

Knowing God

*And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true
God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.
John 17:3*

People can search for a long time for some missing piece they thought essential, without ever knowing they have found it. The missing piece could be a part of a treasure-map, or then again, a jig-saw puzzle or perhaps that missing piece of a clock you were restoring.

It may be just a little piece but it can leave a big hole in the final picture, the restoration of which you want to be proud.

Human life without God can leave a great big vacuum which only He can fill. You may try some substitute but no one fits the puzzle except God.

O to be a sure, people have tried to construct a god of their own making. In fact people have been busy with that throughout the ages. Yet without the one true God there is really no true life, no eternal life.

Jesus however did so, He prayed, *“This is eternal life, that they know you the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” (John 17:3)*

Yet there are those who dismiss and reject this eternal life which is the possession of those who truly know God and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. *“After all “they say, “We live in this post-modern world and every community as well as every individual has his or her own construct of what and who God might be. No construct or story is more true than another. “*

Yet the missing piece must be found so ,people will supply their own. It might be family or one’s vocation. For not a few financial security is

the missing piece. Once you have that you can say, “ Eureka, I have found it.”

There’s a whole subculture today that would elevate beauty or good looks, physical ability and standing in sport or entertainment as the things to strive for and gain. For then if you have that standing or that trophy you can say, “ *Heh man, that is life.* “ Though a debilitating illness can put you in the hospital next day with the doctor’s prognosis being, “ *You’re really close to death!*”

Foolish people who might spend a lifetime idolizing their bodies although not being able to add even part of a day to one’s life. Seriously considered those who strive after wind are really living in the dark.

O did I hear one of them say, “ *But look idolatry, like smallpox and polio has been eradicated*”. *We don’t have wooden and stone idols cluttering up lives and communities anymore.* “ *Besides, we are the world. We’re in charge of our own destiny so who really needs that religious stuff, anyway.*

Mind you, for all man’s achievements in science, technology, and the unraveling of the DNA molecule there are not a few scourges that stand in the way of perfection. There is still an awful lot of superstition and fear. Man’s modern knowhow has not wiped war and terrorism off the earth. Selfishness, as well as psychosomatic illnesses are as destructive today as the bubonic plague was yesteryear.

The fact is there is no substitute for knowing God. Not if you truly want to live and have true life. Sure, there’s a universal cry around that shouts in your ear, “ *Get a life why don’t you.*” Meaning, “ *Get with the current morality, the live-it-up and let-it-all-hang-out way of life.*” “ *O.K. don’t overdo it, gamble on life responsibly*’ (what ever that’s supposed to mean) *but just enjoy yourself. After all you live a few decades and then the curtain falls. That’s the way it is.... with life!*”

While he was on earth Jesus prayed that beautiful prayer we find recorded in John 17. He asked His Father that his followers might know both that Father as well as himself, Jesus Christ.

In the bible *to know God* is much more than being acquainted let us say, with his name and His words. It's more than knowing of him and having a few facts at your fingertips concerning Jesus and what he came to do.

To know God is really to love him and to live in very close fellowship with him. Jesus himself once said, "*I know my sheep and they know me*" (John 10:27). Jesus died for his sheep and he was resurrected for them. He returns on the clouds of heaven for them and he promised to protect, to comfort and to abide with them always.

And those sheep? They are heard not only to confess the name of God rather than blaspheming him. They are heard to say and to live out of this confession: "*I know that my Redeemer (that's Jesus) lives.* Even children of believing households will sing, "*I love the LORD the found of life and grace.*"

God loves to be known as your and my Creator and re-Creator. The God who governs all things and is able and willing to turn evil to our good. Very young children who bow before the LORD will sing , "*Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.*"

That must be your and my confession. For it is the Good News of God that has dawned upon the world in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah. The bible is God's infallible Word and it bears clear testimony to the wonders of what Jesus Christ has done. God's Son became a servant to save the world. While he was on earth he said, "*No one comes to the Father but by me*" (John 14:6). When people looked to Him for salvation He did save them. When they could not save themselves, He died for them. Here is the truth, "*This is eternal life that you and I may know Him the only true God and Jesus Christ, sent by the Father.*"

Before long we may celebrate the day when Jesus Christ went back home to His Father. ¹ In His prayer in John 17 Jesus said to that Father, “ I have glorified you on earth, for I completed the work You gave me to do. *Now glorify me Father, with the glory I had with you before the world began.*” (John 17 : 5)

This Jesus Christ is not a killjoy! He doesn't drain the pleasure out of life. No he *restores* life - even your life and mine, to what it was intended to be. No he doesn't use gimmicks of magic potions. But he does insist on faith, on genuine faith for without that faith it is impossible to please him. (Hebrews 7) Yet also this faith is his gracious gift. All you need to do is to ask for it. As you listen to His Word and take it to heart, you will come to see how great this God and this life that he offers, is!

Knowing God and seeing Him in the face of Jesus Christ is a matter of both the head and the heart. It is not just some intellectual exercise. Nor do you have to wait until this life is done to receive external life. O no! This is eternal life that you know God and you believe in Jesus. That means eternal life come to people righty here and now.

When you believe in God and in His Son then his mercy and goodness with forgiveness for the past and his promise for the future wash away all those things which clutter up one's life, making it a mess. But the big things: love joy, peace, patience, kindness, faithfulness and self-control begin to stand out. These are the gifts of the Spirit, which He, the Spirit will pour out in your life.

The reformer Martin Luther, who was instrumental in God's bringing about what is known as the Great Protestant Reformation once made this one-sentence declaration of his faith in Jesus Christ saying:

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God,

¹ Ascension Day

*begotten of the Father from eternity
and also true man,
born of the Virgin Mary
Is my Lord;
Who has redeemed me
a lost and condemned creature,
Purchased and won me from
All sin and death that I might be His own
and might live under Him in His kingdom and
Might serve Him in everlasting peace and joy.....
This is most certainly true ²*

*Dear listeners, surely this is life that claimed by Him, sure of Him,
trusting Him, that He will come through with what He's promised,*

*Yes, "This is eternal life to know God, the Only True God, and Jesus
Christ whom He has sent. " Amen, and thanks for being
with us today.*

² quoted by Dr. O. Hoffman in "Do You Know Him?" a Lutheran Hour message of Oct. 25, 1981.