

060430
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A Heart to Know Him pt. 2

I spoke last week about having a heart to know the Lord. I thought I would carry on along that line and continue, perhaps for a few weeks, talking about knowing the Lord.

We started last week by talking about having a heart to know Him. That is where everything starts. That is how it must begin. We must have a heart to know Him. A heart without a plan B. A heart that stands with Him, towards Him in confusion and confrontation knowing that, in fact, we are the source of that confusion, and we are the reason for that confrontation. We are the wall that stands before you. We are the veil that prevents our eyes from seeing. We are the one who so often insists to live “for Him” and so preventing ourselves from experiencing His life (because Christianity is not us living for Jesus, but rather Jesus living in us). We are the one who’s darkened understanding blocks the light of the glory of God shining in Your heart.

We have to own that. We have to concede in this or there is never growth. The Son of God is not veiled in this covenant, as He was in the Old Covenant, except by the earth-bound, blinded heart of the natural man...who still thinks Himself to be where he is no longer – if indeed he is in Christ. That is the veil the lies over your heart. That is the barricade that stands in the way of knowing Him. And so you must have a heart that is willing to say with Peter “Lord, I have no idea what you just said, what it means, or how it pertains to anything, but you have the words of eternal life and so I’m not going anywhere”.

And as we said last week, you will have many exit ramps along the way if you desire to get off. Now, of course we, who take those exit ramps, don’t call them exits. We call them the straight and narrow path. There are always what appear to be legitimate reasons and justifiable motivations that lead us away from His eternal purpose, and we will never admit that we have turned aside...because in our minds our choices and paths are generally always justified.

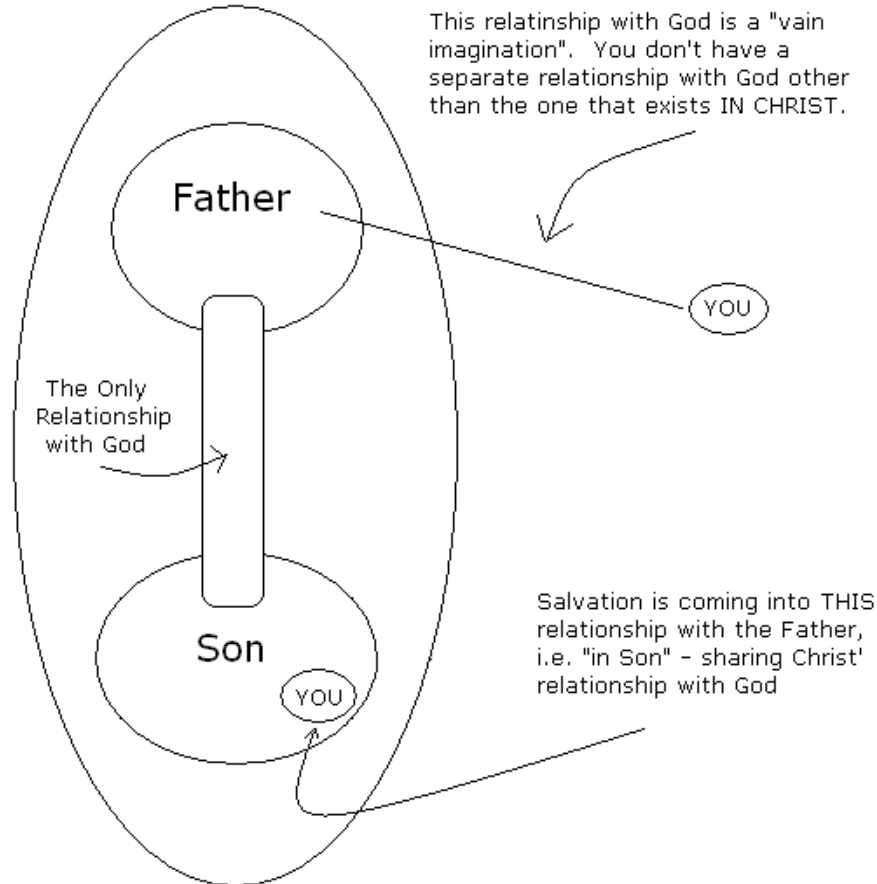
Did those who became offended at Jesus turn aside and say “I’m not interested in the Messiah”. No, they simply said – “this certainly cannot be Him”. And that is what we do. This can’t be the Lord, its too confusing. This can’t be the Lord, I don’t understand. This just can’t be the Lord, its not what I heard in Sunday school. This can’t be the Lord, that’s not what the majority are saying.

So we talked last week about having a heart to know Him, and that is where it must start. **But then there is the way in which He is known.** Then there is the way in which He

must be known. Apart from knowing Him in the way He is known, there is nothing but a wasteland of imaginations – all of which, I am sure, can find ample “Scriptural backing”.

Here is where we, the church, are so deeply deceived. Here is where we have missed so much. We are not deceived in that Jesus is the Christ. We are not deceived in that He is the Son of God. No, we are not deceived primarily in our doctrines. **We are deceived in mistaking facts for Truth.** We are deceived in thinking that belief in and excitement about true doctrine produces a soul that knows the Lord. We are deceived in thinking that knowing true things is the same as knowing Him who is the Truth. We are deceived in thinking that experiencing Him in power or spiritual experiences is the same as a soul that knows Him. **We are deceived in the manner in which He is known. The manner. That is where we are deceived.**

Remember the diagram that we referred to several weeks ago.



- Review what the diagram is demonstrating
 - You don't have a relationship with God other than the one that Christ has always had. You have been brought into THAT relationship. It is called "in Christ" or "union".

Only the Spirit of God reveals the reality, the substance, the spiritual truth of this relationship. What we call Salvation – God calls “in my Son”. That is the relationship that you have with God. And only the Spirit of God can open the eyes of your understanding to take that beyond the realm of fact and bring it into the realm of spiritual actuality. Only the Spirit can take doctrinal facts and turn them into the Person of Truth living in you. His concrete substance. He who fills and transforms your soul into the image of what and where you are.

We have talked about that so many times, I won't belabor the point. We're going to move on shortly, though perhaps not this morning, to how the Spirit causes you to know Him in His death and in His resurrection. That is really where growing up happens. That is how you know Him “in the power of His resurrection, in the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death”. We'll get to all of that, because that is where the rubber meets the road. That is where truth is known in the innermost man. That is where you begin to bear His image, and know Him through an experience of His life. I want to jump ahead to that because it is foremost on my heart right now, but there is no point going there unless we first establish a heart to know Him.

But I'd like to just jump right in to knowing Him in His death. That is where the Lord has my heart today. That is where He is opening my window right now. Being conformed to His death – where all that He killed becomes dead in me...and He who is Life in me, is allowed to live. Where all that is dead to Him becomes dead to me...and I offer Him none of it any longer. Where my dead old man gets out of His way and He lives. Where I am conformed to His death – not MY death. His death. My death doesn't do any good. You'll never find anything in Scripture about being conformed to YOUR death. It's always His death. The death that punished and put away death itself. That death that I am by nature. By nature I am the dead who bury the dead. Well, I could go on and on, but we'll start that next week.

This week we're just backing up a bit. First we talked about having a heart to know Him. Needing to know Him. That is good. Now we're adding to that by talking a bit about the way in which He is known. He is known as the Spirit of God unveils Him.

And for those who might be visiting with us or new this week, when I make reference to the Spirit of God revealing Christ, I am not talking about visions and dreams and prophetic experiences (though I do not deny the veracity of such experiences). I am not talking about some secret hidden knowledge or some mystical enlightenment. I am quite simply talking about the Truth of Christ being shown to your heart by the Spirit of God. I am talking about the reality and substance of salvation becoming more than words as the Spirit of God opens the eyes of your understanding.

“Truly I say to you, Peter, that flesh and blood did not reveal that to you but my Father who is in Heaven” “Nobody knows the Son but the Father. Nobody knows the Father but the Son and those to whom the Son will reveal Him”. “The Spirit of truth is coming and He will guide you into all truth” “He will take of Mine and disclose it to you”. “The

Spirit of God has been given that you might know the things that have been given to you by God” “Father, grant them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the true knowledge of the Lord”. “the anointing that abides within you teaches you all things” “By this you know that you are in Him, by the Spirit He has given you” Etc.

We could go on and on Here’s my point. That (the diagram) being that nature of the relationship, and the Spirit of God being the one that discloses that to your heart, then everything else that arises from the thoughts, desires, needs, and sentiments of man as to the nature of knowing Him is what the Bible calls a vain imagination. Vain imaginations are not just ridiculous fears or bad theology. **Vain imaginations are all things that proceed out from your own heart and mind to understand or define spiritual reality.** Let me say that again. Vain imaginations are all things that proceed out from your own heart and mind to understand or define spiritual reality

And we do not even realize that we are building a fortress of imaginations because it is all that the natural mind knows to do. Now I’m leading up to a solution for this if you’ll hold on a minute. But we do not realize that this is what we’re doing. We cannot see it. Its like walking up to a person in a pitch black room who appears to be drawing a picture. And you ask him, what are you doing? And he says “I’m painting a picture of this room”. And you say “how do you know what it looks like”. And He says “I read about it in a book”. And you say...”ok...” and then give him a few minutes and then flick the light on. And not only does the room look nothing at all like the imaginations of this man, but he’s not even holding a paintbrush – it’s a toothbrush. And that’s not a canvas, it’s a piece of drywall. Or whatever...

I’m just trying to describe the utter hopelessness of knowing the Lord through any other means other than the concrete spiritual reality of being in Christ revealed to the heart of man by the Spirit of God within us. He must be known in spirit and truth or He isn’t known at all. He must be known as He is, not according to what we want Him to be.

And apart from this we create God in our own image. Apart from this we create a God concept according to our own desires, our own sentiments, our own hopes...and all of it is the best King we can imagine. Or the best Father we can imagine. Or the best Spouse we can imagine. Or whatever. We create Him according to what we need Him to be for us. You see, all of this is for us. We create God in our own image because of who we desire Him to be. This is who we need God to be. Again, its like the golden calf – “Moses is gone up that mountain, so here is the God that brought you out of Egypt”. They weren’t switching Gods. They were just defining the God that brought them out of Egypt according to their own mind, their own needs, their own sentiment.

That is what we will do every time. That is what we cannot but do apart from the Truth Himself being reveled by the Spirit of Truth. And we build our imaginations one upon another. We build them up block after block – something we read, something we interpreted, something we had a dream about, something we need to be true. Block upon block upon block. And then we cement that Tower of Babel in place with the sweat and zeal of our own efforts, and the joy and sorrow of our own hearts – giving our lives to it.

And, as the years go by, and this giant thing grows, and there are so many years of toil to build it and support it – how could we then not say of it “this is what it means to know the Lord”. Look how big it is – here is the proof. Look at how much I’ve wept over it in prayer – this is the proof. Look at how many people are now involved in it – here is the proof. Yes, this is what it means to know the Lord!

And then we protect it, **because everything a man creates he must defend**. And when anything seems to threaten it, especially threatening its foundations, we lash out in defense of it. And if somebody comes and actually speaks the truth of God in spirit and truth to us – we either say that we already know (for how could I have built this if I didn’t now that?), or we trample their pearls under our feet and then turn on them.

And sometimes we read things in Scripture that are so plainly contradictory to this tower of imaginations that we have built, this fortress of abominable religious notions, and we think to ourselves “this is a hard saying, who can understand it”. You know, verses like “you are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God”. What could that possibly mean? “I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I that live but Christ that lives in me”. “In the flesh dwells no good thing” “All of your righteousness is filthy rags”. “Apart from me you can do nothing”.

We read such things and never for a moment suspect that the reality of these Scriptures undermines and confronts and contradicts the very foundation of our religious notions. We never for a minute suspect that perhaps we have offered something He would call filthy rags. That we have built something he would call “nothing”. Instead we either ignore such “hard sayings” or we “carnalize” them. You know...we carnalize them – we make them natural. We know we can’t just rip them out of the Bible, so we make them mean something that the natural mind can comprehend and accept. We make them something that fits nicely with what we have already decided to be “the true knowledge of God”. **Isn’t it amazing what we can make “fit in” to what we already believe?** Isn’t it amazing how we can squeeze just about anything through the filter of what we already “know” to be true?

Don’t you see that is what the Jews did with their Messiah. They all had the same book that we have, but when the Person of expectation, the promised Seed, walked into their streets they rejected Him in exchange for their own carnal concept of that which was written of Him. **They rejected Truth in the name of facts**. They rejected reality in the name of what they had already built and needed defended. How could He be contrary to all of this? How could He not seek to establish and under-gird this? They needed a Messiah who would support and fight for what they had already concluded, taught, and built.

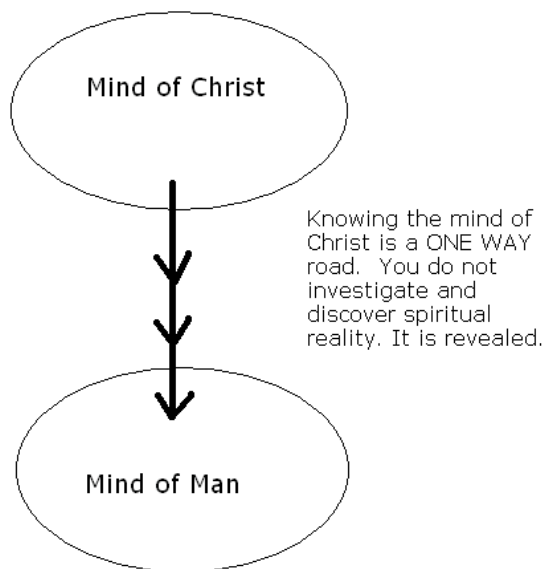
And so do we. We create our concept of Jesus, what it means to know Jesus, and we fall in love with that Jesus. All of this is possible for us as Christians. In fact, all of this is inevitable for us as Christians if we do not learn Christ first with a heart to know Him, and then according as the Spirit reveals Him.

And so I said all of that to say that before any true knowing of Him can begin, you must start by seeing that you know nothing at all. You must start and continue by realizing you know absolutely nothing apart from what He has revealed. I know that is an offense to the mind of man, but it is true.

And if you were to have said that to me a few years ago, I would have perhaps agreed but then naturally assumed that what I did know was, in fact, what He had revealed. But you cannot start with that assumption or you'll go nowhere. You cannot grow from there. In reality, everything I thought I came to know has stood in the way of truly knowing Him. And everything that He has indeed shown me only enlarges in my understanding as I continually refuse to pretend that I have arrived at an understanding of even what He has begun to show. In other words, I do not truly know anything that He hasn't shown me. And I have only ever just begun to know what He **has** shown me. And from there alone, do I offer Him good soil.

Knowing Him begins with realizing what you are, and more importantly, what you are not. Knowing Him begins with affirming that not only do you know nothing, but neither CAN you know anything apart from Him sharing His mind with you.

Diagram:



This is where it has to begin. It is not a coincidence that Jesus, on so many occasions, deals with this as a starting point. "the greatest in the kingdom are the least" "unless you become like a little child you will never see the kingdom of God" "unless you are converted and humble yourselves, etc" "Looking at the children he said the kingdom of God belongs to such as these". "I have some so that those who claim to see are made blind, and those who are blind will see".

Or Paul - [1Co 8:2](#) And if any man thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.

And this is essentially what Jesus is trying to get at in the famous beatitudes – despite all sorts of interpretations to the contrary. Basically, what He is saying is that, unless you realize that you are spiritually bankrupt, that you have nothing to offer, that you are in need of me to be made unto you all things...unless you hunger and thirst for what you know yourself not to be, unless you know yourself poor in spirit, and weak, and desperate, and discontent with all that the world wants to make you to be, and mourn over it, and ask, and seek, and knock, unless this describes you, then you have your reward already. But blessed are those who see all of this and long for more, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

It starts there. Knowing Him starts right there. And, growing up in Him means staying right there. Becoming like a child is not a phase that you graduate from. Becoming like a child is the only heart posture that offers any hope at all.

Luk 10:21 In that hour Jesus rejoiced in Spirit and said, I thank You, Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* sophisticated and cunning, and have revealed them to babes. Yes, Father, for so it was pleasing before You.

So, we'll stop there for today. It's a good place to stop. Next week we'll get into knowing Him in His death, becoming obedient unto death, being conformed to His death.