

"Knowing Christ"

How well do you know the Jesus Christ revealed in the New Testament? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders. And this is a Bible study, "In SEARCH of the Lord's Way." Some think they know Jesus, but do they really? Stay with us and find out.

Welcome to In Search of the Lord's Way. We're here to search God's word for the Lord's way. And one way to know someone is to pay attention to what he says and does. The Bible reveals the words and the actions of God through history. And we can't know everything about God, because He's infinite, but because of the Scriptures we can know some things that He has revealed. We can know His will, and how to please Him. And pleasing God is our passion. We're delighted that you spend this time with us. And we want to be a part of your life each week.

Today is a good day to evaluate your relationship with Jesus Christ. How well do you really know the Lord? Many know some facts about Jesus. They know He was born in Bethlehem, taught great moral lessons, died on the cross, and was resurrected. Many realize that He's coming again to judge the world. But how well do you know the heart of the Lord Jesus? Do you know His teaching, what He stood for, and what He called sin? Do you know what He valued, and what He loved, and what He despised? Do you call Him your friend? Does He think of you as His friend?

Some people dream up a Christ they want rather than understand the Jesus Christ of the Bible. They want a Christ who is all grace and no repentance. They want a Christ who is like a genie in a bottle but has no expectations of them and no restrictions on them. The Christ they want, however, is not the Christ revealed in the New Testament. Don't you want to know Christ for who He really is? Do you know the Lord Jesus as well as you'd like? How committed are you to a better knowledge of Christ?

Now we offer an opportunity for you to learn more about Christ, and it's free. If you'd like a printed copy of our program, and then mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also stream this program on our website at www.searchtv.org and on YouTube.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Hebrews 2:1 to 4, and explore what it means to know Christ.

Our reading today is from Hebrews 2:1 to 4, and in this passage we have a writer who is addressing a group of people who have become dull of hearing. "For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we've heard, so that we do not drift away from it. For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His will." Oh we have an important message given to us and we must pay much closer attention lest we drift away from it.

Let's pray. "Father, help us to be devoted to Your word, to listen and pay attention to the things that You have said lest we drift away. And Father help us always to love You, to love one another, and to love the truth. In Jesus name we pray, Amen."

Deuteronomy 29:29 says, "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." God's Word is a marvelous gift to help us understand. It provides God's wisdom, His efforts to save us, and

His inexhaustible love for us. The Bible provides an unsurpassed moral law, helping to bring out the very best in us. The Lord Jesus said in John 6:63, that “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.” Jesus came to give us life, and the way we come to know about and enjoy that life is through His words.

God’s word is a treasure. It comes as a unique, written revelation from the true and living God. Nothing else compares. The Bible is inspired and inerrant, because God who gave it is Divine and infallible. David wrote in Psalm 19 verses 7 to 11, that “The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is your servant warned; and in keeping them there is great reward.”

The more you study the Bible, the more you see God’s greatness and wisdom! Romans 11:33 to 36 says, “Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor? Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid? For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.”

Neglecting to study God’s Word will cheat you out of a storehouse of wisdom and knowledge. People study what they think is significant. One day the most significant matter will be where our souls spend eternity. And it won’t matter what’s in the bank, where we live, or what position we have. What will matter is our relationship with the Lord and whether we belong to Him. Now this book, the Bible, opens up the way to eternal life, so we must treasure it up in our hearts.

Now some Christians study a little but never get as deep into the Word as they ought. The writer of the book of Hebrews saw that some Christians were drifting in their faith and lacking commitment—much like they do today. And he said in Hebrews 5:12 to 14, “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.” Studying the Word gives us the wisdom to know what will bless us and what will hurt us spiritually.

The prophet Jeremiah reveals God’s values. Jeremiah 9:23 to 24 says, “Thus says the LORD, ‘Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice, and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,’ declares the LORD.”

Knowing Christ was more important to Paul than anything else. Paul defended himself against some Jewish Christians who criticized him by revealing his Jewish background. And he said in Philippians 3:3 to 6, “for we are the true (speaking of the Jews, the true) circumcision (excuse me, not the Jews but the Christians), (we are the true circumcision) who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ, (Christ) Jesus and we put no confidence in the flesh, although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.”

Now these were not small matters to a Jew. And being a Hebrew of Hebrews meant he retained his dedication to Law, even though he grew up in a Greek city. He spoke Hebrew and was a student of the great Jewish teacher, Gamaliel. Paul was a Jew to his very core. But Paul, as he, even though he could boast of a deep and spotless Jewish record; this really meant nothing to him. He wanted Christ!

Paul said in Philippians 3:7 to 11, “But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I’ve suffered the loss of all things and counted them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, no, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.” What are you willing to give up to know Jesus Christ? At the resurrection, you’ll wish you had done like the apostle Paul and had given up everything to know Christ.

How can we know Jesus Christ? Well, you won’t know Him by simply reasoning on your own. Some think they can know God by observing nature. Oh, I love the great outdoors, the woods, and the lakes. One can learn a few things about God from nature. Romans 1:18 to 20 says: “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.”

Oh yes, nature teaches us there is an all-knowing, all powerful, all-wise God, who created the universe to bless, but nature cannot teach us what we need to know about Him as a person or how to be saved and have eternal life. 1 Corinthians 1:21 says, “For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached (the message preached) to save those who believed.” God gave us this message by the preaching of the apostles, and he gave it to us to save us. And we must know the Lord’s message to know the Lord.

Romans 10:14 to 17 says, “How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they’re sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!’ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?’ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ (or the word of God).” Now the more you study, the deeper your faith will be and the better you’ll know Christ.

John 20:30 to 31 says, “Now Jesus did many other signs (that is miracles) in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” While the Bible does not reveal everything Jesus did or said, it is sufficient to lead us to faith and to eternal life.

Again, 1 John 5:11 to 13 says, “And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; and whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.” The word of God is dependable. It gives us the most important knowledge we’ll ever need, the knowledge of how to gain eternal life in heaven.

So, we must learn all we can about the Lord. Luke praised the Bereans in Acts 17 verse 11. Whenever he said, "Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so." They wanted to know the truth about Jesus, so they examined the Scriptures to find the truth. They were not content merely to hear what was said; they checked Paul out. And we too must examine the things that we hear to determine if they are true to God's Word. Now many people just accept what some preacher or their church says. And they don't realize this might lead them into error or give them false hope.

You see, the devil loves to pretend he is religious and he counterfeit's Christianity. Paul dealt with people who claimed to be apostles but were frauds. He explained in 2 Corinthians 11:13 to 15, "For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, they disguised themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it's no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds." Now these false apostles exploited the people, trying to get them to follow their deceitful ways and false teaching. The devil is not your friend, he's never been your friend; and he'll do anything to keep you from knowing the truth of the gospel. Can you distinguish the real Jesus Christ from the fraudulent Satan? What some criticize in religion didn't come from Jesus but came from Satan.

The Lord Jesus exposed the devil in John 8:44. The Lord said "He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies." The devil tells lies that people buy into and follow. And people who don't study as they ought can easily embrace a half-truth.

Now this explains why Paul urged Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:15 to "Be diligent (King James says to study) to (be diligent to) present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth." We must know the Word well enough to separate what it says, when and how it speaks, and what is the context. We must handle the truth accurately and not be persuaded by people who don't know what is in the Bible or what applies to Jews in the Old Testament and what applies to Christians in the New.

If we fail to study God's word, we may fall for the devil's lies and be deceived. Now while some say it doesn't matter what you believe, the Bible always, always, always makes what we believe vitally important to our souls. The Lord expects us to search the Scriptures so that we might know the truth. And so I ask you, are you studying God's Word daily? Are you listening to the things that it teaches? Do you know the books of the Bible? Have you really looked into the things in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, to know about the character of Jesus? Have you understood how the church began by studying the book of Acts? Have you read through the epistles of Paul, and the general epistles from Hebrews up through Jude? And have you looked at the book of Revelation? Do you know the word of God, and are you close to Him?

Let's pray together. "Heavenly Father we're thankful for Your love, we're thankful for Your word, that teaches and blesses our lives. And Father we pray that in all things we may come to love You more and more, to serve You freely from a full heart, and to be the kind of people who glorify Your name. May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen."

Some who claim to know Christ don't really know Him. Here is how Scripture determines who knows Christ. 1 John 2 verses 3 to 6 says, "And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. The one who says, 'I've come to know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of

God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.”

Now knowing Christ means keeping His commandments. Obeying the Lord shows our love is full-grown. People who worship one day but live sinful lives the next actually cause the shame, cause shame on the name of the Lord. Now loving the Lord means living as a Christian every day. It means turning away from sin and following the Lord with a whole heart.

People who claim they know Christ but live wicked lives will one day hear the Lord say, “I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.” Now knowing Christ is the only thing that will matter at Judgment Day. If we love and follow Him, He will say He knows us.

To become a Christian, trust in the Lord, repent of your sins, confess Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and be baptized into Christ. Now baptism is an immersion in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2 verse 38). Now in baptism the Lord will wash away your sins (Acts 22:16) and add you to His church. You’ll be baptized into Christ, and you’ll be united with Him (Romans 6:3 to 7). And nothing is more important than having that right relationship with Jesus Christ.

Now we hope that today’s challenge to know Christ has made you think. If you want a free printed copy of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord’s Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org.

Or you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. There’s also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches in your area at www.searchtv.org. Now you can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, subscribe to it at “SearchTVMinistry.” And be sure to like the programs. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don’t worry, if you get a hold of us, we’re not asking for money. We’re here to help you draw close to God.

Focus your heart on God by worshiping at church. Everybody needs a church family. And there’s probably a church of Christ near you. And if you’re looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we’ll gladly help you find one. We’ll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God’s Word with us, tell a friend about the program. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord’s Way.