

How to Know God (Uzziah)

The Beauty of Humility & the Danger of Pride

2 Chronicles 26

The King is Coming (2 Chronicles)

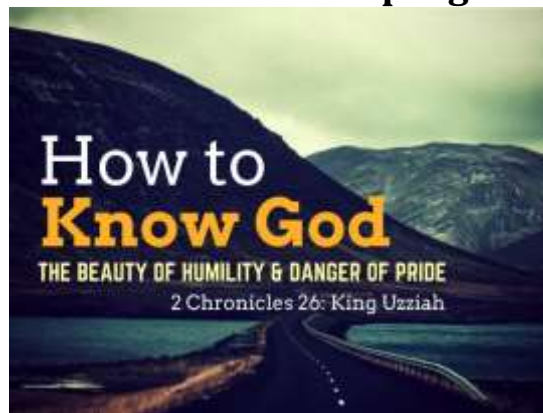
Prepared by: Matthew S. Black

Sunday, January 29, 2017, 10:30am at Living Hope Church of Roselle, Illinois

livinghopechurch.net

“That only is worth my having which I can have forever. That only is worth my grasping which death cannot tear out of my hand.”

~ Charles Haddon Spurgeon



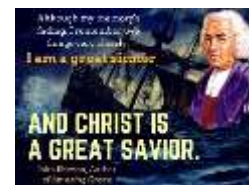
Open your Bible to **2 Chronicles**. We are in a 15-message series in the book of 2 Chronicles entitled “The King is Coming.” This morning we are looking at a message number eleven entitled: “Uzziah: How to Know God.”

Proposition: To know God is easy – come to Him in humble faith through Jesus Christ.

Introduction

If you know the Lord, you will think rightly about yourself. The person who truly knows the Lord walks in humility.

The Story of John Newton



Someone who knew this is John Newton. He said, “Although my memory's fading, I remember two things very clearly: I am a great sinner and Christ is a great Savior.”

John Newton was born July 24, 1725 in London to a Christian mother and an very rough

unbelieving father who was the captain of a slave ship.

By the time little John Newton was seven years old, his mother died, but not before she taught him the entire Westminster catechism. He had memorized vast amounts of Bible verses too.

Yet John rejected the religion of his mother, and instead joined his father at sea. He was trained as a seaman from age 11 to 18 on the slave ships. At age 18 he was drafted into British naval service. By the time he was 20 he was told to leave his naval ship and they abandoned him on an Island near Sierra Leone, West Africa where he was taken into slavery. For one year he starved and was beaten and almost died many times. But finally after a year, a friend of his father's found out he was there and freed him from bondage.

He went immediately back into the slave trade that was so horrific. He became the worst blasphemer and a murderer.

John Newton's job was shackle 500-600 African people into a ship of the most horrid conditions. Sickness would move through the ship and they would sit there in their own stench and vomit. Most of the time less than half made it across the ocean to America. At times some would be free for a time. But if they tried to escape, he would murder them. He would literally hack them to pieces.

This was a vile man who, after he left this evil business of human trafficking, said that he had "20,000 ghosts" that followed him. He could see their faces, but never knew their names.

Everything changed on March 21, 1748. There was a storm at sea. For days he tried to save the ship. During this time Newton had much time to ponder his soul. He thought he was going to die. It was on that day that he vowed to give his life to Jesus.

This very proud, hateful, murderous man became humble. He began to pray. He found a Bible and opened it and got help from Luke 11:13, which promises the Holy Spirit to those who ask. John Newton began to humble himself and call out the God he had denied. He now felt his heart warm, and he cried out to God for mercy. He called this day, his "Day of Great Awakening."

And God heard him and saved him.

God transformed him so much that he was man greatly used by the Lord, and we know him best for writing the famous Hymn:

*Amazing Grace how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost but now am found
Was blind but now I see.*

You may not know the story rest of the story. He dedicated his life to the Lord as a pastor, and he and William Wilberforce were used in the British Parliament to end the African slave trade in Britain.

God Can Save You

I want you to know that no matter who you are, God can save you. You may have cursed and mocked God all your life, but God can change you if you want Him.

John Newton was right. We need to remember two great things: "I am a great sinner and Christ is a great Savior."

Our Text: 2 Chronicles 26

Our text today is 2 Chronicles 26 where we read of a great king named Uzziah. The Bible says he came to know the Lord, and the Lord made him to prosper.

Lots of people say they know God. Knowing God is so much more than knowing about Him. I know about a lot of people and places.

My father has told me all about the old country in Scotland where my grandfather came from. I know about my Great Uncle Matthew Black there in the old country who I am named after. But I don't know him. I just know about him.

Lots of people know *about* God, but have never actually reached out to Him and said, "God I want to know you."

The message today is about how you can cross that divide. You can know God today. He loves you. He made you. He knows you better than you know yourself.

You may know about God today, but I want you to know Him, like you know your closest friend. You can know Him today.

To know God, you must...

I. Seek the Lord with a humble faith, (26:1-5).



We turn to **2 Chronicles 26:3-5**, "Uzziah was sixteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jecoliah of Jerusalem. 4 And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, according to all that his father Amaziah had done. 5 He set himself to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear of God, and as long as he sought the Lord, God made him prosper."

Uzziah sought the Lord with a humble heart. He "set himself to seek God" and even though he was king, he humbled himself in "the fear of God."

Spurgeon Quote on Humility



What does it mean to seek the Lord with a humble heart? Charles Haddon Spurgeon said, "The best definition of humility I ever heard was this – to think rightly of ourselves."

The Bible tells us that our main problem is that we are blind to our need for Jesus Christ because we are proud.

Definition of Humility



Humility is considered the proper attitude of human beings toward their Creator. Humility is the sincere acknowledgment of **absolute dependence** upon God.¹

God Opposes the Proud



James 4:8, we read: “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” If you don’t have a right view of yourself, and a right view of God, then God opposes you.

What is Pride and Humility?



What is pride? Pride is an unrealistic confidence in yourself. Humility is shifting your confidence from self to God.

Some absurd examples of unrealistic confidence in self would be

- Trying to perform heart surgery on myself.
- Giving me the controls of a Boeing 747 midair with no training.

All of these things would end up in tragedy. I would be sinfully proud to take up any one of these things. I made these examples absurd on purpose. But I want you to consider something that is much closer to home.

- Do you realize that the majority of people on earth are piloting something much more important than an airplane? What about your soul?
- It is sinfully proud to ignore the Lord’s voice calling you to Himself.
- It is unrealistic confidence in yourself do nothing with your soul. Be responsible with your soul and throw yourself upon Jesus.

¹ Elwell, W. A., & Comfort, P. W. (2001). In *Tyndale Bible dictionary* (p. 618). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

What is the proper view of ourselves?



Isaiah 64:8, “But now, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand.”

Romans 3:10-12, “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”

Romans 6:23, “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

We ought not think very highly of ourselves. We have been traitors to a loving God. But He has been merciful to us. We ought to think very highly of Him!

Psalms 124:8, “Our help is in the Name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.”

A Proper View

A proper view of ourselves is that we are sinners and all worthy of hell. It’s like John Newton said, “Amazing Grace how sweet the sound, that saved a **wretch** like me.”

CS Lewis Quote



C.S. Lewis, author of the Narnia series, said, “Humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less.”

In other words, it’s not “I’m so dumb...but actually it’s not to think of yourself at all.” Why? Because you are consumed with Someone infinitely greater and more inspiring than yourself, namely, the God who made you.

This is what Uzziah understood. His mind was not on himself. He set his heart to seek the Lord.

Your Whole Heart



Uzziah set himself to seek the Lord. The Lord does not make it hard for us to find Him. He says simply in **Jeremiah 29:13**, “You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.”

Coming to know God is not a half-hearted effort. You will only find Him if you put it all on the table. You can't just dip your foot in the water. You must jump with both feet into the deep end. God wants your all your heart!

Become Like Little Children



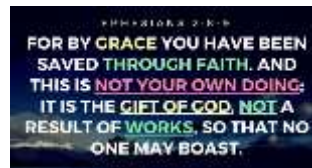
It's simple to come really. You must come helpless and humble like a little child. Jesus said, "Truly, unless you turn from your sins and become like little children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

To come to know God – truly know Him – you must be as helpless and humble as a child. My little Ava always needs help!

- She needs help cutting her food.
- She needs help getting dressed.
- She needs help getting buckled in the car.
- She needs help getting cleaned up to go to bed.

We are all just like Ava. We need God's help. We need Him to save us and wash us clean of all our sin. We cannot save ourselves. We must come helpless and humble as a child.

Come as a Child by Grace You are Saved!



Just come as a child, helpless and humble. Going to church doesn't save you. Doing good things does not save you. You must put your whole life in the trust of Jesus. You must believe that Jesus died for your sins. Nothing you do can save you.

The Bible says in **Ephesians 2:8-9**, "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast." Salvation is a free gift!" Come as a child and see the greatness of God. He can do something amazing. He can remove your sins.

Isaiah's Vision of God: An Example of True Humility



Another man that lived during the time of Uzziah was Isaiah. The Bible says in Isaiah 6:1ff, "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the

train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him stood the seraphim...” Look at verse 3, “And one called to another and said:

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory!”

Verse 5, look at Isaiah’s humble response to the vision of God, “I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!”

And Isaiah found cleansing for his sins. The angel declares to Isaiah: “your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for” (Isa 6:7).

He had a proper understanding of himself. Who am I in the presence of God?

God Welcomes Humble Sinners!



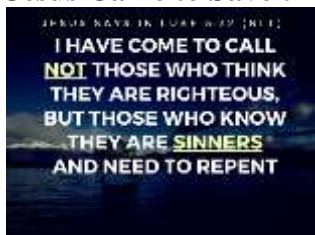
Isaiah 57:15 (NLT), “The high and lofty one who lives in eternity,
the Holy One, says this:

“I live in the high and holy place
with those whose spirits are contrite and humble.
I restore the crushed spirit of the humble
and revive the courage of those with repentant hearts.”

As a result of seeing God in His magnificent glory, Isaiah was totally devastated. But in Isaiah 57:15 this same infinitely holy and exalted One promises to dwell with those who are of a contrite and humble spirit, and to revive their hearts.² He promises to revive joy and courage for those who are humble and crushed and heartbroken. Heartbroken over what? Their sin! They have repentant hearts.

Most people are heartbroken over a loss of prosperity. A truly humble person sees the loss of his or her life and says, you know, I deserve that loss. I am a sinner.

Jesus Came to Save those Heartbroken Over Sin



Truly humble people are those who are heartbroken over their sin. They often think God will not forgive them because their sin is so great. They’ve seen the greatness of God, and as a result they see their sin as truly sinful and shameful and filthy. It is a great stain to the humble person

² Bridges, Jerry. The Blessing of Humility (Kindle Locations 198-202). NavPress. Kindle Edition.

who honestly looks at his or her life. But this is just the kind of person Jesus came to save.

Jesus said it this way in **Luke 5:32** (NLT), “I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners and need to repent.”

The Lord became Humble

Do you know the Lord became humble in order to save you? He “humbled Himself and became obedient unto death” in order to save you! The Father in heaven ordained it. Jesus went to the cross. The least you can do is come to Him today.

To know God, you must...

II. Serve the Lord with **amazing grace**, (26:5-15).



2 Chronicles 26:5, “He set himself to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear of God, and as long as he sought the Lord, God made him prosper.”

God Helped Uzziah



We read that God helped Uzziah.

In WAR: Verse 6-9, 11-14 – he helped him in war against all his enemies.

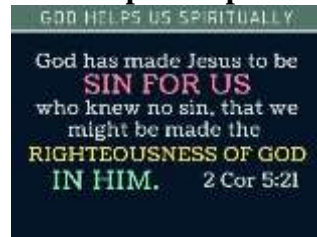
In FARMING: Verse 10 – he helped him in farming, “he had farmers and vinedressers in the hills and in the fertile lands, for he loved the soil.”

In INDUSTRY: Verse 15 – God helped Uzziah in industry. In verse 15, it says he had skillful men invent a catapult machine for war.

Verse 15b summarizes the point – God’s amazing grace was upon Uzziah, “And his fame spread far, for he was **marvelously helped**, till he was strong [became very powerful-(NLT)].” Uzziah was “marvelously helped.”

Every Child of God is “marvelously helped” by God. That’s why we call it “amazing” grace!

God Helps Us Spiritually



We are marvelously helped **spiritually**. Jesus substituted His life on the cross for us. **2 Corinthians 5:21**, “God has made Jesus to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” He exchanges your sin for His righteousness, so that on the day of Judgement, your record is expunged. It’s paid for on the Cross. And all Christ’s righteous deeds are written on your account. Wow! Amazing Grace!

God Helps Us Materially



We are marvelously helped **materially**. When we come to know Jesus we are God’s adopted children. He promises to take care of us. He says in **Philippians 4:19**, “And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” God promises to take care of you on this earth. He will provide for you. But then when we depart from this body, we will inherit the earth. We are promised to be “heirs of God” and “joint heirs with Jesus Christ.” Wow! Amazing Grace!

God Helps Us Eternally



We are marvelously helped **eternally**. Jesus says in **John 10:28**, “I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish...” To perish means to die eternally – to perish in the Lake of fire forever. God is not willing that any should perish. It is not His nature. God is love. And yet He is holy. If He is good, He must meticulously judge sin. If you trust in Christ you will never perish, but have “eternal life.” What does that mean?

Here’s the ultimate statistic: 10 out of 10 people die. You are part of that statistic. But for the child of God, death is dead. The grave is defeated. Death is an entrance into life for the child of God.

The New Heaven and New Earth. There will one day be a new heaven and a new earth that become one. There will be cities and music, and most importantly, the Lamb of God will give the light. There will be no sin. And there will be no night there. We’ll never get tired. There will be

no more tears. He'll give us a new body that doesn't ache. We won't need to go to the doctor. What a day that will be. Wow! Amazing Grace!

Spurgeon Quote



Charles Haddon Spurgeon said, “That only is worth my having which I can have forever. That only is worth my grasping which death cannot tear out of my hand.”

Piper Quote



What do you have that will last forever? Nothing unless you have Christ. John Piper said it well, “There are no U-Haul’s behind hearses.”

To know God, you must...

III. Keep yourself from a **sinful pride**, (26:16-23).



2 Chronicles 26:16-23, “But when he was strong, he grew proud, to his destruction. For he was unfaithful to the Lord his God and entered the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense. 17 But Azariah the priest went in after him, with eighty priests of the Lord who were men of valor, 18 and they withstood King Uzziah and said to him, “It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the Lord, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Go out of the sanctuary, **for you have done wrong, and it will bring you no honor from the Lord God.” 19 Then **Uzziah was angry**. Now he had a censer in his hand to burn incense, and when he became angry with the priests, **leprosy broke out on his forehead in the presence of the priests in the house of the Lord**, by the altar of incense. 20 And Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and behold, he was leprous in his forehead! And they rushed him out quickly, and he himself hurried to go out, because the Lord had struck him. 21 And **King Uzziah was a leper to the day of his death**, and being a leper lived in a separate house, for he was excluded from the house of the**

Lord. And Jotham his son was over the king's household, governing the people of the land.

22 Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, from first to last, Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz wrote. 23 And Uzziah slept with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the burial field that belonged to the kings, for they said, “**He is a leper.**” And Jotham his son reigned in his place.”

Review of Pride vs. Humilty



Remember, **Pride** is an **unrealistic**, and really **reckless confidence in yourself**. **Humility** is joyfully **shifting your confidence from your self to God**. It's saying: God I'm done piloting my life. I'm done making the choices with my own fallen wisdom. I am now depending and trusting in you. That's humility.

God Opposes the Proud



Remember **James 4:8**, “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

As Uzziah's success grew, he got too big for his britches. His head and heart swelled with sinful pride. That's not a good place to be. God had to deal with him and gave him disease that makes you lose feeling in your flesh. That's a good illustration of what pride does.

We should be tender that one day we are going to meet our maker. That should make us have tender, humble, submissive hearts. Pride rejects confidence in God and puts confidence in self.

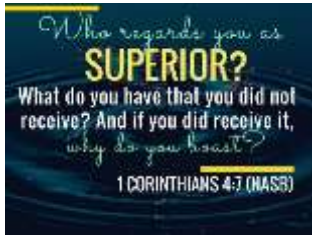
Pride Leads to Destruction



Proverbs 18:16 says it well, “Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall.” Pride never gets us where we want to be.

What Makes You Superior?

We really have nothing to boast in do we? Everything we have has been given to us. Perhaps you are tempted to boast in your intellect or your skill, or your good looks. How gave you your brain to think? Who gave you your body to work? Who gave you your looks? Everything you have is from God.



1 Corinthians 4:7 (NASB), “For who regards you as superior? [i.e. What makes you so special] What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?”

Boast in the Cross of Christ



The truth is the only thing we should boast in is the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. St. Paul said in **Galatians 6:14**, “May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” Everything I have is because of the blood of Jesus. Without Jesus, I would lose my soul and perish in hell.

God Hardened Uzziah’s Skin so His Heart Would be Soft

The Lord hardened Uzziah’s skin so that his heart would be humbled and soft again. We read here that King Uzziah forgot where all his blessing came from, and he became proud. He was no longer humble like a little child. He was acting as if he himself had designed his own success. So the Lord was merciful to Uzziah and gave him leprosy.

Yes. I said it. God was merciful. It is merciful for God to humble us from our pride. It is destructive for us to continue in pride.

God sent this trial of leprosy which hardened his skin so that Uzziah’s heart would remain soft. God has a purpose in the trials He brings us.

Trials Help Us Grow in Christlike Humility



James shows us that trials help us grow in Christlike humility and perseverance. James 1:2-

4, “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”

More Important How You Finish

One thing Uzziah learned in all of this. It’s more important how you finish than how you start.



It seems Uzziah didn’t finish well. He had reigned 42 years, and the last 10 years of his life, he lived as a leper while his son Jotham reigned as King in his place.

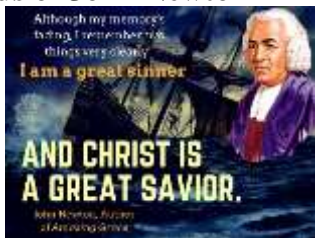
And yet, God was making sure that Uzziah finished well. He had hardened skin, but a soft heart.

How to End Well (Conclusion)

How is your heart? I want to close assuring you that if you will soften your heart and give your heart and life to Christ, you will end better than you have begun, no matter what happens.

I know that I will end well. I know that when I stand before Christ, he will say, “Well done good and faithful servant.” How do I know that? Because I’m good in and of myself. No! I just a wretched sinner saved by grace.

Words of John Newton



Remember the words of John Newton. He said, “Although my memory's fading, I remember two things very clearly: I am a great sinner and Christ is a great Savior.”

My Testimony

I know this one thing. That Jesus Christ can save anyone. He saved me. It was September of 1989, and I was in a meeting with thousands of young people. The man at the front said, “If you all the other people on earth were perfect, and you were the only sinner, Jesus loved you so much that He would have gladly died for you.”

Can I say, when He died on the cross he knew your name. He knew he would create you. And he will receive all who come to Him. He said, “whoever comes to me I will never turn away” (Jn 6:37).

If you came to Jesus and he turned you away today, it would be the first time. He says, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Mt 11:28).

That night the man said, “If you don’t stand for something you’ll fall for anything.” I decided that night to commit my life to Christ, and it’s made all the difference.

I’m so far from perfect. I’m a wretched sinner. But my God is faithful. And no matter what happens I remember two things.

**I am a great sinner, and
Christ is a great Savior!**

Come to Him today and He will give you eternal life. You will not be disappointed!