the word **knowing** here I don't think he means in merely an **intellectual** sense, but in an **experiential** sense
- To actually **know** Jesus (vv. 8-10<sup>a</sup>)
- Not intellectually, but **personally**

Jesus said: **And this is eternal life, that they may know... the only true God** (Jn 17:3)

Peter said: ...His divine power has granted us everything pertaining to life and godliness through **the true knowledge of Him** who called us...

- **ἐπιγνωσις**: clear and exact knowledge; more intense than knowledge; it expresses a more thorough participation in the object on the part of the subject

Salvation, being born again, “is not an end, but an inception, for now begins the glorious pursuit, the heart's happy exploration of the infinite riches of the Godhead.”<sup>1</sup>

- There is a reason for the metaphor of birth that is used to describe salvation (forgiveness and a new nature)
  - It **begins** a life-long journey (birth is always the beginning) DUH

The journey (what has begun) is the pursuit to really know/experience God

There was a difference between the way the Roman Centurion(s) knew Jesus and the way the Apostle John knew Jesus

- The centurion in Matthew 27:54 and the one in 8:5-13
  - They knew who Jesus was, one had the identity right and one had the power right
- But neither of them ever reclined upon the chest of Jesus (John 13:23-25)
  - John knew Jesus

This act denotes intimacy of relationship

- John was caught up in that centripetal thing
- Jesus draws us into Himself

This happens positionally—so that it can happen personally

Our position in Christ:

- We are **sons** of God
- We are **risen with** Christ
- We are **seated with Him** in the heavenly places
- We are **indwelt by** His Holy Spirit
- We are members of **His body**
  - Notice the bold words above: the positional is personal

Our position in Christ should be “literally fulfilled within the heart, not merely accepted in the head”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A. W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God* (Camp Hill, Penn.: Christian Publications), 14.

<sup>2</sup> A. W. Tozer, *Keys to the Deeper Life* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1954), 33.

Not to just know that we are forgiven, though that is important  
 Not to just know we are going to heaven

But to know **why** we are forgiven, and **why** we are going to heaven

We are forgiven so that we might **know** Jesus  
 We are going to heaven to be **with** Jesus

Here is something I have been thinking about this week

- It is a question posed by John Piper in his book *God is the Gospel*
- ["If you could go to heaven, with no sickness, and with all the friends you ever had on earth, and all the food you ever liked, and all the leisure activities you ever enjoyed, and all the natural beauty you ever saw, all the physical pleasure you ever tasted, and no human conflict or natural disasters, could you be satisfied with heaven if Christ were not there?" \(p. 15\)](#)

I'm convicted by that question

- Because I find myself often making life (and Christianity) about so many things other than enjoying Jesus

Christ is to be experienced and enjoyed—seen and savored

This is admittedly... a pursuit.

Jeremiah 29:13-14<sup>a</sup>

"And you will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. And I will be found by you," declares the Lord...

Psalms 27:4

One thing I have asked from the Lord that I may seek:  
 That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,  
 To behold the beauty of the Lord...

Psalms 42:1-2<sup>a</sup>

As the deer pants after the water brooks,  
 So my soul pants for Thee, O God.  
 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God...

Psalms 107:9

For He has satisfied the thirsty soul...

What we seldom really believe is that God can and will actually satisfy us

- So we hide it in this lifetime by being about all sort of "Jesus stuff"

- And we secretly are fearful that if heaven is really about the person of Jesus, that we are going to be bored there

We do not *know* Jesus

How can we know Jesus?

- The Gospel
  - Makes nearness with God possible
- The Bible
  - Tells us about God
- The Sacraments
  - Helps us experience the truth of God
- Prayer
  - Brings us near to God
- Obedience
  - Causes us to experience the goodness of God
- Mission
  - Puts us in an adventure with God

He is so much better than we think. His grace is so much bigger than we think.