

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

1 John 5:20

Intro: Man has always prided himself on what he knows. And it is true that we have made great strides in many areas of knowledge. The increase of knowledge in so many area has been so extensive and so rapid that no one is really able to keep up with it all. I often think about how amazed my Dad would be if he could come back and suddenly see how life has changed, and in many respects for the good. But while man takes a great deal of pride in his knowledge, there is a whole realm of truth which man does not know, and is utterly incapable of knowing. And that is the most important knowledge of all: *the knowledge of God*.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth which was saturated with “the wisdom of this world” (1 Cor. 1:20), reminding them that “the world by wisdom,” that is, its own human wisdom, “knew not God” (1 Cor. 1: 21). On the other hand, as Paul wrote about “the wisdom of God,” he was quick to say,

8 Which none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory (1 Cor. 2:8).

And then he added to show that the wisdom of God was completely beyond the reach of the natural man, quoting from Isa. 64:4,

9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him (1 Cor. 2:8).

But he didn't even stop there like a lot of Christians do, but he went on to say,

10 But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God (1 Cor. 2:10).

Along this line there is a very interesting statement in Paul's letter to the Ephesians which shows that this lack of knowledge of God, and lack of ability to know God, is a part of every man's nature. I am referring to what Paul wrote in Eph. 4:17-19:

17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

18 Having the understanding [remember this word] darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto

1 John 5:20 (2)

lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. Paul was warning those Gentile believers not to live like they used to live before they were saved. And the reason: sin had corrupted their ability to think reasonably and truthfully. However, when we are saved, our IQ is not necessarily improved, but we are capable of reasoning in a way that we could not think before. We were made aware of a whole area of truth that we did not know even existed before. The world calls it foolishness, and scoffs at it, but that is because they are still without understanding. Their hearts are blinded and hardened by sin, a word which most people in the world hate.

This change does not take place all at once. Paul wrote to the believers at Rome about the renewing of their minds. At salvation God gives us the ability to understand the truth of God, but it is only as we grow in the Lord that our ability to understand the truth of God grows!

For several Sunday nights I am going to be talking about “truths that we know.” Tonight I want to begin with 1 John 5:20.

We all know that the Apostle John, in his first epistle especially, placed a heavy emphasis on the word “know.” In fact, you can see that he used it several times at the end of his epistle, beginning with verse 13 of chapter 5. (Read them.) He alternates between two Greek verbs in the original text, but the two are very close in their meaning having to do with the ability to understand, and to grow in such understanding. And John is clearly addressing those who are saved because people without Christ are still blinded against the truth. That is why they oppose it so strongly. It doesn’t make sense to them. But it does make sense to us because of a new capacity we have for understanding as a result of the new birth.

I would almost feel about the text that I have chosen tonight, that it should appear close to the beginning of the epistle. It explains why we think the way we do, and what we understand the truth which only Christians can understand. But the Apostle John, and the Holy Spirit put it at the end probably because it confirms why we know what we know, and why we love the truth the way we do.

Now let us look at our text.

The Apostle John, speaking of all true believers, said that

I. “WE KNOW THAT THE SON OF GOD IS COME.”

Now this is a tremendous claim to make. If you did not know this, you wouldn't be a Christian. So if you claim to be a Christian, but don't believe this, then you need to find out what salvation is all about.

The Jews did not know this or they never would have opposed Christ the way they did. The Romans did not know this, or they never would have agreed to crucify Christ. I believe that our President knows this, and this is the main reason that many people hate him. His enemies hate him because they don't know what he knows. The masses of people living in the world at any given time in world history do not know this, that “the Son of God is come.” Most people know about Jesus of Nazareth. Some religions even consider Him to be a prophet, but they do not believe that He was the Son of God.

Now what do we mean when we say that “we know that the Son of God is come”? Come from where, to where, and why? If you read through this epistle, and if you will add to it the Gospel written by the Apostle John, you will see that when he says here “that the Son of God is come,” He meant that He came from heaven as a Man, born of the virgin Mary, and still retained all of His Deity. Read 1 John 4:14 and you will see what John meant by this. With these few words we have the whole Gospel message. “The Son of God” speaks of His Deity, yet He came into the world born as a little baby, the Son of God, to do the Father's will which was to die as a Substitute for all that the Father had given to Him, taking the penalty of their sin upon Himself and paying their debt in full.

Most of us would rather die than deny such truth, and yet when we stop to think about it for a moment, you can understand why the world has trouble with this great truth because there was never a birth like this before, and there never has been another since. And yet we can all unite and say, “We know that the Son of God is come.” He came, He lived a perfect life, He died for sinners, He was raised from the dead, and then He ascended back to heaven. We know this! We have no doubt but that this is true. Every true Christian believes this because they *know* it!

Now this sounds like arrogance to the world. People with a lot more education than we have, and who are smarter than we are, don't know this, and they don't believe that we know it either. How did we come to know it? It certainly can't be because we figured this all out by ourselves.

And we didn't. Well, how did we come to know it?

II. HE 'HATH GIVEN US AN UNDERSTANDING.'

Do you remember what we read about the understanding that people have, and that we had, before we came to Christ. All of that has been changed. Our understanding is no longer darkened, but it is not something that we have done for ourselves. Nor is it anything that we deserved more than anyone else. Jesus Christ Himself, the One Who made us, has in pure grace given us by the Holy Spirit, and through the Word of God, the ability to understand these divine truths. Spiritually, once we were blind like everyone else, but now we see. We didn't open our eyes; the Lord did. Now it all makes sense to us. We are learning daily more to think like God thinks, and that is a part of the miracle of regeneration.

Oh, how we need to thank God for what He has done to our minds. We love these truths, and we have no doubt but what they are true.

Now let me emphasize that this does not all take place at once. We need to read the Bible where God has revealed these truths, and we need to seek from Him greater understanding as long as we live. But there is absolutely now reason for us to feel proud that we know what other people don't know, and what they often oppose so strongly. Instead we need to be praising the Lord constantly that He has exercised His grace toward us instead of giving us what we really deserve.

But now what is the greatest part of this knowledge that we have? Let us move on in the verse.

III. THE PURPOSE OF WHAT WE KNOW.

Here it is: "That we may know Him that is true." The Greek should be translated, *in order that we may know Him that is true.*" The main purpose of God's salvation is that we may know God, the one and only true God.

Men in their blindness have many different God. But there is only one God. He is the Creator of heaven and earth. He is our Creator. What a tragic and terrible surprise awaits those terrorists who have given their lives thinking that they were going to Paradise because they have killed any number of what they call "infidels." How they would like to come

back to warn their fellow Moslems not to do what they have done because they aren't in Paradise at all. They are suffering under the judgment of the One true God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and they are awaiting the final judgment which is terrible beyond anything that we can imagine!

But how good God has been that He in sovereign grace sent His Son to die for us, not only that our sins would be forgiven, and not only that we would be in heaven some day, but that beginning the moment we passed out of the darkness of sin into the glorious liberty of God's children, *we might know Him, the living, eternal, sovereign God. He chose us, and called us, and saved us through Christ, because He wants us to know Him.* And when I say "Him," I not only mean God the Father, but Jesus Christ His Son, and God the Holy Spirit. As Paul told the Corinthian believers, we have been called into the fellowship of God Son. Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, as John told us at the beginning of this epistle of 1 John.

But even this is not all.

At our salvation we were inseparably joined to God and to His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Although we may be able to understand this great truth fully, "we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ." And John concludes this tremendous verse by saying, "This is the true God, and eternal life."

Then we come to John's concluding word in this epistle, and I make it my concluding word in this message.

Concl: "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." And then he added, "Amen."

We might paraphrase this, "Little children, accept no substitutes." What is an idol? It is anything, or anyone, that takes the place that only God the Father, Son, and Spirit rightfully own and deserve to have.

What by God's grace we know, carries with it great responsibilities. And they are greater than we can fulfill in our own strength. But as we walk with the Lord, and learn to love Him more and more, and to trust Him more fully, He will keep us from turning in any direction except more fully to Him. We keep ourselves by trusting Him to keep us.