

GOD!

MESSAGE 3

Scripture: Jeremiah 10:1-10, 9:23-24

INTRO: We have been looking at the subject of God, the greatest subject matter to be considered ever, anywhere, and by anyone. The very first verse in the Bible speaks of God and His great creation act. The last verse in the Bible speaks of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and every verse of the Bible, from the first to the last is inspired by the Holy Spirit.

In the last message we sought to answer this question: Who is God? We considered three of four points. First, how do we know there is a God? Well, we answered with the Catechism that we can know there is a God from nature, the conscience and the Bible. Second, we answered how God is revealed, and He is revealed in both general and special revelation reveal. We called that the world book and the Word book. Third we answered who is revealed in the world book and the Word book, and that is Jahwey God or Jehovah God, the God revealed as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The only one and true God. The only One who is God by His very nature, His very being! And this morning we are to answer this question: How can we know Him?

Then, having answered the question from a Christian perspective, Who is God? we want to change gears a bit and begin to answer this question: Why did God create man? So let us see how we can know Him.

D. How We Can Know Him

I told you last message about a modern book called, "The God you Can Know." That is a true title and a most incredible fact. This Almighty God, this God of all gods, this Lord of all lords, this sovereign of the universe is a God you can get to know personally. Not only that, but He wants a personal relationship with you. And you can get to know Him better and better, and better. And the better you know Him, the more fulfilled your life will be, even though it may be filled with trials. And, the better you know Him, the more you will trust Him. And it is my great privilege as a preacher of the Gospel, to tell you how you can know Him. I know that most of you know Him, but we may have those who do not know Him, and

some who do not know Him may listen to these messages over internet or CD. But let me add as well, you and I may know Him in salvation, but how well do we know Him in sanctification? How well do you and I know Him as a Person?, and a Person He is.

Is it possible to know God intimately and personally? Is it possible for mere man to enter a relationship with Almighty God? Will Almighty God, stoop down, and enter a relationship with man? Will a thrice holy God enter a relationship with man who is a sinner? Let me read a few Scriptures for you. Ponder these and marvel at them!

1 Chronicles 28:9 "As for you, my son Solomon, **know the God of your father**, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever." Here God Almighty instructs Solomon to know Him. Now God would not do that if it was not possible.

Now listen to Jeremiah 9:22-23 "Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty *man* glory in his might, Nor let the rich *man* glory in his riches; 24 But let him who glories glory in this, **That he understands and knows Me, That I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight**, says the LORD." You see, of all the things there are to glory in, in this world, none exceeds glorying in knowing and understanding God Almighty. I trust this concept will grab and grip your heart until you have one desire above all others, and that is to know and understand God, and then to glory in that knowledge above all other glories.

Listen to 2 Peter 1:2 "Grace and peace be multiplied to you **in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord...**" Man's two greatest needs, in my understanding, are grace and peace. And as one's knowledge of God grows, so grace and peace is multiplied in the heart of man. Are you given to worry? Are you given to discouragement? Do you get down on yourself? There is a solution! Get to know God, and then get to know Him

better and better, and grace and peace will be multiplied to you!

Let me remind you once more of John 17:3, a verse that equates the phrase 'eternal life' *aiownios zwee*, with knowing God. You see, when I say I have what the NT calls eternal life, my life better be coming more and more in line with the will of God or I am a liar. If I have eternal life, I have the kind of life that knows God, and the life that knows God must grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and my life must be becoming more godly all the time. If I say I have eternal life and live in known wrong, and keep living in it, I will not live with God forever and ever, that is very clear from Scripture.

A good many years ago I heard a short clip of a message done by Dr. S. M. Lockridge. He was introducing the Lord Jesus Christ. And this introduction describes briefly, One of the three Persons of the Trinity, and several times Dr. Lockridge asks this question: Do you know Him. Listen to him now:

Dr. S. M. Lockridge.

Dr. Lockridge said this: "Do you know Him? I wonder if you know Him today? I wonder if you know Him? Do you know Him?" I wonder this morning, do you know Him? If you do, He is your Savior. And if you know Him as your Savior, I wonder do you know Him as being your sanctifier? You see, you can get to know Him as your Savior in a moment, but to know Him as your sanctifier takes a life-time.

Now, it is important that we understand that we do not automatically know God, nor do we know Him because our parents know Him or because we go to church or even because we have been baptized and become church members. You see, the very first thing we must understand is that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. And once we sin we cut off from God and we cannot know him. Sin, shorts out any possible relationship with God. When we sin, we are lost and cut off from God. And if we die in this state, we go to hell. There are no exceptions. That

is why the Bible says, "The soul that sins shall die."

Second, we must understand that this God we are talking about, sent His only Son into the world to become man, and as man He endured all the things we endure, yet never sinned. And in the end He was crucified in our place. When we repent of our sins and receive Christ as our Savior, God's anger against us is satisfied by His death and His shed blood on our behalf. So when we repent of our sins and receive Him as our Savior, the Lord Jesus removes our sins and gives His righteousness to us. The moment this happens, we have come to know God, even though it is very much on a beginner's level. That is what Dr. Lockridge meant when he said, "Do you know Him?"

Now when we get saved, as we put it, we know Him in a very small way, but this knowledge is to begin to grow. Listen to this from 2 Peter 3:17-18, "You therefore, beloved, since you know *this* beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory both now and forever. Amen." So once we know Him, then it is to grow and grow and grow. And when we die and go to heaven, we will grow and grow and grow in this knowledge. And then when the millennium comes we will grow and grow and grow in our knowledge of Him. And then when the new heavens and new earth are in place, then we will only have begun to grow in Him. And then, for all eternity, we will grow in our knowledge of Him and we will never, never come to the place where we completely know Him. This is God!

In this life, our growth happens mainly through getting to know His Word. God is revealed in a great way in creation, but in the Bible He is revealed in a much greater way. Our knowledge of Him can increase through nature or creation, but the major part of growth comes through His Word, the Bible. Bible studies; personal devotions; personal Bible reading; church attendance, all of these are important to our growth in the knowledge of God. And the more we know Him, the greater our trust in Him will be. And I believe when we dwell on the new earth, we will still

learn to know Him through the Bible. I believe we will study the Bible for all eternity, and we will never fully grasp it all. There will always be new things to learn, and we will never, never tire of learning to know God better. But then we will learn to know Him because He will be here on earth, in Jerusalem, where He will dwell with man forever and ever! Incredible, is it not?

All those who do not know this God, are dead, yes, spiritually dead! I have heard of people who do not want to go to heaven. Why? Because it will be boring, so they think. All you do there, they say, is praise God and say He is holy. I am afraid many people who are Christians cannot understand how we could enjoy heaven because all we will be doing is casting our crowns before the Lord and praising God and telling Him He is holy. When such is our understanding, our minds are dull and dim to an understanding of what it means to know God!

So what is man's problem? Job 36:26 states our problem like this, "Behold, God is great and we know Him not." Do you know Him? Today is the day to get to know God. And if you do not get to know Him by the time you die, you will spend eternity in hell fire. But as a Christian, do you know God in His character? His attributes? His essence? I challenge you to learn to know God. To do that, you will have to go to this book again and again and again.

Now I want to take us to heaven for a brief time. To do that, turn with me to the Book of Revelation where we will read the fourth chapter (read chapter 4). Here we have the highest created beings in all the universe, beings who have existed with God since the angels were created. We do not know with certainty if they were created before the heavens and the earth, but I believe they were. If that is so, we do not know how long, but it could have been millions of years. We do not know. And here, in the book of Revelation, John has been transported in the spirit ahead to the day of the Lord, the tribulation period. And after all that time since their creation, whether that be 6000 years or 6 million, they have never tired of saying, "Holy, holy, holy." So they come before God again and again and say, "Holy, holy,

holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come." Now these highly intelligent beings, who have not been wound up like a clock, but are free moral agents with an intelligence that may far exceed our own in some ways, have in all this time never lost the sense of being overpowered by the awe they feel in the presence of God Almighty!

Then in verses 9-11, we have human beings who have gone to heaven. No doubt these are a representative group, of maybe twenty four of the highest Christians of the Church age, or possibly 12 of the highest Jewish elders and 12 of the highest church elders, and they have been in heaven a long time and they just burst out in new praise. They are seeing the Almighty in ways they had never dreamed of before. Notice that from what they have seen and heard and learned they say that the Lord is worthy to receive #1 glory, #2 honor, and #3 power. Slowly, in my own mind, I am beginning to grasp what it means to know God! Oh, how incredible! We Christians, for the most part I think, do not know what it means to give the Lord glory, or honor or power, never mind know and understand that He is worthy to receive those things. Oh, we know intellectually that He is worthy to receive these things, but we do not know it experientially! If we but grasped how worthy He is of these things, we would do them more. Very few Christians could explain to you what it means to give Him glory, or what it means to give Him honor, or what it means to give Him power. What do you mean, "Give God power"? Does He not have all power? Oh but we are dim and dull in our comprehension of this one great Almighty God!

And why is He worthy to receive all this? Because He created all things! Stop and ponder that for a moment! And not only did He create all things, He created them by His will, and they continue to exist by His will. Oh, the wonder of what lies in this passage!

Now look at chapter 5 (read 1-4). Well, what is so big about that? Look at 5:1-4. There is a book in the hand of God that no one was found worthy to open. Its contents must remain shut up to man. But look at verse 5 (read). You see, these 24 elders have learned

to know God. They know this Jesus who is the lion of the tribe of Judah. They understand the symbolism of the OT and who Jesus is in light of that. Not only is He the lion of the tribe of Judah, but He is the Root of David. Ah, that was prophesied too, was it not? Now look at verses 6-7 (read).

So we go on to verse 8 (read). Notice that these four living creatures, the highest created beings in heaven, and the 24 elders all have harps. You know what is coming. Harps are for music. But not only do they have harps, but they have golden bowls full of incense. Notice that they each have a harp, singular; but they have bowls, plural. And I want you to notice what is in these bowls. The incense, the sweet smell causing ingredients are the prayers of saints. Now why would he mention that here? Could it be that the prayers of the Christians throughout the ages now give the Lord Jesus the right to open this book? Is it not amazing that God has collected the prayers of the saints throughout the ages in bowls, and they are here brought out?

And then a chord on the harps is struck and a song that has never been sung before is sung. And they sang a new song. Now I want you to listen to the words of A.W. Tozer that I have read for you earlier in these messages but note them here especially: "When you look at the hymnody of Wesley, Montgomery and Watts, it was 'Thou art, O God, thou art.' But when you look at the modern hymns it is 'I am, I am, I am.' It makes me sick to the stomach. Occasionally a good hymn with testimonies is all right, but we've overdone it. The song of the ransomed is going to be 'Thou art worthy, O God.'"

So let us see if Tozer is right by reading verses 9-10 (read). You see, the central theme of this new song is, "Thou art", not "I am".

Let me just add here that I do not believe all songs need to be about God. Colossians 3:16 instructs Christians to sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. That is a wide range of Christian songs. But today there is an over abundance of songs that breed what I might call 'meism'. Did you know the pronoun 'I' is the Greek word ego? We get our word ego and a

host of other self centered words from this word. So in our singing, surely some stress should be placed on singing about God.

Now let us read verses 11-14 (read). Now you see, it is the very things man seeks for himself, that are to be ascribed to God. We want praise and power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and on and on. But there is a very important word that runs throughout these 2 chapters and it is the word worthy. It occurs seven times in this book, and six are found in these two chapters. And this word worthy is the word axios, meaning a weight. I see it as a weight on a weigh scale. So put man on a weigh scale, and then put receiving honor or glory or power etc... on the other side and it would never be equal. But put the Lord on one side of the scale, and put each of the things listed here on the other side one after another, and the scale would always balance! He is worthy!

Now I want to tell you something else. Any Christian who cannot yet see the thrill and the wonder and the glory of learning new things about God and expressing this to Him in praise or worship has a great need to grow in his or her Christian experience. Such a Christian is still quite poor, quite blind, quite unseeing and quite unfeeling. He must go on in life and meet new circumstance after new circumstance read more and more Scripture so that some day his eyes will be opened to the wonder of true praise and worship. When you get to know God, and you get to know Him better, you have entered into the highest capacity of man, that which God made man for.

I will tell you what I believe one of the major problems of modern Christianity is. Let me express it in the words of Tozer. Here is what he said, "When you look at the hymnody of Wesley, Montgomery and Watts, it was 'Thou art, O God, thou art.' But when you look at the modern hymns it is 'I am, I am, I am.' It makes me sick to the stomach. Occasionally a good hymn with testimonies is all right, but we've overdone it. The song of the ransomed is going to be 'Thou art worthy, O God.'"

CONCL: So let us conclude this message by a reminder that today, you can get to know God if you do not already know Him. I mean getting to know Him in salvation. But getting to know God in salvation is like being introduced to someone. Someone says, "This is pastor Phil Schlamp. Phil, this is John Henry". And I say, "Which Henry family is he from?" And I am told something like this: "Do you know the Henrys that used to live in such and such a place. Actually, I married your cousin on your Dad's side, the one they knew as "dee krietzuuga Schlamp." And then I say, "Oh, yes, now I get the connection."

So now I have met this person, but how much do I know about him? Is he kind, or nice or etc... etc... None of those things I know yet. Now let us say I talk for five minutes with this person. Now let us say I meet you and you say, "By the way, do you know so and so?" And I say, "Yes, I know him." You see, I have met this person and I know who he is talking about, but do I really know him? That is like getting to know God in salvation.

But let us say we spend some time together, or work together with this man, here is where I get to know him better. That is like getting to know God in sanctification. You have to spend time together with God to truly get to know Him and there is the greatest problem of Christianity. So Elihu, in Job 36:26 states our problem like this, "Behold, God is great and we know Him not."