

“To Know Him More”  
Ephesians 1:17-21  
(Preached at Trinity, January 19, 2014)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we've seen, Paul is writing this letter to Christians. He refers to them in **Verse 1** as the faithful saints. They are God's elect people chosen before the foundation of the world to be holy. Holiness and faithfulness characterizes them.
2. After spending 12 verses declaring the spiritual blessings that are the possession of these people God has chosen Paul again speaks of their qualities in **Verse 15**.  
**Ephesians 1:15-16 NAU** - "For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which *exists* among you and your love for all the saints, <sup>16</sup> do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention *of you* in my prayers"
3. They had a reputation for pressing on in the faith. Their love for one another was well attested. The reality of their faith was observable to all. Faith and love are the two other great marks of the true Christian. These things are outwardly observable. When Paul wrote to the Church of Rome he said:  
**Romans 1:8 NAU** - "I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world."
4. When Paul heard that they were pressing on in faith and love his heart was filled with gratitude to God which drove him to prayer which is the essence of the remainder of the chapter. His prayer for them was dominated by two aspects of prayer – thanksgiving and intercession.
5. As we continue in this passage we find the content of Paul's prayer of intercession for these believers in Ephesus. What he prays in **Verse 17** seems strange.  
**Ephesians 1:17 NAU** - "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him."  
How is it that Paul is praying for these Christians to have a spirit of revelation in the knowledge of God when as Christians they already had a knowledge of God?
  - I. To understand the knowledge of God you have to understand the blindness of the human heart apart from Christ. Human beings have lost the ability to know God
    - A. The fall of Adam resulted in the loss of the knowledge of God
      1. First of all, this means he lost the ability to understand God properly. Adam immediately mistrusted God and feared Him—he hid himself from the presence of God. He became alienated from God no longer recognized God's goodness.
      2. Second of all, Adam lost every degree of intimacy with God. He became shut out from a relationship with God.

3. The lost man suppresses the right knowledge of God  
**Romans 1:18-20** - "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, <sup>19</sup> because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. <sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse."
  4. Jesus entered the world but lost humanity is not able to comprehend Him  
**John 1:4-5 NAS** - "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup> And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it."  
**John 1:10 NAS** - "He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him."
  5. Lost humanity doesn't really want to know the one true God. Coming face to face with God is terrifying. The solution is to try to remake God after their own image
    - a. They try to fashion a non-threatening God.  
 Lost humanity creates a god to be more like man than God
    - b. This is why modern worship is often so lacking in reverence. It has all become so common, so casual.  
 Today it is popular and trendy to treat worship as a casual affair. There are pastors who preach in shorts, flowered shirts, and flip-flops. There are churches who have coffee bars so you can sip your favorite cup of java during worship.  
 Where do we get the idea that worship is a casual affair? Certainly not from the Bible.  
 You wouldn't get this from Jacob:  
**Genesis 28:16-17 NAU** - "Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it." <sup>17</sup> He was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."  
 You wouldn't get it from Moses who stood on holy ground.  
 You wouldn't get it from Isaiah who trembled in the presence of God. Or from the Apostle John:  
**Revelation 1:17 NAU** - "When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man."
    - c. Lost humanity wants a powerless God but pretending that God has no power does not change the reality. His infinite power and glory remains fearsome.  
 C.S. Lewis wrote of Aslan in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, "He is not a tame lion." God cannot be tamed by mere mortal man. Although God is good and merciful the Lion of Judah cannot be ruled by man.
- B. To know God is to come face to face with God as He is
1. It is to see and recognize His glory—the expression of His Divine excellence. We behold His goodness and it causes us to worship Him

2. Our minds are renewed and we are able to think rightly about Christ. Paul described it as sharing the mind of Christ  
**1 Corinthians 2:16-1 NAS** - "For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ."
3. To know God rightly is to have Him at the center of all things. He becomes immense in our lives.

## II. EVERY Christian has the knowledge of God

- A. This is the promise of the New Covenant  
**Jeremiah 31:34 NAU** - "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."
  1. Christians have had their minds renewed. We can comprehend Him. We have a right understanding of Him.
  2. We see Him in the light of His excellence. We see Him as all glorious. This is why Christ referred to Himself as the "Pearl of Great Price."
- B. The knowledge of God doesn't simply mean to know *about* God
  1. The knowledge of God has an objective aspect but more.  
 The word here is ἐπίγνωσις a form of ἐπιγινώσκω  
 Paul is talking about a knowledge that's more of a comprehension. There is an experiential element.
  2. Many suppose that since they know *about* God and believe in God they must be Christians
    - a. If you ask many if they are going to heaven they will quickly answer in the affirmative. If you follow up with a question regarding their reason for such confidence they will answer, "Because I believe in God."
    - b. What they mean by this is they have a vague understanding of Him and they are not antagonistic towards Him.
  3. James warns against such vain presumption  
**James 2:19 NAU** - "You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder."
  4. In **Romans 1** Paul presumes that all men know God. They know Him but they deny His right to rule over them. They deny Him the worship that He alone deserves.  
**Romans 1:21 NAU** - "For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened."  
 The word for "honor" is the verbal form of the word for glory.  
 They refused to give Him glory.  
**Romans 1:21 KJV** - "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."
  5. Knowing God is far more than just knowing *about* God.
- C. To know God is to have a relationship with Him. Knowing in the Bible carries the idea of intimacy

1. We can see this with regard to the marital relationship - ידע yada`  
**Gen. 4:1 KJV** - "And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD."
  2. Knowing God means having an intimate relationship with Him  
 It means being intimately acquainted with Him. It implies an experience with Him; having communion with Him.
  3. This is the greatest of all wonders. That the infinite, eternal, unchangeable, transcendent God has revealed Himself and has chosen to enter into a relationship with sinful man.
- D. Christianity is about this relationship
1. There is no greater blessing; no greater experience than knowing God  
**Jer. 9:23-24 NAS** - "Thus says the LORD, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; <sup>24</sup> but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice, and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the LORD."  
 This is the word ידע
  2. We have an intimate, personal relationship with God  
 It is a unique particular relationship made possible through Christ  
**John Owen** – "To know the Lord is to know God as he is in Christ *personally*, as he will be unto us in Christ *graciously*, and what he requires of us and accepts in us through the Beloved. To know God as he is revealed in Christ is the highest privilege whereof in this life we can be made partakers, for this is life eternal, that we may know the Father, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent."
  3. Our knowledge of God stirs our hearts in love for Him. It creates an intimacy with Jesus.  
 John spoke of it  
**1 John 1:3** – "what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ."  
 κοινωνία – fellowship, sharing, communion
- E. To know God is to know and experience His great love for you
1. God loves all of His creation in a general way
  2. He loves you in an intimate covenantal way.  
 This is the nature of the Hebrew word ידע
  3. He has adopted us as His own dear children – **Verse 5**. He has blessed us with His everlasting love, a steadfast love that is irrevocable. Our relationship with God cannot be broken.
- III. So what's the point? If this knowledge of God is something all Christians have why is Paul praying that these Christians might have a "spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him?"

- A. Our knowledge of God progressively grows.
1. Paul is praying that they might know God more and more  
The mark of counterfeit religion is a lack of growth, no progress towards maturity.
  2. The Christian life is about pursuing Christ more and more. It is about knowing Him more and more. It is about increasing in our fellowship with Him.
  3. Sin and carelessness hinders our relationship with Christ.
- B. This is where the means of grace are so important
1. Notice Paul's words:  
**Ephesians 1:17 NAU** - "may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him."  
    - a. Wisdom is the capacity to know
    - b. Revelation is a means of knowing
    - c. Paul is referring to the work of the Holy Spirit in giving us the knowledge of God; of His nature, His work, His purpose, His holiness.  
**John 14:26 NAU** - "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."
  2. What is the source of knowing God more?  
The Word of God is His revelation of Himself. We know Him more through His Word. To learn to obey Him through His Word  
**Psalms 119** is a beautiful picture of the relationship of God's Law/Word to our relationship with God.  
**Psalms 119:9-11 KJV** - "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed *thereto* according to thy word. <sup>10</sup> With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. <sup>11</sup> Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."
  3. God's Word is used of God to equip us in our Christian life  
**2 Timothy 3:16-17 NAU** - "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; <sup>17</sup> so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."
  4. We are dependent upon God to teach us from His Word and increase our understanding.  
**Ephesians 1:17 NAU** - "may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him."

#### Conclusion:

1. Paul is praying that they might know God more. It was the passion of his own life. It was his great desire for them.  
**Philippians 3:10 NAU** - "that I may know Him . . ."
2. Prayer is essential to our Christian life in the presence of Christ—both for ourselves and for one another.