

God knows everything

Knowing God

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Those of you that use a computer will know the power of a search engine. If I am preparing sermon material and I want to find a verse, it is quicker now to just quickly go to the box at the top of the screen, insert the key words and the verse will come out in a second. It is much quicker than reaching for a concordance. Almost any information that we want is there at the touch of a button.

But the information we are given has to be put in, doesn't it? Someone somewhere across the world has fed in some kind of database or material that we might access it. And we know that it could be a day or two out of date, or even longer, which might be important, and we don't know whether it is completely accurate.

I want to draw your attention this morning to the fact that our great and glorious God knows all things and he knows all things in all times about everyone, about every plan, about every spirit. There is nothing that God does not know. We could say when it comes to knowledge our God is the ultimate search engine. But no one gave him information. God has always had all information from eternity and, indeed, to eternity. God is what we call omniscient. He knows all things. And it is something else that God has decided in his sovereign wisdom to reveal about himself to us.

And those of us who come along here regularly will know that on Sunday mornings we have been looking at a series of sermons which I have called 'knowing God' in which we are trying to learn things about God that God himself has decided to reveal. And I would suggest to you that he only reveals certain things because our minds can only take in so much. And there is so much about God that he could not possibly give us as a full revelation of himself in that we just could not take it in. But there are things that he has revealed. And just by way of background this morning we started in Genesis one.

"In the beginning God..."¹

We looked at the existence of God and how we looked at arguments and evidence for the existence of God, but realizing it is not a scientific argument as the world would look. It is a matter of faith. Although science, of course, confirms that. It is a matter of the heart. And the first thing that God revealed to us is that he existed.

"In the beginning God..."²

¹ Genesis 1:1.

² Ibid.

No explanation. Don't need it. It is an insult. God simply announces this He is.

“In the beginning God created...”³

And so we looked at the fact that God disclosed to us that he created. He created as set down in the book of Genesis. We believe that. We accept that. Then in the same chapter he reveals to us something of the trinity of God, the triune godhead. He says:

“Let us make man...”⁴

And we began to explore that the trinity means.

We have also looked at the power of God. We have looked at the fact that God is everywhere present. And now today we come this morning to think about the fact that God knows all things. I would stop for just a moment and remind you that learning about God should be one of the chief delights of the Christian. This is eternal life to know him. It is one of our tasks on earth is to know God. I know it means not just to know about him, but to know him, but we have to know about him also. And I think it is thrilling to think that the things we are looking at are things that God—and I will say this with respect—God made a decision. This is something about me that I am going to reveal to my creation.

And so as we read these things and even that simple psalm this morning, we are reading things that God wants us to know and has decided to reveal about himself.

A few people are blessed with a photographic memory. I remember being at school and having to work quite hard to remember things and you find the kid next to you didn't even bother at all. He could just remember what was on the blackboard. Others have what you might call encyclopedic minds. They just seem to be able to remember lots of facts and things. And then there are people who always seem to have what we call a mind of useless information. Yet the most knowledgeable person on the globe is limited by what we can know. They tell us that we only use a certain percentage of our brain. I suppose some people might use a slightly bigger more percentage than others. I think it highly likely that Adam when he was created used all of his brain. He was a very intelligent being - Adam was a very intelligent person. But now we only use a very small part of our brain. And so we are limited in what we can remember and know.

This morning we have read of the living God who has the total knowledge of all things at all times. And you say, “Well, ok, we know that. That is of interest. But we must go further than that. It must impact the way that we think if we are Christians and the way that we behave in the knowledge that God knows all things. And if we are not a Christian, then we need to be aware that God knows just what we are thinking. Maybe we think we are a Christian, but we are not sure. Or maybe we give the impression to everybody that we are Christians, but actually we know we are not. Then this knowledge that God knows us is something that should challenge us for nothing is hid from his eyes.

Now the first thing I want to leave with you this morning is this:

1 The fact of God's omniscience, the fact that he knows all things.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Genesis 1:26.

Sometimes we say, ‘well, you learn something new every day’ . You know, you read something in the papers something perhaps a bit obscure and you say, “I didn’t know that.” You learn something new every day.

God never says that. And God never will say it. God never learns anything new every day, because everything that is to be known, he knows. God never discovers anything. God is never surprised by knowledge. He knows it all.

We hopefully gain knowledge as we get a bit older. When we are a bit younger we train in a certain expertise and, you know, we get certificates and things. We become teachers and engineers, farmers and whatever else we might become. We are constantly learning. God never learns. He knows all things. He created the very knowledge that we are learning.

John 1:1 says:

“In the beginning was the Word...”⁵

That word word in the Greek is the logos, the logic, the reasoning behind all things. He embraces all knowledge. In the beginning was all knowledge in God. It was there from all eternity.

You say, “Explain that to me.”

I can’t explain it to you. That is what faith is about. God reveals to us that that is how he is. We read in Romans 11 verse 34:

“For who hath known the mind of the Lord?”⁶

Now one. We can’t know the mind of the Lord except within the bounds of what he has revealed to us in Scripture. We can’t know all that is in the mind of God.

“Or who hath been his counsellor?”⁷

Who has given God advice? The Lord often comes with such language in the book of Job. No one gives God advice. He is all knowing. He is self sufficient in knowledge as he is in all other things. Anything that can be known, he knows. And he knows it all instantly with utter perfection. And he even knows our minds. We will see more of that in a moment, but the psalm we read says:

“...thou understandest my thought afar off.”⁸

Stuff you haven’t thought of yet, God knows. And that little verse in Ezekiel 11 verse five it says:

“...for I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them.”⁹

⁵ John 1:1.

⁶ Romans 11:34.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Psalm 139:2.

⁹ Ezekiel 11:5.

That is quite a powerful verse when think of it. God himself says, "I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them." You know, God's knowledge reigns across eternity. We think of knowing things in the here and now, don't we? We think, "Well, God knows us here. He knows what we are thinking. He knows what we are going to do later. He knows all of these things about us and we have got friends living in this country and that country and he knows all about them as well."

But, you know, God's knowledge is wider and deeper than that. We might call it a 3D knowledge. It extends through time. He knows all things that are actual, all things that are possible, past, present and future. He knows them fully and perfectly and simultaneously. He knows all of that in an instant. God is always in the present now.

One of the titles God discloses when he was speaking earlier in the Scripture when Moses asks who shall I say sent me. God said say I am that I am. Not the I was and I will be, although he was the I was and will be, but he is the I am, the ever present now.

God's knowledge is more than encyclopedic. It is more than a photographic memory. It is a part of who God is that he knows all things. Psalm 147 verse five, I read it at the opening of our worship:

"...his understanding is infinite."¹⁰

We can comprehend that we know so much. If I do this study I will know more and then I will know a bit more etc We think of the accumulation of knowledge, but not with God. His understanding is infinite. And the God whose understanding is infinite and knows all things, if you are a Christian, he is your friend and Savior, our great and glorious God, our all knowing Father. I can't speak for my children, but when we were quite we looked to our fathers as those who know everything, because that is what dads do. And you go to dad and you say, "Dad, what is this. What is the answer to that?" And occasionally dad might say, "I haven't a clue." And all of the sudden you think, hang on. You are dad. You are meant to know everything. We know that dads don't know everything. There are things that dads don't know, moms know. Go speak to your mother.

But, you see, we can go to our heavenly Father with complete confidence. Lord, you know absolutely everything. And that which I don't know and I need to know at the moment and no doubt you have perhaps told me in the Word, Lord, just guide me there. Show me.

He knows all things as God the Father. He knows all things as God the Son. He knows all things as God the Holy Spirit. And the only qualification we might make here is to point out that when Jesus Christ came, he voluntarily laid aside some of the capacity that he had. So, for example, we find the Lord Jesus Christ spoke about not knowing the hour of his return. It is known only unto the Father. Some of these things are voluntarily submissions of the Son to the Father, but does not detract from his deity or the knowledge of the godhead.

2 He knows the every day things about us and the world.

This brings it a little closer, doesn't it? We know that God knows what is going on in the world. We think of the disasters that have been in Boston and in Mexico and the earthquakes in China

¹⁰ Psalm 147:5.

and Pakistan. He knows all about those things. But he also knows about us. Proverbs 15 verse three says:

“The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.”¹¹

Nothing escapes the knowledge of God. And one reason we had the psalm read this morning is because that psalm shows us some very personal things that God knows about us. David wrote there how God knew him thoroughly.

“LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me.”¹²

He says in verse one of that psalm. That is a searching word and he comes back to it at the end of the psalm. And that is a good thing to know that God knows us thoroughly. But it also says he knows a very simple thing I mentioned to the boys and girls. He knows when we get up and when we go to bed.

“Thou knowest my downsitteing and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.”¹³

It is a simple thing, isn't it? And yet it is deemed important by God to have that put down there. For some people who live alone and some who are fearful, to know that God knows when you go to bed and to know that God knows when you get up, that he has been caring for you all the way through the night is a great comfort. It is a very practical thing that this great God who knows all things, yes, he knows when I lay down and go to sleep. Isn't that an amazing thing? He also knows our mind.

“...thou understandest my thought afar off.”¹⁴

He knows what you think and he knows why you think it and he knows sometimes those thoughts are coming to our mind. He knows the thoughts that you don't want it. He also knows when those thoughts come in and we harbor them and we meditate upon them and we shouldn't. He knows the thoughts that we have that are a struggle. He knows the confusion that our minds get in and he knows about mental illness as well as he does about physical illness. He knows all of the struggles that we have there. It says thou understandest. Now that takes knowledge a little bit deeper, doesn't it? He knows, ah, but he understands. Sometimes we know about one another in our problems and we try to understand, but no one understands like our God.

One hymn writer says, “Jesus knows all about our struggles.” And that should comfort us. He says he knows our journey, verse three.

“Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.”¹⁵

God knows exactly when we go out. We commit our way to the Lord. He knows. He is there with us. He is behind us. He is in front of us. And we learned recently concerning God's omnipresence, he is everywhere, everywhere present. There is not a place we can go and he is not present. In fact, we found that from this psalm also. It says:

¹¹ Proverbs 15:3.

¹² Psalm 139:1.

¹³ Psalm 139:2.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Psalm 139:3.

“Thou compasses my path.”¹⁶

What does that mean? The Hebrew word there is a word that we might use for scattering seed in a particularly careful way. I don't know about you, but sometimes when I am in a garden I sow seed and just sprinkle it along and you know what happens. You get clumps of something here and nothing there. But occasionally you go through and you put a seed in every inch or two. You are doing it very carefully. That is the sort of phrase we have got here.

“Thou compasses my path.”¹⁷

Thou dost very carefully observe, thou dost encircle me. Elsewhere the Scripture speaks about the Lord and the host of God encamping around the dwelling of the just. He encompasses us. He knows our journey wherever we are. He knows every word uttered, verse four.

“For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.”¹⁸

Well, that is a warning to us, isn't it? He knows the mutterings. He knows it when we complain, when we didn't really ought to complain. He knows when something ought to be kept within and it is not. But he also hears every prayer, doesn't he? Every word that comes from our lips that we cry unto the Lord. Unless we are in a state of sin when he will not hear our prayer, but, you know, this is not what we are looking at here. He knows every word uttered. He knows us in every direction.

“Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.”¹⁹

The eyes of the Lord are in every place. He knows everything about us in that very practical way. And, my friends, hasn't that been an encouragement to us to prayer? In all the circumstances that you are in, they are known to him. And when we tell him what is in our mind and we get a bit muddled, the Lord knows exactly what you are talking about because he knows all things. And God the Holy Spirit has promised to take our muddle and will present it to our heavenly Father in the name of Jesus Christ. And when you tell him, for example, that someone is ill and you are bringing them before the Lord, he knew that. But he still wants you to tell him. He wants to see that you cared. He wants to hear that prayer.

I think it is in the book of Isaiah it speaks there of one who was the Lord's remembrancer, reminding the Lord of stuff.

When I worked in the civil service, I am going back a good few years for this, I had one little tiny part of my job, I think, was to ... we had to write to the Queen's Office in Buckingham Palace to remind the queen that there were certain people within our government department who were about to serve 50 years or whatever it was. So we are reminding her that she might like to write them a letter to say how wonderful it was that they served her all those years. We were the remembrances. We were reminding her office of something that they should have had anyway.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Psalm 139:4.

¹⁹ Psalm 139:5.

And that is what we do with the Lord. We remind the King of kings. He knows anyway, but he wants us to do that and to bring these things before him. And as much joy as we get when our children are young, when they come before us with their cares and their love, so the Lord wants us to come before him.

And, my friends, here is encouragement for the future. God cannot learn anything about the future, because he has already there. He knows all things about the future because he is eternal. And it is not because of foreknowledge. It is because of all knowledge. And, my friends, because he is there, because he knows all things, we can trust him for the future. You see, we don't know what the future holds. No, but we know one who does. And he has promised to care for us every step of our pilgrimage. Our God has promised to supply all your needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Now that is a promise we can claim, because not only is he God who keeps his Word, but he is a God who has all knowledge concerning all of these things.

3 He knows the state of our hearts.

This is important – here we get closer. I spoke about some worldly things. I have spoken about our daily walk. And now we are right here in the heart. God knows the state and condition of our hearts.

We have to use great care in making an assessment about one's spiritual condition. We can ask the right questions and we can get the right response, but only God really knows the state of our hearts. And we can make a wrong assessment about ourselves. Then that is a very serious matter, isn't it, to stake our eternity on a mistaken premise and yet many will do that today. There will be many attending worship and some won't be attending worship and they will say, "Well, I know I am a Christian, because I turn up at church at Easter or Christmas or whatever. I do the best I can." Some people just refuse the truth and there are some people who have not been told the truth.

But we come to one who knows our soul's condition better than we know it ourselves. We come before one that we can't fool. We are either alive in him or we are dead in sin. We read in the Scripture there is no creature that is not manifest or revealed in his sight, but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

I talked to the young people during the week – we are going through the commandments and were looking at the 7th commandment. It is not an easy one to put before the children. One of the things we are saying to the children there is that, when other young people in the playground want to show us something that is inappropriate or tell a joke that is inappropriate there is peer pressure to join in with the crowd. That is cool. We remind the children that actually to be big and to be cool is to stand out from such a group because in eternity you won't have to give an account to these friends, but we will have to give an account to God. It is cool to be right with God.

You know, it is amazing that by virtue of our nature despite knowing that God knows all things we still try and hide our sin. Think of Adam and Eve way back in the garden. What happened? Adam and Eve sinned and Adam hears the voice of the Lord walking in the evening in the cool of the day has happened quite often. It wasn't unusual. And it is interesting to have eavesdropped on those conversations. But this night it was different. They had sinned and they were hiding. They had covered themselves in fig leaves because they were ashamed. They were now sinners. They hid from the presence of the Lord. And yet they knew that God knew all things. And the God who knows all things still asked the question and says, "Where art thou?" God knew where they were,

but he asked the question. So he does still today. Doesn't he? Where are you? Where are you with me? Are we hiding from God because of our sin?

They had sinned and now they had an inherent knowledge that they could not appear before God as they were. There was something between them. It was sin and so they tried to cover their shame with something that they had made and it didn't work. It wasn't acceptable to God. And you remember the account how God in his grace and mercy even right at the beginning he kills an innocent animal, skins it and crafts clothes for them. And so through the shedding of the blood they were able to appear before him. They tried to hide from the presence of God.

Think of Jonah, a prophet, a man of God. And he thinks, ok, God wants me to go somewhere. I don't want to do that. So I will get a boat and, oh, look, there is a boat going exactly the wrong direction. I will get on that one. God knew where he was. God followed him. God prepared the storm. God prepared the great fish and later God prepared the gourd and God prepared a great wind and later he prepared the hearts of the people of Nineveh. Jonah, a man of God thinks that God couldn't see him or know him. Praise God in the belly of that great fish he comes to the knowledge that God does know him, even in the depths of the ocean and he was able to cry out to the Lord.

My friends, such knowledge should encourage us to look to the same Lord who knows all about our troubles, who has a perfect knowledge with a perfect love and a perfect desire to deliver us.

Someone has said the most astounding thing about God's omniscience is that he knows us and we are still here. God says:

"I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."²⁰

Such is his mercy and love. He knows those thoughts. He knows those actions. He knows everything about us and all about the world and all that is going on today and you think, oh, the Lord could just kind of screw it all up and throw it out into the universe. But, no, he has a purpose. He has a divine decree. He has determined before the world was created that there will be a people in glory. There will be a people washed in the blood of the Lamb. And he will show grace. He will show mercy to such a people. And if you are one of the Lord's people here this morning you can rejoice in that fact that God's knowledge of you is something wonderful. The psalmist says there:

"How precious also are thy thoughts unto me."²¹

Isn't it marvelous to think this morning with all that is going on in the world that the Lord thinks of you and me. Verse 17.

"How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand."²²

Isn't that amazing? God's thoughts towards us are more than the sand. Let us try and apply this a little bit this morning. We have looked at three things: We have looked at the fact of God's omniscience, the fact that he knows everything. But, secondly, we have seen how he knows

²⁰ Malachi 3:6.

²¹ Psalm 139:17.

²² Psalm 139:17-18.

everything about every day things as well as in the world. And then, thirdly, we have seen how he knows in particular the state of our hearts.

Now what application or what response could we make to these things?

Well, firstly, I think, that we might have a more perfect relationship with the Lord. You see, what was David's response to these things in the psalm? Well, the first response was in verse six. He says, "This is too wonderful to me. I can't cope with this. I can't understand this fully."

"Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it."²³

Fair enough. We can't fully understand how it is that God knows all things about everything through our eternity and all at the same time. But that is what the Word says and we accept that. We are not meant to understand everything. Sometimes people say in our house, "Can you really understand that?" And I will say, "No, we are not meant to." Why wear my brain out trying to understand something I am not meant to understand. I am meant to simply believe it. There are some things for us to delve into and try and understand. There are other things God says, for example, in the beginning God. Ok, I see it. God is there. You couldn't take it in. It is beyond his grasp.

But it didn't mean he shrugged his shoulders and moved on. Rather, he asked the Lord when we get to the end of the psalm, he asks "Lord, now search me. Search me and see if there be any wicked way in me." That was the result of it. Lord, you know everything and it is a good thing that you know everything. Now just come and have a fresh look at me and reveal to me anything that is wrong.

Folk who come along here regularly know that I often use the dentist as an illustration. And I hate the dentist, not personally. He is a fine guy, but I don't like the concept of the dentist. And I was there this week and a classic example of this, I was having a tooth taken out and it is a bit of a clean up. While he was giving me a clean up he says "I found a little cavity."

Now he wouldn't have found that had he not been having a bit of a clean up, you see. What had happened? Search me, oh Lord. The spot light was on. It was something that wasn't visible to the naked eye but he found it. He asked, "Well, I will do that now, then, shall I?" Well the injection was already in so there is me thinking it's as bad as it going to get let's get on with it.

But you think of that spiritually. Lord, search me. Search my heart. So if there is something that is sinful and wrong in my heart that really stops me being what you want me to be, then find it. And put your finger on it and eradicate it. And that is the attitude we need. As God's people, we want to be as right as we can with God.

You know, in the Old Testament there was even a sacrifice for sins of ignorance, things that people didn't realize were wrong. And that is the attitude we want. Lord, are there sins of ignorance, things I just don't know about yet? And that is what David says.

"And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."²⁴

²³ Psalm 139:6.

²⁴ Psalm 139:24.

That was his conclusion that David wanted an even more perfect relationship with the Lord. And that is perfect from God's point of view.

But then, secondly, by way of application can we not trust him more fully? You know when a baby is hungry he or she cries. And a sensible parent will feed the child. The child doesn't know that. All the child knows is there is something going on here. I cry and I get fed. The baby will cry when they are afraid. They may not know fully why they are crying. They just have a feeling and this is what happens. We don't understand the situation of why they are afraid, but they know that mom and dad comes and gives them comfort.

If that child had the knowledge of the parent, they might not cry, because they know that what they are fearful of is either something not to be fearful of, or, hang on, mom and dad are going to sort that out anyway. And as the child gets older they learn to trust the knowledge of their parent. And so when mom or dad says, "That is ok," there are no more tears. They just trust in the knowledge of the parent.

Well, my friends, that is how we are to trust our heavenly Father. He knows the situation when we don't, just like a parent knows the situation when the child doesn't. And we have to learn to trust him. We don't understand why this has happened or that has happened in our life, our fellowship, our families or whatever. But I will trust the Lord. We are trusting our heavenly Father. We can become too often like the child that cries rather than trusts in the Lord.

He is the parent that never leaves the room. He is the teacher that is always beside us. He knows every anxiety and every care. He is the one that knows how we love him, although it might be imperfect and the little things we do that others don't see. He knows all of that.

My friends, let's trust him more fully for the things that are not going to be in your life just tomorrow, but now.

Perhaps there are those here this morning who are really anxious about something. Then take it as a word from the Lord. He knows all things and he understands all things. And he is there to be with us in those situations.

And then, thirdly, by way of application, we should see this great truth as a preventative to sin. All we do and think is within the knowledge of almighty God. He hears our whispers. He hears our complaints. He sees our hidden sin. One has put it like this. It is as if we have crawled up to the throne room and we have moved to the foot of the throne and committed our sin in the very sight of God.

That is sobering, isn't it? When you tempted to sin, to think or whatever – stop and remember it's just as if I am in the throne room. Will I do this in the very presence of God?

Oh, my friend, just think. God is everywhere present. God knows everything about me. I am not going to do this.

And then, finally, we should trust him with our souls. Who else will you trust? The psalmist says the arm of flesh will fail you, you dare not trust your own. Christ knows everything about us because he is God. But there is a little bit more, if I could put it like that. He not only knows all about us, he entered into a body of flesh. He sent his only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He

came to walk in our shoes, as it were, to walk in our flesh, to enter into our experiences. He came to tread a pathway to Calvary, didn't he?

And I don't know what you are trusting in this morning, whether it is a keeping of some ritual or trying to keep the law. It can be all sorts of things. Maybe you are not trusting in anything towards God but you have just got your trust in your career or your money or your family or whatever it might be. But whatever you are trusting in is known by him. But our trust must be in Christ alone.

My friends, your open sins, your secret sins, they are all known to him. In Ecclesiastes we read:

“For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”²⁵

And God has not only revealed that he knows all things, but amongst those things else that he has revealed he has revealed to us that we are sinners, that we break God's law.

Speaking to the boys and girls as we go through these commandments they appear genuinely, interested because they don't hear those things at school. Some of them don't hear them at home. They have never heard that some things are wrong and why they are wrong and to hear that once we talk about unfaithfulness in marriages, adultery, to turn that around and to see that God is the ultimate faithful one. We break those commandments, every one of them. But Christ came to keep them in our place. He is the only one that could do that. And then on the cross of Calvary the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all. He laid on him all the broken law, all the sin, because that is what sin is, isn't it, the broken law. He laid it upon the Lord Jesus Christ. He came to deal with that.

And this is something that is revealed to us, that we are sinners. He has revealed to us that he is the Savior of sinners. He has revealed to us that there is a heaven to gain and there is a hell to shun. No one is ever going to appear before God and say, “You didn't tell us that.” It is all here in the Word of God. He calls us now to repent and that we might trust in him. And those are the gifts of God.

Oh, I pray the Lord might help us if any don't know the Savior that you might seek him. The Scripture says when we seek him with all our hearts then we shall be found. Those who know the Lord, may we walk every moment in the knowledge that our God knows all things at all times. And we shall see him one day in all his glory.

²⁵ Ecclesiastes 12:14.