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Seeking God

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Knowing God is the essential pursuit of life. Now is time for the Lord to take his rightful place in our affections and be the object of our investigations. Now is time for God's people to be captivated by the Lord's infinite character and glorious works. "I want to know *Him*," needs to be the ambition which makes all other pursuits insignificant (Phil. 3:8-10).

It may seem strange to suggest that Christians need to consider Christ. Yet, religion has always been a respectable place to ignore God. We are constantly tempted to enthrone our own feelings and pursue our own pleasures. We end up with Christless churches filled to the brim with disciples of religious celebrities.

Is that off the mark? Just look what happens when a little "crisis" arises. We splinter in hundred directions! Why? Because we are more acquainted with our rights than God's ways. A pursuit of the knowledge of God vaccinates us against the sickness of self-worship which lies under a thin veneer of religious justification.

I wonder, could our faith survive the transition the early church made from popularity to persecution (Acts 2-8)? Do we have the courage to share the gospel and start a church in new city (Acts 8:4; 11:19-26)? Do we have the love to yield our rights to live in fellowship with others (1 Cor. 8:1-13)? Do we have the humility to serve someone vastly different from ourselves (Acts 6:1-7)? Or do we simply find a place *we* feel comfortable?

The solution to this Christless Christianity is to know the Lord. This is much more than knowing doctrines, traditions, and institutions. It is to launch into the inexhaustible journey to discover the nature of God.

This is possible because God made himself known to us. He placed his signature on Creation. He recorded his deeds and values in the Scripture. Ultimately, he modeled his ways in Jesus, "*the exact imprint of his nature*" (Heb. 1:3). God wants us to know Him! So, he says, "*Be still, and know that I am God*" (Psalm 46:10).

To do this requires a reorientation of our reading of Scripture. The primary purpose of revelation is not human happiness or church policy, it is to know God (Ex. 20:1; John 1:18; 5:39; *et al.*)! His glory engulfs each story. His power is to be praised. His character is to be embraced.

This focus spills over into our hymns, prayers and preaching where we speak more of God than self! We do this until we recognize God is on his throne and we are on our knees. Only then will we be rightly directed by what he says and reflect who he is.

Jesus prayed, "this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (John 17:3). Human movements often devolve from noble ideals into an arrogant struggle between personalities. The history of religion is no different. But rescue comes when we turn our eyes upward with a singular passion to know the Lord. This is the time to know Him!

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Thinking Beyond What is Written

by Heath Rogers

The members of the church in Corinth were enamored with their favorite preachers, so much so that they were dividing along these lines (1 Cor. 1:11-12). To help them beyond this error, Paul showed that he and Apollos (two of these “favorite” preachers) were nothing more than laborers, builders, and stewards in the important work of preaching the gospel (3:5-4:5).

Paul then says, “Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written...” (1 Cor. 4:6). An important principle is set forth in that passage that is too easily forgotten. We are not to think of anyone above what is written in Scripture. When it comes to determining God’s will, “what is written” must settle the matter for all of us.

Unfortunately, that is not always the case. I fondly remember preaching in a place where many of the members came to church with their Bibles and their copy of Johnson’s Notes. They were going to make sure I was preaching the truth - according to “what is written” by Johnson.

Some Christians have their favorite preachers. Unlike the Bereans, who searched the Scriptures to make sure Paul was teaching them the truth (Acts 17:11), they accept what these preachers say and write without ever making sure it is in harmony with “what is written” in the Bible. When challenged, they will defend their favorite preacher over “what is written.”

Some preachers are guilty of the same thing. They are big fans of various writers. Sometimes these educated writers set forth false doctrines in their books, but these false doctrines are accepted, defended, and spread by preachers over “what is written” in the Bible.

The only way to know and stand upon the truth, and thus to stand right before God, is to think of no person above what is written in the Bible. Where do you stand? *Knollwood Reminder*

The Sun

Has anyone missed seeing the sun? I recall while living and preaching in Wisconsin and enduring nine months of winter, a co-worker longing to see the sun. Consider below Moses’ blessings upon Joseph’s family.

Deuteronomy 33:13-17 And of Joseph he said: "Blessed of the LORD *is* his land, With the precious things of heaven, with the dew, And the deep lying beneath, **With the precious fruits of the sun**, With the precious produce of the months, With the best things of the ancient mountains, With the precious things of the everlasting hills, With the precious things of the earth and its fullness, And the favor of Him who dwelt in the bush. Let *the blessing* come 'on the head of Joseph, And on the crown of the head of him *who was* separate from his brothers.' His glory *is like* a firstborn bull, And his horns *like* the horns of the wild ox; Together with them He shall push the peoples To the ends of the earth; They *are* the ten thousands of Ephraim, And they *are* the thousands of Manasseh."

How much we do need the sun, which God spoke into existence. (Genesis 1:14) It is not hard to long for spring after an abundance of snow and ice, but Lord willing, spring is just around the corner and the “precious fruits of the sun” to feel our tables and hearts with gladness. How Great is our God!

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