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Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York

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"Knowledge"

2 Peter 1:5-7

Prayer: *Father, again I just thank you for that song. That's the most important question I think anybody will ever be asked is are you washed in the blood of the Lamb. Lord, I just thank you for being that lamb. I thank you for being willing to shed your blood as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, and we just praise you and thank you for that gift. We thank you also for the gift of your word, Lord, that we are about to open this morning. We again acknowledge that without the presence of your Holy Spirit these are mere words that will just be uttered and disappear. So we pray for the presence of your Holy Spirit, that you would be guiding us into your truth and that it would be of permanent value. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Our text this morning is 2 Peter 1:5-7: *For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. We're doing a*

series based on this text and last time we looked at that strange sentence that Peter utters, he says: "*Make every effort to add to your faith.*" Again we asked as we asked last week, we said if we're saved by grace alone through faith alone, then what could I or should I ever add to my faith? I pointed out the book of Galatians addresses this whole idea of adding to our faith by human effort by saying in *Galatians 3:3*: *Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?* You see, when you give your life to Christ, the Spirit of Christ begins to indwell you and it's by Christ's power that we're able to grow in our faith. Paul puts it this way in *Colossians 2:9*, he says: *For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.* So it's his spirit and his power working within you that enables you to add to your faith as Peter is commanding us. The moment you become a Christian, you are filled with the Spirit of Christ, and yet we know that sanctification, that process that makes us more and more like Christ, it's a life long process that doesn't stop until you breathe your last. If you are a believer, the Spirit of Christ is in you. And so growing the ability to express that Spirit is a lifelong endeavor that never stops and it requires effort.

When Peter says: *Make every effort to add to our faith*, he's

exhorting us to get out what God has placed in. You see, the gospel that we've been given doesn't vary or get added to but the way our lives display the fullness of the glory of Christ varies a great deal, and a lot of it depends on our efforts. I mean to repeat what I said last time, I said imagine the gospel as this fantastically orchestrated CD. Now you could play that CD through a \$30 boombox or through a telephone or you could take the exact same CD and play it through a \$30,000 surround sound theater quality system. One of them sounds like it's coming through a phone, because it is, and the other sends chills down your spine making it feel like you're right there in the orchestra pit. Now have you added anything to the CD? Have you added anything to the file? Well, the answer is no. I mean it's the same CD, nothing has been added to it, it's just being played through difficult equipment. Well, the gospel is the same way. And the gospel is -- quote -- "playing through your life." Some of us are living lives that are no different than the world, they're playing out a gospel in the cheapest of boomboxes, reducing it to a highly distorted squawk that people genuinely don't want to hear. Others allow the full volume to play with no distortion and nothing added, allowing the power of the music itself to flow freely to work its magic. And we make every effort not to add to that gospel by getting ourselves and our egos out of the way so that the grace of God could be more fully revealed without the distortion of our fear or

pride or selfishness. You know, when you've really heard a great music system, you're not really listening to the system at all, you're simply hearing the music. Well the same is true for the gospel that we live out, I mean, we are supposed to disappear so that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only music that people really hear. Paul put it simply in *Galatians 2:20*. He said: *It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.* God's telling us we have been given this fullness in Christ and how this fullness gets played out in our lives all comes down to those three words of Peter: *"Make every effort."*

Last time we looked at *"make every effort to add to your faith goodness,"* and we defined "goodness" as "the right stuff." It was a combination of passion and courage and energy, and I said we get the right stuff the day that we realize that absolutely everything in this world: Family, career, business, everything that is outside the kingdom of God will be in time ultimately meaningless.

Today we want to look at the second quality that Peter directs our efforts at and that is this term "knowledge." We are to *make every effort to add to our faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge.* Well, the Greek for that term "knowledge" here is "epignosis." It means full knowledge, it means discernment, it means recognition and understanding in this case of God in Christ. And God is saying

through Peter that we are to make every effort to add the knowledge of God to our faith in Christ. Once again, Peter is very good at saying stuff that makes people scratch their heads and you say what is he saying here, because Peter's words can make us pause because the fact is you already have to have the knowledge of God in order to have any faith at all. I mean in order to have faith, you have to know that Jesus Christ is God in the flesh and that he died to pay our penalty for sin and that he rose from the dead. *Romans 10* says: *If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.* So what else do you need to know? I mean, that verse is certainly true, that is all you need to know to enter the kingdom of God, but you know, the very same Peter in the very same letter, in fact in the very next paragraph says that this failure to pursue the knowledge of God makes us ineffective, unfruitful, nearsighted and blind. This is what he says. He says: *For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, 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. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.*

So Peter's really about -- what Peter's really talking about and

really the question that we have to ask ourselves this morning is do we really care about getting this knowledge? I mean, if I can get to heaven with a minimal understanding of the knowledge of God, then why should I bother with all this theological stuff, all these long terms and all of this stuff that makes me scratch my head? It's hard to get. I mean in our heart of hearts I think that's what a lot of us think. I mean after all, didn't the Lord Jesus himself say that we have to have childlike faith to enter the kingdom? *Matthew 18* says: *And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."* I can see someone reasoning that childlike faith comes from childlike understanding, so it must be a good thing. Simple faith in a simple gospel, that's really all you need. But Jesus wasn't referring to childlike understanding. He was referring to childlike faith. And that's a faith that's humble, that's a faith that's trusting. In fact Paul warns us specifically against a childlike understanding in *1 Corinthians 13:11*, he says: *When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.* See what Paul warns us against, we often find ourselves bragging about, you know, we follow the "KISS" rule, keep it simple stupid. It's just the simple gospel. You know, the church today often says: *Doctrine divides, love unites.* And knowledge is

oftentimes seen as something that divides people, something that makes them arrogant and proud. There's no question that's a genuine danger. But the church also ignores the danger in the simple approach to loving Jesus. And the danger in that approach is really asking yourselves, okay, which Jesus do you choose to love? I mean there are literally dozens to choose from. You see, you won't find the simple Jesus just by reading scripture. You find a simple Jesus by selectively reading portions of scripture. You also find an easy to handle, easy to understand, easy to manage God only by carefully limiting your knowledge of him to what you're comfortable with. And that's why I'm a big fan of the one-year Bible. I mean, the reason why I like the one-year Bible is that it forces you to deal with the whole Bible, the whole revelation of who God is. I mean you can't worship a one-dimensional god if you're exposed to the whole of scripture, and anyone who makes an effort to add to their faith knowledge is going to find a God who is anything but simple. You're going to find a God who is profoundly complex and sometimes completely mystifying. I mean I don't know how many times I've come away from my daily reading of scripture just shaking my head because I don't know God as I should and I don't seem to understand him. I certainly oftentimes don't understand his ways at all. But the reason why I stick with it over time is that my capacity to know him is growing all the time. I mean things that absolutely mystified me ten years ago now seem

to be altogether reasonable and simple. But new mysteries have taken their place. And that process is going to continue for the rest of my life and that is normal, because his ways are not our ways. As Tim Keller puts it: If you have a god who neither confounds or dumbfounds you, if his ways never stretch the limits of your mind, then it's just as likely then that he's a god who's been spun out of your mind. These are gods of our own making. The Bible calls them idols. And they're almost always simple, non demanding, one-dimensional cartoon super hero gods who reward us for good behavior and punish us when we're bad. And it makes for a real simple life, I mean, you lead a good Christian life and God gives you all of his blessings. What could be simpler? When it doesn't turn out that way, when you start seeing good things happening to bad people and bad things happening to good people, you wind up wanting to walk away from that God, and obviously many do. And it's then though that you begin to realize the value of knowing a God who is not a cartoon character, a God who is not at all like us.

So this morning I want to look at adding knowledge to our faith by asking three very basic questions. I want to address the why's, the how's, and the what's of this knowledge and why we should pursue it. So let's first like at the why. Why should I pursue this knowledge of God when the simple gospel is enough to get me

into the kingdom? I mean if I have to choose between gaining knowledge or watching TV or Netflix or social media, why in the world should I choose knowledge? Well, the first answer to that question, the question of why is actually so obvious it's easy to miss. It's a matter of obedience. I mean we don't think of studying scripture, of growing in knowledge as being in the same category as sharing the gospel or loving my neighbor, but it really is. The very first reason why we add to our faith knowledge is because God commands it of us. In *1 Timothy 2:15* it says: *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.* The last verse of Peter's second letter contains this exhortation in *2 Peter 3:18*. He says: *But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.* Mind you this is from that great intellectual Peter. I mean who's Peter? He's a fisherman. It's not exactly an occupation that's given to a great deal of study. He knew another reason why it was so important to grow in knowledge, and Paul expressed that reason in *Colossians 1:9*. This is what Paul said. He said: *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. You see, you will not know God or his will without increasing in knowledge. And if you want to live a life worthy of the Lord, if you want to please him, you've got to be willing to grow in your understanding of his will for you. It's not rocket science.

Let me explain to you why it's necessary. Okay. When I was a brand new believer, I decided I wanted to live a life worthy of the Lord. And I understood these very basic things at the very beginning. God says getting drunk, getting high, using foul language, all the stuff that I was into, that all had to go, and by his grace they all did go. That was over 40 years ago. Now if somebody had asked me 40 years later what it means to live a sanctified life, to hate sin and love pleasing God, those sins wouldn't have even made the list, because I've grown in knowledge. When I was a brand new believer, those sins were the gross and the obvious ones. God had plenty more that he wanted me to work on but those were the first to go. And now for 44 years God has been dealing with my sin like you would peel an onion. You know, he does it over time, he peels back layer upon layer, he goes deeper and deeper. So the sins that I struggle with today bear almost no resemblance at all to the sins that I struggled with 44 years ago, with one exception. They're both sins. I mean if I took my 2019 sins to the 1973 brand new christian Tom Mortenson, he would look

at those sins and say you call those sins? They wouldn't even register. I mean, coveting and bitterness, sloth and envy and the like, they seem like minorly compared to sex, drugs and rock and roll, but they're not. They're the type of whispering sins that are much harder to identify and eradicate. The 1973 version of me hardly gave those sins any type of thought. He was profoundly ignorant because he had very little knowledge of God. But that didn't stop God. You see, God graciously leads us in sanctification step by step, and knowledge is how he does it. And the very first thing that God deals with is the sins that shout. But the next things that he begins to work on are the sins that whisper. And sins that whisper are often far more deadly and far more entrenched than sins that shout. So how do you expect that God exposes and then confronts about those sins that we don't even know we're guilty of? I mean how does God -- quote -- "*fill you with the knowledge of his will?*" Well, he speaks to us in his word, but he speaks in direct proportion to how much effort we make to add to our faith knowledge of his word. No pain, no gain applies as much in the realm of the spirit as it does to the flesh. When it comes to knowledge, God's patient and kind. Scripture says in *Romans 2:4*: *Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?*

Let me give you an example of how that kindness and patience works. This is going back to 1973, brand new believers, Janice and I had just moved to San Francisco. We had been Christians for about a month and decided we're going to have our own little Bible study. So I'm going to out and get me a Bible, I got me a Bible and started reading the New Testament. I come across this guy named Paul. I started reading and I started getting to this place where he's talking about marriage and I started reading about submission and I quickly conclude that this fellow Paul, he's nuts. I mean this guy is absolutely insane. Look what he's writing: Wives, submit to your husbands. What the heck is that? Well, back then, you know, I vilified his insensitivity. Today I celebrate his wisdom. In between there have been years and years of progressive confrontation about the sins that I have committed as a husband, as a father, as the priest for my family. It's God peeling back the onion layer by layer by layer, and many of those sins I didn't even know existed in 1973. But here's the amazing part. God knew about them. God saw them. And God was committed to working on them right from the start. He knew them and he began the process of sanctification to remove them. And so he patiently began the process of revealing them to me by first increasing my knowledge of them in his word, and then by conviction he led me to confession and confession led to repentance which is a genuine turning around process and the process continues even today. But it all started

by adding to my faith knowledge.

So why do we add knowledge to faith? First because we're commanded to; secondly, it's the primary means that God uses to teach us; and thirdly, there's another reason, a very important reason why the knowledge of God is so crucial. Because that's what we were designed for. It's why we were created. You see, we were created as creatures made in God's image, created to glorify him, and knowledge comes directly under that heading. Listen to what Jesus said in *John 17*. He said: *"And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."* See, we exist to know God and to grow in that knowledge each and every day. Paul says in *Philippians 3:7*, he says: *But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 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 may gain Christ.*

So we ask, what priority do you place on adding to your faith knowledge? I confess I know Christians who haven't grown a lick in 15 years precisely because of the priorities that they've set. The effort has to come from you. The second part of knowledge is the how. Now in this instance, the "how" is absolutely crucial because God communicates knowledge of himself not on the basis of intellect

or achievement or even dedication, but on the basis of attitude, and the attitude that God communicates is the attitude of humility. I mean many of the most learned Bible scholars in the world are among those who are hopelessly lost because they've ignored this principle. Pride and arrogance have blinded them to the truth of scripture in spite of their great learning, I mean, we all know that Harvard and Yale started out as conservative seminaries. It took them years but they're now cemeteries when it comes to knowledge. It was J.I. Packer, I believe, who said that biblical knowledge is the most dangerous knowledge there is. It's never static. If it doesn't make you better, it's going to make you worse, and it all has to do with attitude. *1 Corinthians 8* says: *We know that "all of us possess knowledge". This "knowledge" puffs up, but love builds up.* Knowledge puffs up. It makes us proud, it makes us arrogant, and God resists the proud. So the principle is this: All and any knowledge of God that you ever receive is a gift. It is a gift from God. You can use your intellect, you can use your achievement and your dedication to get to know all kinds of information about God but you will never know God that way. See, knowing God is a matter of God himself coming alongside us, granting us the privilege of knowing him. Paul says as much in a parenthetical remark he makes to the Galatians in *Galatians 4*. Listen to what he says. This is *Galatians 4:8*. He says: *Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those*

that by nature are not gods. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more? You see, what God is actually saying here is that knowing God is really more a matter of being known by God. He's saying the process is all on his side. And here's where childlike trust and humility makes all the difference. And you know, I shudder to think how offensive our 21st century attitude towards knowing God has become. You know, we've taken the privilege of, we have this seat at the Father's table, and we've used it as an opportunity to kind of lean back, put our hands behind our head and put our muddy boots up on the table and translate "Abba Father" as "Yo, Pops." That doesn't fly. "God opposes the proud but he gives grace to the humble." So if you really want to know God, I have a perfect introduction, it's from Luke 18:13. It's: "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" God delights in giving knowledge of himself to those who are humble enough to receive it. So humility is how you grow in knowledge of God.

So far we've looked at the why's and we looked at the how's.

Lastly we want to look at the what's. But just to review, why grow in the knowledge of God? Because he commands us to, because that's how we grow, because that's what we're made for. And secondly, how

do we know him? In humility and childlike trust. And finally, just what is this knowledge that we're to add to our faith? What is a -- what it is is a higher logic, a higher living and a higher love than human beings experience. And first of all, God's knowledge is a form of higher logic.

Now I'm a terrible mechanic because I always wind up going for the low logic answer when I have a mechanical problem. My diagnosis is almost always logical but it turns out that the correct diagnosis is even more logical. I mean I'll give you a great logical explanation why it's my loose fan belt that's causing that squeak, but it's my mechanic who can give you a better, more logical reason that it's the water pump's bearing that causing the squeak. The same is true with scripture. It's a higher logic. Again, let me give you an example. At first glimpse, I thought the issue of submission in marriage and in life itself was not only unreasonable, I thought was irrational. I mean how in the world could submission be a good thing when I was always taught that submission's a sign of weakness? I mean it made no sense because I did not know that its logic was based on the submission of the Lord Jesus Christ to his Father. I read in *Philippians 2:5: Have this mind -- again, knowledge, mind -- have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but*

emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

So as I grew in knowledge as a believer, the logic of submission became more and more self-evident as my knowledge of Jesus Christ grew. I mean if Jesus didn't consider his equality with his heavenly Father as something that he needed to cling to, then why should I cling to my notions of how I'm supposed to get ahead. Why not trust the Father just like Jesus did. That's a higher logic. And it's that higher logic that produces a higher living. The more knowledge of God you acquire, the more you seek to incorporate his logic into your own, the higher you will live your life. And that's his doing, it's not ours.

And again, it's important that we not confuse knowledge of God with information about God. They are two very different things. Remember what God said in *John 17*, he said: *"And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."* So you have to constantly question what is the nature of this knowledge I'm gaining about God? I mean if your knowledge of God has made you haughty and proud instead of humble and grateful, you can be sure that your knowledge is not of God. So how do you know if you're growing in this real knowledge of God? How do you know if you're actually living a higher life? Well,

there's a very simple diagnostic test. Are you becoming more Christ-like? Are you becoming more lovely? Listen to 2 *Corinthians 2:14*. It says this: *But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of -- what? -- of the knowledge of him everywhere.* Now do you know what that fragrance consists of? It's right there in *Galatians 5:22*. It says: *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.* See, the fruit of the spirit is higher living and it is what is flowing out of us as we grow in the knowledge of Christ. And you grow in the knowledge of Christ, you grow in the fruit of the Spirit by abiding in Christ, by recognizing that he is the vine, he is the one who supplies all of the nutrients and all of the living water that we need. He says in *John 15*: *I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.* And to abide in Christ means to grow in the knowledge of Christ. We used to put it this way: The more you hang around Christ, the more like Christ you're going to become. And you hang around Christ by studying his word, by growing in your knowledge of him. So if you're not growing more lovely by adding knowledge to your faith, something is clearly wrong. You're not living higher.

So knowledge of God is higher logic, it's higher living, and lastly it's higher loving. See, the love of God in Christ Jesus is absolutely beyond comprehension. That's not just a nice flowy statement, it's a statement of stone cold fact. Human minds cannot begin to fully grasp the love of God. It's just beyond us. In Ephesians 3, Paul specifically asks for supernatural power necessary to grasp God's love. We spoke about that just last week at communion. Listen to how Paul prays in *Ephesians 3*. He says: *So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith -- that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have the strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.* What he's saying is the love of God surpasses knowledge. It goes beyond the human mind's abilities to grasp it. So you have to ask yourselves: Have you ever been lifted up and out by the knowledge of God? I mean I know I have. It's rare, but sometimes I get a glimpse of the enormity of the brilliance of the beauty of God, having been awestruck by some kind of mountain scene or ocean sunset or some expression of the grandeur and glory of God. And sometimes this little window opens up briefly into the love of God in Christ when I catch a glimpse of this same grand and great magnificent of God willingly subjecting himself to being stripped naked and nailed to a cross in order to rescue and ransom the likes

of me, and it moves me to tears.

C.S. Lewis describes how he sees heaven as this grand expansion of those tiny little moments, how they expand into an eternal bliss of praise. This is how he speaks of it in his *Reflections on the Psalms*. He says:

"If it were possible for a created soul fully to 'appreciate' that is to love and delight in, the worthiest object of all, and simultaneously at every moment to give this delight perfect expression, then that soul would be in supreme beatitude. It is along these lines that I find it easiest to understand the Christian doctrine that 'Heaven' is a state in which angels now, and men hereafter, are perpetually employed in praising God. To see what the doctrine really means, we must suppose ourselves to be in perfect love with God drunk with, drowned in, dissolved by, that delight which, far from remaining pent up within ourselves as incommunicable, hence hardly tolerable, bliss, flows out from us incessantly again in effortless and perfect expression, our joy no more separable from the praise in which it liberates and utters itself than the brightness a mirror receives is separable from the brightness it sheds. The Scotch catechism says that man's chief end is 'to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.' But we shall then know that these are the same thing. Fully to enjoy is to glorify.

In commanding us to glorify Him, God is inviting us to enjoy Him."

It's hard to grasp that right off the bat, but what Lewis is saying is imagine being absolutely flabbergasted by the enormity of the love of God and at the same time being able to fully and completely express everything that you feel inside. That's something that escapes our experience here on earth. We get these tiny, tiny little glimpses of these moments, sometimes we even find them in the pages of scripture. In fact we have names for them, we call them doxologies. And what we find is the writer of scripture have going along and suddenly we find the writer himself getting, he's overwhelmed, he's overwhelmed with the wonder of the love of God, so the lesson stops and the writer, he just stops right there and he starts worshiping with his pen, and he starts writing what he's worshiping. I'll show you, it's in Romans 11. We pick up at verse 29 of Romans 11, we see Paul is talking about God's master plan in the way that he's using the rebellion of the Jews as a means of opening up the Gentiles to the gospel. And as he's writing, he suddenly, he's got to stop because he gets this little window as to who God is, and he's so blown away, he starts writing out his worship. Let me just read it to you. He says: *For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience --* he's talking about the Jews disobeying and

now the gospel going to the Gentiles, he says -- *so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy.* He's talking about the Jews coming back. *For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.* Then he stops and he says: *Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.* Paul, that's a giant non sequitur there. He's just going from this -- he's going from A to Z because he's overwhelmed with the knowledge of God. It's as if God has lifted the curtain a fraction and the light and the beauty is simply overwhelming. And Paul gets this little glimpse of God's master plan unfolding and he cannot contain himself for his joy and his wonder.

So I have to ask, have you ever been overwhelmed with the knowledge of God? I mean have you ever had a little tiny taste of heaven like Paul is describing here? I mean I have. I haven't had lots of them but I've had a number of them. I guess it raises the obvious question, have you made every effort to add to your faith knowledge? And have you asked, why should I pursue it? Again, because we're commanded to, because it's how we grow, because it's

what we're made for. How do we get it? It's all a matter of attitude. *God, have mercy on me, a sinner!* And finally what is this knowledge? It's a higher logic, it's what Philippians commands us when it says: *Have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus.* We are to grow in our knowledge and understanding of how Jesus perceived reality, so much so that his manner of thinking becomes our manner of thinking. And that leads to a higher living. It's all part of the process of the Holy Spirit growing our knowledge of the fruit of the Spirit. We grow in that knowledge by abiding in Christ. And finally it's a higher love. It's gaining the knowledge of the height and the breadth and the width and the depth of the love of God in Christ. Well, again, is it worth every effort to add to your faith knowledge? Well, I conclude by asking Paul. He says: *Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.*

Father, I just want to come before you this morning to confess that for myself, I'm as guilty as all, there are times when I have chosen things that are so less value than the knowledge that I could gain by simply reading your word, by simply growing in my

understanding of who you are. And Lord, I am thankful that you are kind and patient, and I pray that each and everyone of us would recognize the importance of growing in this knowledge when we're tempted to go to social media or TV or Netflix or any of the other things as opposed to growing in our knowledge of God. Lord, give us a vision of what that knowledge can do for us, give us a vision of how that can help us to grow more and more like your Son. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.