

To know

ODCC 25/10/09 (x.pages)

Text: Eph 1:15-22

Introduction

1. A Russian philosopher said about 80 years ago that “to think is to know”. So I want to talk a little about knowing today.
 - a. It is said that thinking is work. Some definitions are: It is an intellectual discipline; It is to employ the mind.
 - b. The Bible clearly shows that Believers should be thinkers so that they come to clear conclusions about such important things as Christ, the cross, faith, the heart, discipleship, the church, life, death, eternity, etc.
 - c. Last week we looked at 1 Cor 6:19 where Paul asked, “*Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit?*” – there’s that word “know”.
2. At the end of his letter he says, “*Brothers, stop thinking like children...in your thinking be adults*” (14:20).
 - a. The writer to the Hebrews says, “*We have much to say...but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn*” (5:11).
 - b. I don’t want to labour the point and neither do I want to give the impression that I am suggesting anything like this of us at Open Door but...
 - c. I do want to encourage us **not to be passive** with our minds when it comes to the things of God because...
 - d. God has given us His Word and it is precious, it is important, it is life –
 - i. Your Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path (Ps 119:105)
 - ii. I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life (Jn 5:24);
 - iii. The word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart (Heb 4:12).

Not human knowledge

1. Let me first clarify something. You can know the Bible backward. You could learn it so you can recite it perfectly from Genesis to Revelation. You can go to college and get a PhD in theology (a DD (Doctor of Divinity)). You can even write a dozen books **and still know nothing**.
 - a¹. Jesus said to the Jews, “*You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life*” (Jn 5:39).
 - a². Jesus was talking to highly religious men but they were extremely ignorant of God.
 - b¹. Paul says, “*Their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools...since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind*” (Rom 1:18-32).
 - b². Paul is talking about people who have become too clever in their own minds. Many of them are highly degreed or are “persons of the world”. They know a lot about what they can see and touch and confidently boast about about what they know but they know less than nothing because they have no faith and without faith it is impossible to please God and impossible to know God.
2. What kind of knowledge is our text talking about and how do we get knowledge?
 - a. The Bible uses words like, meditate, study, seek, ask, knock, find out, pray, think about, etc.
 - b. And obviously the Word of God (Bible) and prayer are the two most important agents in acquiring knowledge.
 - c. And we need to be active, that is, vigorous in pursuing knowledge of God. It is not knowledge about God, it is knowing God.
3. I must say that, in my opinion, God seldom reveals to those who don’t look for Him – I can’t say that He never does but He hardly does (although His Spirit always calls men to seek).
 - a. Proverbs speaks about wisdom but it is wisdom personified. It is wisdom and knowledge as found in God.
 - b. Wisdom says, “*I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me. With me are riches and honour, enduring wealth and prosperity. My fruit is better than fine gold; what I yield surpasses choice silver. I walk in the way of righteousness, along the paths of justice, bestowing wealth on those who love me and making their treasuries full*” (8:17-21).

- c. The rewards of seeking God would be disappointing to a worldly person because a worldly person values things that belong to this life and to this body – the here and now but the temporary.
So what are the rewards?

Truth

1. Before this weekend is finished go to a high place where you have a good view of the city (like Kings Park)
 - a. Stand quietly and feel your being (be conscious of yourself) and say to yourself, “I shall not always be here because I am definitely going to die some day.”
 - b. Look at the cars and trains and boats and planes and ask yourself, “Will they all be here, being used 100 or 200 years from now? The answer is, “no” (though a couple may be in a museum).
 - c. Look at the biggest buildings in the city and all the houses – will they be here indefinitely?
 - d. Speaking about this Jesus said, “*Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away*” (Mark 13:31).
2. Jesus’ words pertain to our relationship with God and have everything to do with eternal things.
 - a. There is an emptiness inside all of us – an inexpressible desire which most people try and fill by the things of this world, this life.
 - b. That desire can only be satisfied by God because it is something that is spiritual and we are made in the image of God and can only find genuine satisfaction spiritually.
 - c. “*Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labour on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live... Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near*” (Isa 55:10-6).
3. We are told that God cannot lie (Titus 1:2, Heb 6:18); if this is true then everything God says must be truth.
 - a. I’m not having a go at people with tattoos, I’m only illustrating: If God says that anyone who puts a tattoo on their right cheek is condemned, why argue?
 - b. Why question God? He is the hub of truth, the centre of truth. He is truth and Christ is truth manifested in the flesh.
 - c. The ungodly want to claim their rights. They rebel against God’s word, God’s way, God’s law.
 - d. Why rebel? Why run away? Why look for ultimate fulfilment in things that are fading and temporary?
 - a. Jesus said, “*I am the way, the truth and the life*” (Jn 14:6).

Conclusion

1. We have a choice, don’t we?
 - a. If you cannot remember ever coming to Jesus and saying something like, “I want you. I’ll follow you”, then won’t you do that today. If God is seeking you, then He is giving you an opportunity now.
2. Have you been passive in your relationship with God? Or are you currently passive even if you’ve been active in the past? Are you passive right now?
 - a. Has God spoken to you today and has He brought some conviction or opened your eyes to some truth about your relationship with Him right now?
 - b. If He has then now is a good time to talk to God about it and to make a commitment to Him that you will, from today, begin to seek Him.