

The Knowledge of God in Actuality

by Bryan Anthony

Bryan Anthony emphasizes the critical need for the church to pursue an authentic knowledge of God amidst contemporary challenges and moral failures.

Duration: 1:11:15

Scripture: Jeremiah 5:30-31

Topics: "Knowledge"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses five principal themes that are being explored in a series of Friday night gatherings. The second theme is the knowledge of God, which is described as a broad and profound subject. The speaker explains that he is not following a systematic teaching approach but rather allowing the week's experiences and devotional time to guide his message. The sermon references Jeremiah chapter five and mentions a particular burden the speaker has for this week's topic.

Transcript

Lord, we desire you. We want to know you, not as men have set you forth, but as you are. So we ask this evening, Lord, that you would open up to us the scriptures.

Open up to us by the spirit of understanding, the revelation of your Son. We ask, Lord, that the anointing oil would be upon the speaker and upon the hearer. We ask for the increase of the knowledge of God.

Brood over us, Holy Spirit. Move upon us this evening. What would you have to say to the church, Lord? What would you have to say this evening as we set our souls before you and before the scriptures with a jealousy for the knowledge of God? Lord, who is adequate for these things? Who is sufficient to speak of you? But we have the mind of Christ.

So we ask that you would open up the spirit of wisdom and revelation and the intimate knowledge of yourself as set forth in the scriptures. Speak to us this evening, Lord. Your children are listening.

Amen. All right, saints, if you could turn to Jeremiah, the fifth chapter. I say the sixth because we're actually at the very end of the fifth chapter.

If you need a drink in between the message time, there's drinks in the kitchen. So help yourself. Jeremiah chapter five.

I have a particular burden this week, the second week in the five week cycles that we're opening up the scriptures together. The subject matter is the very broad theme of the knowledge of God. And in fact, the theme is more broad than we could ever know.

But if you just to give you an understanding of how these Friday nights are coming together, we have these five principal themes. The first, as we spoke on last week, is the man, Christ, Jesus, and the gospel of the cross. The second is the knowledge of God.

The third is the mystery of Israel and the church in the last days. The fourth is someone help me. You want to remember? My mind is drawing a blank.

The fourth, I can't even remember. I know the fifth is a gleanings from the great cloud of witnesses where we'll be giving a one hour statement on the life of different saints from throughout church history. And the fourth is slipping my mind for some reason.

But anyhow, you can check the website on that. But what I wanted to say was we have these general themes that in reality, you can't even begin to brush in one sitting. And so I'm not systematically laying out a teaching.

I'm just going throughout the course of my week with in the back of my mind that at the end of the week, a word needs to be delivered on the knowledge of God. And so whatever comes to me in my own devotional time throughout the week, whatever comes just throughout the course of life in that particular week, I'm seeing the Lord just tie things together. So this week at the beginning of the week, I knew that we'd be opening up the scriptures on some passage in relation to the pursuit of the knowledge of God, or just simply the knowledge of God.

And at the beginning of the week, the verse came to me out of 1 Corinthians 15, which we'll get to. But the theme that emerged today in prayer was the knowledge of God in relation to sin. And so I'm particularly burdened.

Last night, I found out that a senior pastor who's been a senior pastor here in Kansas City for 25 years of an evangelical congregation, a congregation of 5,000 members, fell into some kind of immorality with a gal that had been on staff there for years, married man, and he had to resign. They didn't disclose all the details. I don't really care to know the details.

But my heart was broken last night when I heard this. And 25 years of preaching in an evangelical congregation, 5,000 members, after 25 years, he's resigning. I don't know what the result will be with his marriage.

I hope for a recovery of his own heart in the Lord and a recovery of his relationship with his wife. And I have the highest hopes for full redemption, not necessarily in terms of ministry, but just in terms of his own life. But my heart is broken because this passage came back to me when I heard that last night out of 1 Corinthians 15.

And I'll quote it, but don't go there yet. We'll get to it. Paul is speaking, giving his great statement in 1 Corinthians on the resurrection of the dead.

1 Corinthians 15 is the magnum opus in the scriptures on the apostles' teaching of the resurrection of the dead. And he's bringing it up because the church at Corinth is actually, many of the saints in the church at

Corinth are questioning the reality of the resurrection itself. Was it a literal event that Jesus' resurrection really happened? Some are asking, is there going to be a resurrection from the dead from the saints? That's the more prevalent question they're asking.

They're doubting what the apostles have already set forth, and that's the issue that Paul is addressing. But in the midst of that great statement on the resurrection where Paul is saying, if Christ has not been raised from the dead, and if there is no resurrection from the dead for us, then your faith is in vain. All of our labors are in vain.

This whole thing is meaningless. In the midst of that great statement on the resurrection, Paul gives this statement. He says, become sober-minded as you ought.

Actually, he gives a little proverb from outside of the scripture. He gives a quotation. It's a which says, do not be deceived.

Bad company corrupts good morals. And then he says, become sober-minded as you ought and stop sinning. For some have no knowledge of God.

And I speak this to your shame. He writes this to a group of believers at Corinth who are questioning the resurrection. Of course, they had other moral issues going on in their community.

There's issues of immorality. There are issues of strife and comparison, one with another, arrogance, and other things that are damaging that community, bad doctrine. But Paul gives this statement in the midst of his magnum opus on the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of the dead.

Become sober-minded as you ought and stop sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.

Now, that statement from Paul itself seems archaic. It seems out of keeping with modern ministerial wisdom. Why would you even speak anything to believers to their shame? Isn't that just, aren't you just giving something heavy, Paul? What is your issue? What is your problem? Haven't you taken the course on how to do counseling? Why would you speak anything to a group of believers to their shame? Well, the reason is because the apostle is grieved over the condition of this church.

In fact, in the second letter that we have record of, second Corinthians in chapter 11, he makes the statement about all of his sufferings because they were comparing him to these men that Paul called super apostles. They were men who claimed to have a higher and better gospel even than Paul. So Paul is challenging the saints at Corinth with his credentials as an apostle, which are not that he has a title or not that he has a large following, but that he has scars on his back and tear stains on his cheeks.

That's what Paul is bringing out. I have greater sufferings. I have labored all the more than these men.

Do I not have a place, at least for you to lend me your ear? You're discounting and questioning my own apostleship, but you've forgotten that the scars on my back bear testimony to the fact that you are my epistle in the Lord. So Paul is giving a statement that what I have declared to you is foundational to such an extent that even if an angel appeared to you and declared another gospel than the one which you heard from me, it's a false gospel. It's not to be received.

Look at the scars on my back. Look at the time I've spent in your midst. Look at the fact that I've not only given you the gospel, but I've given you myself.

Those are the kinds of phrases that he uses. But he says in 2 Corinthians 11, not only do I have all of this accumulation of sufferings, which bear witness to the fact that I'm a sent one from heaven to you. Not only do I have all of those sufferings, but I bear in my internal soul daily a grief over the condition of all the churches.

He says, in a sense, perhaps greater than all of the external sufferings that I've endured are the internal sufferings that I bear on behalf of these saints who are being led astray in various ways by strange doctrines, by immorality, by other issues that are causing them to deviate from the foundation of the knowledge of God as he is. While I was walking outside and praying this afternoon, I had a little phrase pop into my heart, the knowledge of God in his actuality. Who is he? What is he like? What have the prophets and apostles set him forth as being? This is the crucial question that the church must ask in these days.

In an hour of strange Gospels emerging and having such a heavy flow over the airwaves of extreme prosperity Gospels, what's the word? Slipping my mind. Not prosperity. What's the other prevalent thing? The emergent groups.

Yeah, I don't know. My brain is a little slow this evening, but the emergent Gospels, the taking back one of the recent bestsellers, Love Wins, which gives such a distorted view of the love of God that it would discount judgment and eternal punishment altogether. It's removing or diluting or polluting the foundational realities that the prophets and apostles have set forth.

So when we ask the question of the knowledge of God, we must necessarily return to those foundational men upon whom those revelations came and whom the Lord entrusted for the pinning out of our scriptures. When I was on the fire department, fancy that, when I was on the fire department, one of my drivers used to ask me because at sundown, I would go into the back room and open up the scriptures and I would lay in bed. It'd be one of the first times at this particular company that I would get rest.

And so I would lay on the bed there and read the scriptures. And he would often make statements like this, Purtle, what is the deal with you in that book? How many times have you read that anyway? I said, I don't know. I haven't counted.

He said, but you've read it all the way through. I said, yeah. He said, what is it? Does the story change in between readings or something like that? What's the big deal with that book? He said, don't you know? And I said, oh, you have no idea.

I said, this book transcends human wisdom. He said, yeah, whatever. He said, that book was written by men.

And I think he was expecting maybe a fundamentalist response from me along these lines. No, it wasn't. It was written by God.

But my response instead was this. Oh, yeah, I agree. It was written by men.

And he was a bit startled. He looked at me. I said, but they were men of an entirely different order and nature than you.

And of an entirely different maturity and depth than me. I said, these men knew God as he is. And that's why I read this book.

It was written by men, but men of what kind? Men who heard the Lord, men who knew him as he is, and men who had a divine calling and responsibility to set him forth as he is in a way that would be foundational for the whole history of Israel and the church and the whole future of redemptive experience for mankind. Why am I saying all of that? Because I believe we've gone looking in every nook and cranny of the earth within every movement and conference and new book that has hit the shelves in hopes of finding the knowledge of God. But we've neglected the foundational men who actually had the knowledge of God.

And not only did they bear it and have it, and not only were they possessed by it, but they were the ones ordained by the Lord to set it forth for our foundation. So thinking of this minister who has just fallen into immorality after 25 years of pastoring, a 5,000 member congregation, and had to resign. And thinking also of a report that I received a week ago of a quite well-known charismatic leader who was in Europe to do a conference on revival and who went to a pub and got drunk out of his mind and was speeding 80 or 90 miles an hour down the road and crashed into another vehicle just within the last few weeks.

It's not a predicament of Baptist or charismatic. It's the condition of the church. And these days we are radically in need of the knowledge of God in his actuality.

As he is, we've lost the fear of the Lord. We've lost a love for God as the prophets and apostles have set him forth. And we're fancying for ourselves a gospel and a Jesus after our own liking that does not require what the apostles and prophets said he required of us.

Nor does it promise what the apostles and prophets have promised in all of the joyous glory of who God is. Someone else, as Tozer said, a God whom our fathers knew not has set up camp in the house of the Lord. And we need a recovery of the revelation of God as the prophets and apostles have set him forth.

If it sounds redundant, I don't care. Because we haven't heard it enough. We haven't considered it enough.

And our lives testify to that neglect. I'm broken this evening. My heart is broken.

I've been weeping today over this man who's fallen. I have high hopes for him, but I've been weeping in recent months over men who are considered to be the primary leaders of the prophetic movement in the 90s, who had fallen into gross immorality and sin. And listen, this is not me sitting on a high horse and pointing a finger.

This is what I feel is an identification with the brokenness of Jesus himself over his people, over the church, that men who had, perhaps many of them even authentic gifts of the spirit, as did the church at Corinth, could fall headlong into strange doctrines or gross immorality as a lifestyle is a statement that the knowledge of God, the foundational knowledge of God has withered in the church, or in fact, never been there in many of our lives. Jeremiah was bearing this grief over his people Judah in his day. And we see it articulated in the fifth chapter.

I want to read it. And I want to open up something from this scholar that I believe will be crucial for us to hear. Verses 30 and 31.

Some of the scholars I read today said that these two verses seem to jump in as out of nowhere, almost as if they don't flow in total continuum with the verses before. Well, they know more than I know about the original text, but all I know is these two verses are striking my soul these days. Jeremiah 5, 30 and 31.

William Holliday called these two verses, the prophets and priests reject their calling. It says an appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land. The prophets prophesied falsely, and the priests rule on their own authority, and my people love it so.

But what will you do at the end of it? For the prophet, what was happening in Judah was an appalling and a horrible thing. The prophets were prophesying falsely, and the priests were ruling of their own authority. I want to read from William Holliday what he said about this from this hermeneia commentary.

So just bear with me, and we'll just trust that the spirit of the Lord can carry us through these passages, and I'm trusting that the Lord will bring a necessary grace for us to take this in, to recognize the hour that we live in, to recognize the condition of his people, and to cast our hearts more entirely upon him for the attainment of the knowledge of God, which will be necessary for the saints to be the saints in these last days. Great shakings are coming, and even many are upon us already, and it will require the virgins to be found as the wise ones and not as the foolish ones. The oil that they are to gather is not merely power for a demonstration of miracles, though it is that.

The oil in the larger sense is the gathering up, the accumulation, the attaining of the knowledge of God by the Holy Spirit, that we would know him intimately, that we would walk with him day by day in the midst of prosperity and in the midst of poverty, that we would have an abiding knowledge of God so that the saints could be the saints in the earth. We've lost our prophetic distinctive saints. We've lost the edge that is upon those who are hearing the Lord and who are speaking on behalf of the Lord and who are living and abiding in the Lord in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

The distinctive holiness that marked the prophets and apostles of old has left us. It's left us, and our preachers are dealing with pornography, and our pastors, after 25 years of laboring fingers to the bone in professional ministry, are falling. My God, we need a revelation of the Lord enthroned in his holiness, and the prophet Jeremiah was buckling and breaking under the weight of that burden himself because the prophets of Judah were themselves functioning.

They were living as prophetic functionaries, giving words about the future and saying, peace, peace, when there is no peace. Dr. Michael Brown translated that portion to say that they were saying, all is well, all is well, when nothing is well. I hope you can receive this as something more than just the rantings of a depressed individual or some kind of a heavy religious message.

I believe the Lord is touching us with something of his own heart and asking us to enter into an identification with him in his anguish over Israel and over the church. So this brother writes, one gathers that in Jeremiah's perception, the two wings of the religious establishment worked in parallel fashion, and that the people were a kind of passive clack, content with the destructive leading of the establishment. I know that was above your heads on some level, let me break it down.

He says, one gathers from this text that in Jeremiah's perception, what Jeremiah is seeing, the two wings of the religious establishment, namely the prophets and the priests, that those prophets and priests worked in parallel fashion, and that the people were a kind of passive clack, a clack, C-L-A-Q-U-E is a group of people hired to applaud a performer or a public speaker. So he's saying Jeremiah was seeing the

people of Judah, it appears, as a passive clack, a group of people who were applauding the false prophets and the professional functions of the priests in Judah. Why? Why were they a passive group of souls applauding false prophets and priests who were functioning only on a professional level and of their own authority, not of the authority which comes from heaven? Because, as the scholar goes on to say, they were content with the destructive leading of the establishment.

They were content to play the game. They were content so long as the prophets were prophesying what they wanted to hear, so long as the priests were doing everything in the manner that they desired it to be done. They were content with that and even functioning as passive clacks, as a passive clack, a group of souls who were passive, who were resting on their leaves, who did not want their apple cart to be overturned, who did not want their lifestyles to be questioned, who did not want anything to change or alter except what was perhaps any measure of a suffering they might be experiencing.

Anything that was pleasant and comfortable, they wanted it to remain. Anything that they had the control of in their lives, they wanted it to remain. And as we know well, the true prophet reminds us that we cannot fit God into our agendas and our dreams and our theologies, and that if we would have anything to do with him, we've got to cast ourselves into his kingdom and do things his way.

But this people, they were content, passive, comfortable, functioning on the grounds of convenience and utility and what was easy for them, even with regard to their faith and their religion. And here comes this wild character, Jeremiah, tear-stained cheeks, wrinkles on the sides of his eyes from sleepless nights, having wept over the slain of the daughter of his people, having poured out his soul in intercession on their behalf, and they are not willing to hear one iota of what he has to say, though he is the one who has been sent by the God in whose name they claim to be functioning in their faith. One gathers that in Jeremiah's perception, the two wings of the religious establishment worked in parallel fashion.

What is he saying? They worked side by side, maybe not even consciously, maybe not even getting together and having a secret meeting and saying, let's present a false Yahwism. Let's give a false version of the faith because Judah will be more likely to take part in that. No, out of their own lack of submittedness to truth and to the God of heaven, they were functioning perhaps even in something that they felt to be a true prophetic expression.

And the priests functioning in something that they felt was by all knowledge that they had a decent occupation and a good way of doing functions in the temple. Jeremiah comes along, having not been appointed, having offended the elders of the community by raising a question about the validity of what they were doing, the validity of the prophecies that were being given and of the prophets themselves and the condition of the people of Judah in their day-to-day lives. This people, he gives the word in the beginning of the book, have hewn up for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that do not hold water.

Could it be said of the church in our day that we in most places have hewn up for ourselves broken cisterns that cannot hold the knowledge of God, the life-giving reality of a true and intimate union with our God who is a consuming fire and who gives us the ultimate call to be his spokesman and his sons and daughters in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. But we've desired to jog alongside a crooked and perverse generation even to fashion for ourselves expressions of the gospel that will be more palatable to them, but which will give us a blurry vision of the one who is on the throne and thereby diminish a true life of obedience, joy, and faith that would actually be the witness that they need. Jeremiah was carrying this grief and I believe there's a string that runs all the way through the scriptures of a

jealousy for the abiding life of God and the knowledge of God in the earth.

It goes right through the patriarchs, right through Moses's prophetic and in a sense apostolic labor amongst the people of the ancient people as being one himself who cried out for the knowledge of God on the mount, show me thy glory, not content only to have heard the voice, not content only to have seen different aspects of this great one, not content only to have encountered him in the burning bush, he has that groan continuing in him, show me thy glory. But the people when he descends from the mountain had fashioned for themselves a golden calf. The people were not willing to hear the living voice coming from the top of the mount and ask Moses to speak on his behalf instead.

They wanted it to be filtered if it could be through humanity and through flesh because they were not willing to hear it as it comes from heaven. The same stream, the same string runs all the way through the history of the patriarchs, the prophets of old as they give the call to the backslidden and hard-hearted people of Israel in the prophetic scriptures and all the way through Jesus's involvement as he speaks to his kinsmen who are the religious leaders of the established order. In his day, the same string is running through you.

What does he say to the religious leaders? You are mistaken or you are ignorant. What? Having not understood the scriptures or the power of God. It's the same string running right through Jesus's public ministry and then you see the apostles carrying the same reality.

Paul saying to the church at Corinth, I've betrothed you to one husband and yet the serpent might perhaps deceive you. I have one fear. The apostle was not afraid of getting hit in the face with stones.

He was not afraid of the antagonism of his kinsmen. He was not afraid of one brother that would stand up and challenge his apostleship. The apostle had no fear except for one that you would be removed or that you would lose or betray the purity and simplicity of devotion to Christ.

That's his jealousy. Why is he jealous for that? Because he's jealous for the glory of God. Jeremiah was a like figure with a different ministry.

He had the same jealousy but running parallel to that string of jealousy throughout all of scripture is a string of the church's propensity toward straying away from the true knowledge of God and turning to lesser things. Be it be a bold faced submission and worship of idols or a twisting of the gospel and a twisting of who Christ is and what his kingdom really is and represents to submit for people and for hearers something lesser than the true thing that the prophets and apostles gave. God is jealous over his glory and that's why he raises these kinds of men up.

That's why at Paul's conversion he says to Paul go and find a man called Ananias. He will lay hands on you and you will hear from me all of the things that you must suffer for my name's sake. Right at the inception of his calling the Lord is telling him you're going to hear everything that that you'll suffer for my name's sake.

Forgive the paraphrase you can find the passage later Acts 9. But that's what the Lord said to him all that you must suffer for my name's sake. The calling of Jeremiah is the same. The calling of Ezekiel is the same.

I'm giving you a forehead like a stone because you must go and prophesy against the temple and prophesy against Jerusalem. These people are a hard-hearted people yet you've got to go and speak.

How's that for the prophetic mandate? The prophetic call has much less to do with visionary experiences and speaking about future events has much less to do with that than it has to do with setting forth God as he is to a people who have been unwilling to hear that revelation.

Let me read a little bit more from this brother. He says the summary of these two verses is just this. The priests are rejecting their consecration.

What does he mean? Does he mean the priests are rejecting 40-day fasts, their consecration? No. Does he mean the priests are rejecting their willingness to die physically for the sake of truth to go and be martyrs? No. We think of consecration, we think immediately of heroic endeavors for the sake of God.

But we don't we don't understand the inner priestly distinctive of consecration unto God and that's what he's speaking of here. The priests are rejecting their consecration. What does that mean? It means they are rejecting their distinctive calling to know the Lord as he is and to set him forth as he is amidst the people so that they will be able to distinguish the difference between the righteous and the unrighteous.

That's the priestly distinctive and these men were rejecting it and the people were loving it. He sums it up by saying it is the same old story a religious establishment and a populace rejecting the hard work of judgment from I'm sorry rejecting the hard word of judgment from God. The passage speaks of a time of reckoning and it is a theme with which the whole Bible is concerned.

Let us remember then that the prophetic calling the priestly calling the calling of the of leaders within God's house and of the church as a whole within society is to set the Lord forth as he is come what may. You know the Lutheran congregation that gathers two blocks from here now has the rainbow gay flag hanging beneath the American flag out in front. Two blocks from there is the Islamic mosque orthodox.

Two blocks in the other direction is a nation of Islam mosque. All throughout our neighborhood there are philosophies and ideas about God peppered throughout and we have a distinctive calling in our mode of being and living and because of that in our speaking to set forth the one God as he is. The church has that calling.

The church is the only agency in the earth which has the capacity and ability to even begin to speak of God. So what what has become then of the nation when that one agency who has the calling to speak of him and the privilege of knowing him has shirked or set aside the distinctive role of seeking his face of delving in deeply with hunger and anticipation and yearning and a love that cannot be described on human terms to come into the knowledge of God as he is and having found that knowledge having received that knowledge to share it with all of humanity as we come into contact with them. What happens when a church has lost that? This is what happens.

The religious establishment sweats and labors in something that is merely human and that has been created for humans and for their benefit and the humans then respond by functioning as if they're hooked up to some kind of a feeding tube religiously where they come to the temple for the religious functionary to do his thing because we're paying him to do it and we are like vegetables walking throughout life. One feeding tube stuck on this side where we get a religious fix and that feeding only comes once or twice a week and the other feeding tube stuck to the other side of the stomach which is a worldly feeding where we are drinking in the entertainment of the world, the disposition of the world, the attitudes of the world, the ways of the world and we are filled as a people then of something that is despicably absent of a true knowledge of God and the church is the only agency by which the world has the opportunity to even begin

to hear of this glorious one. It's time for the cutting tubes to be cut and removed.

It's time for the saints to have this severing, this consecration. It's not only a heroic religious endeavor, it's a setting apart of our lives as holy, holy, holy unto the Lord and unto the pursuit of him unto the enjoyment of him unto a delving into the scriptures and unto an obedience of what he speaks that we may experience life and that death may work in us so that life can work in those outside of the church. Jeremiah was broken and aching over this, cognizant of the fact that his own people had a responsibility and a privilege to be a light to the nations and they could not even come into first grade in that reality because they were feeding off of the false prophecies and the professional priestly functions of the priests and they themselves were not jealously pursuing the knowledge of God as he is.

So he says it's the same old story, a religious establishment and a populace rejecting the hard word of judgment from God. Well is this fuel for the fire of the Westboro Baptist guys who want to go to funerals and protest and say in the Psalms it says God is angry with the wicked every day so we'll protest the funerals of those in war, we'll protest the funerals of homosexuals who died of AIDS, we'll give protest and we've got a word of judgment, we're like the Jeremiah's, those guys are as far away from this reality as is the liberal theologian that claims homosexuality is okay. It's totally removed from the wisdom of men in a liberal sin condoning side or in a rigid self-righteous word of judgment.

Jeremiah is not in this place because of his religious categories, he's in this place because he is a man who has been devastated out of his communion with a holy God who has given a people a distinct calling as holy and Jeremiah can no longer run alongside those of his kinsmen who are willing to play the game. He's jealous for the glory of God, he's jealous for the calling of his people so the the word of judgment that they were willing to receive, that they were unwilling to receive, I'm sorry, the word of judgment that they were unwilling to receive was not merely the self-righteous flying off at the mouth of some young guy in their community who was an extreme fundamentalist for Judaism, it was the heart cry of God himself moving and speaking through a man who was broken.

You know I asked Dr.

Brown once you know when I when I went to get his commentary I said I said hey I'll order it from your ministry instead of Amazon if you'll write a one sentence summary of the nature of the prophetic call in the front of the commentary and he said that's a deal so I ordered it from from their ministry and so he this is what he wrote in the front shattered now this is his commentary on Jeremiah so mind you he's spent years laboring with Jeremiah in prayer in exhaustive study he's he's literally dwelt with Jeremiah for a number of years and this is his one sentence summary so I think it's worthy of being heard shattered by the prophetic encounter with the Lord broken to pieces by the Lord and poured out for a dying world shattered by the prophetic encounter with the Lord broken to pieces by

the Lord and poured out for a dying world the world is languishing shall I say the world is perishing and the church is languishing for want of a true knowledge of God the world is perishing they need something more than our ability to build five million dollar buildings exquisite coffee shops in the foyer and beautifully packaged sermons that will keep their interest enough that they'll keep attending and maybe one of these days they might find redemption they need to bump into that company of souls who have been shattered by the prophetic encounter with the Lord broken broken to their own wisdom to their own dreams to their own pursuits to their own ambitions inducted and brought in to the kingdom of the eternal God that's what happened to Jeremiah and that's why he could not

comfortably jog along anymore with the tide of his age he needed to bring into his time that wisdom which he knew was to come says the brother writes the passage speaks of a time of reckoning and it is a theme with which the whole bible is concerned here's some examples first kings 22 Micaiah challenged the quick yes of the court prophets over against his own no Micah spoke out against the venality and Isaiah against the drunkenness of priests and prophets in their time and Jesus himself challenged the priestly authority in Jerusalem there is something about a religious establishment that renders it virtually impervious to fresh truth oh you need to hear that again listen I'm not giving a venomous statement against preachers and leaders in our land there are remarkable servants of the

Lord in this land faithful men who have served the Lord longer than I've been alive but the general tenor of our nation and the general tenor of ministry and the fact that almost 60 percent of preachers say they struggle with pornography and the fact that men who have labored for 25 years in a notable position of ministry imagine the responsibility of being the senior leader of 5,000 saints and after 25 years to fall into some mode of immorality with a woman on staff there this is not my word of self-condemnation this is a statement that we're in a radical need of foundations and in radical need of a reconfiguring of our whole view of what the church is and ultimately that must flow out of a reinstating a re-establishing of the foundation of who God is Tozer once wrote that no local

church will ever rise above its view of God and that the most important thing about the saint is what comes to mind when he thinks about the person of God your theology is not what you have the ability to articulate when someone asks you your theology is what you think of God when you're all by your lonesome when you're in prayer when you're driving in the car and no one else is there and you hear a story of a hurricane that just struck and 11,000 people had died and the question pops in your mind who allowed how did you allow this to happen Lord that is your theology or some brother comes up to you and shares when you're dealing with some kind of a depressive state he says you know something the psalm the psalm says in psalm 149 that the Lord delights in his people and I just want to

remind you that he delights in you and all of a sudden you're shaken out of your category well I was I was wallowing in the wallowing in the dirt of my failure from three weeks ago when I shouted at my wife or whatever might be the issue that's keeping us from the vibrant and active revelation of God as he is in his kindness in his meekness in his purity in his holiness you know what I thought about today I thought why is it that we always emphasize the cross as the climactic expression of God's love only it was the climactic expression of God's love it was the climactic revelation of who he is but it was also the climactic revelation of his wrath never has there been a more poignant and powerful expression of God's wrath than at the cross when his own son his only begotten son upon whom

the dove rested the first man on the earth in the history of mankind and the only man for the history of mankind who from the of his birth to the day of him giving up his spirit at the last the Lord could say this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased there's not an aspect about his personality his attitude his character there's not a cell in his body that I don't find total and free pleasure with everything that he is is the full expression of who I am and therefore when he goes to the cross and I am pleased therefore to crush him I'm not pleased because I take delight in his suffering I'm pleased because only the sacrifice of that perfect lamb could open up the floodgates of mercy for Israel and the nations but it was the ultimate expression of God's wrath we talk about the cross

people say you know people say oh that's a heavy message brother that that's that's legalism what you're saying is legalism and they go in that they take things in that direction we're on this side of the cross

brother well there is such a thing as self-righteousness that's unhealthy and legalism that's unhealthy Paul addressed it in Galatians it needs to be addressed consistently in the church but what they're really saying is the cross was the expression of his love and what they're really doing is diminishing diminishing the heinousness of sin the hideousness of sin the cross was the ultimate expression of God's love and simultaneously the ultimate expression of his wrath because that's how hideous sin and iniquity is that it required the death of the eternal son let me go on there is

something about a religious establishment that renders it virtually impervious to fresh truth the priests and prophets have so much of the truth to begin with that it is almost impossible for them to see the urgent priority of fresh judgment from God Paul was addressing a church at Corinth that actually had experienced judgment themselves in the 11th chapter there were even sicknesses and deaths that had come upon the community because of the lack of the governance the governing reality of God's ways and his doctrine and his nature his life in the community so they had the gifts of the spirit they had they had demonstrations of power which were necessary then and which are necessary now and all the more as we see the day approaching but Paul had to speak to these saints something along

these lines in first Corinthians 15 let's just go there skip over Jeremiah 9 for now because we're short on time I want to get to Paul and let's touch this thread that ran from Jeremiah's all the way through to Paul's heart first Corinthians 15 is Paul's magnum opus on the resurrection but verse 33 in fact let's let's go to verse uh 31 he says I affirm brethren by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord I die daily if from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus what does it profit me if the dead are not raised let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die do not be deceived bad company corrupts good morals become sober-minded as you ought and stop sinning for some have no knowledge of God I speak this to your shame this is the statement of Paul in a continuum with

the burden of Jeremiah and the other prophets for the knowledge of God to be given and known and maintained and even to accumulate over the years until the church becomes a mature bride in the earth who who is in themselves an expression of the nature and knowledge of God in his actuality that when the world rubs shoulders with the church they rub shoulders with Jesus himself that when the world bumps into the church the world bumps into Jesus himself that when the world hears from the church the world hears from Jesus himself and on occasion salvation will spring forth as a result of that and on other occasions persecution and resistance but the church's distinctive role in the earth is to be his body which is the fullness of him who fills everything in every way I want to read briefly

from Gordon Fee on this arguably the most eminent scholar on Paul and a man of the spirit as well so I'm thankful for him but he writes this statement Paul's concern is a simple one they are to adopt the kind of behavior that should be expected of those for whom the future is both already and not yet who have been washed from their sins through Christ Jesus and who yet await the final destruction of death they are to live as people who not only have a past in Christ but a future as well what is he saying this is the great dynamic that comes to a community when they've gone down into the death of their own wisdom and been raised up into newness of life and are walking day by day by the life of God's spirit by the life that he gives Fee says elsewhere that the activity of of the Holy Spirit

in believers establishes them as a thoroughly eschatological people okay that's fancy define that for us Gordon okay this is how he defines it they live the life of the future in the present while they await the consummation Paul had no boast except to boast in the cross why was that because to boast in the cross only is to find resurrection reality not only in the age to come but in my day and your day you know what

my greatest boast is today maybe not the time I spent in my study in prayer and in the scriptures maybe my greatest boast today was that I did a huge stack of dishes and maintained communion with the Lord all throughout could be that when we stand before the Lord and this day is sized up that the Lord says you know believe it or not that was more of a demonstration of wisdom

to the principalities and powers even than your studies but I'm not boasting in my great heroicism I could point you back to many times in the past when I've been doing the dishes and gotten aggravated at how dry the food was on a certain dish that I had told one of my kids to rinse as soon as they were finished but because the day had gone by and they hadn't rinsed it it was an agony to get the food off of it and I was put into the flesh and into complaining and into even anger but I can boast today in the cross because that's not what happened listen nobody put a gun to my head today or a knife to my throat and said deny Christ or we kill you but the demand of resurrection life is just as utter and just as entire for our day-to-day functions for if we can't wash the dishes with the

right righteousness peace and joy of the Holy Spirit lighting upon us how shall we be prepared for the greater times to come so don't look to the heroic death as the measuring rod of your spirituality just let the Lord hear the invitation of the Lord today to go down into death to lay down your own anger your own you know do you know what your own anger is your own anger is the final manifestation of your human striving for kindness you strive out of your own wisdom to be a kind person but when the offense finally reaches its boiling point there comes the snake there comes the anger there it lashes out it's only a manifestation that you've not yet died that day and and set your soul simply to draw from the Lord and abide in him you know what the lashing out of the spouse toward the

husband about the bills is in anxiety it's only the final boiling point manifestation of the fact that we had not laid our souls low and said Lord we trust you whether by life or by death our resources don't come from our occupation our resources don't come from the left or from the right they come from you you are the great shepherd who is worthy of trust where does all that flow from the knowledge of God in his actuality which touches us in our actuality see what I'm saying Gordon Fee goes on to say their present path is one of delusion both in terms of their theology and in its consequent behavior but their position means the end of their existence as believers and hopelessness for the dead it is all it also means that the activities of some of them and especially of his own apostolic

labors are living contradictions what is he saying he's saying their doubt in the in the literal resurrection of Jesus himself and their their suspicion about a future resurrection for themselves actually postures them in their theology and in their what does he say and in their consequent behavior for delusion and that that even it makes out his apostolic labors among them to be living contradictions all of this is in vain if Christ is not raised from the dead but if he has in fact raised from the dead and if you've been seated with him in that place by the work of the cross then if God before us who can be against us even our own selves even our own self-lives can our self-lives even endure under the power of the resurrection life that has been given through the gospel if we would but

surrender to that life day by day that was the great grief of jeremiah was that the saints i want to dig deeper into this perhaps this for a later time because we don't have much time left but we need to go to prayer here because i'm burdened over the church and i'm burdened over the demonstration of the gospel uh not only in the the lack of what seems to be a lack of demonstrations of the power of god for healing but just the knit and grit walking of resurrection life for the saints and the powers of darkness would do everything to dilute to blur or to even pollute our knowledge of god in his actuality and to make of him

some kind of an aloof figure that we can't relate to that we can't walk with yet enoch was taken up for the fact that he walked with god leonard ravenhill used to say

that the greatest men are not the men who have walked on the moon the greatest men are not the men who have sat in the white house the greatest men are not the men who have walked the halls of harvard the greatest men are the men who have walked with god and you know that was the great grief of the lord in jeremiah my people have hewn up for themselves cisterns that don't hold water but what's the second portion of that that grieved the lord and that shattered the prophet they have forsaken me the fountain of living water for these formidable leaders in the body of christ who have somehow spiraled downward and fallen into gross and immoral sins even lifestyles of sin what would have happened if they had adequately cultivated a life of pursuing the knowledge of god in their own individual

lives and amongst a community of saints who were not putting them on a pedestal as religious functionaries put in place to meet their needs but who were on a pilgrimage together onward to zion for the glory of god leon morris new testament scholar said that in this passage in first corinthians 15 paul is linking failure to live rightly with failure to think rightly might we add a little insertion there that paul is linking a failure to live rightly with a failure to think about god rightly to know him as he is the true knowledge of god given by god and he says the error the error which paul is concerned with arises basically from a lack of a real knowledge of god some have no knowledge of god paul says some have no knowledge of god so lord what is this lord that you're wanting to speak

this evening through a broken clay vessel like myself and in the ears of my fellow clay vessels weak and fragmented that we are but i'm remembering this evening the statement from samuel chadwick that it's remarkable to see what the lord can do with a broken life so long as he gets all of the pieces lord i'm thinking of these men who have fallen recently and in years past i'm thinking of our own propensity to fall into those kinds of things if functioning on the ground of our own wisdom and our own spirituality and i'm asking in this day lord would you raise up in the church the vision of yourself could the church again see you high and lifted up could the church again see your majesty displayed at the cross and now filling the heavens in your enthronement and one day to come filling the

earth with the son of god enthroned in jerusalem lord what is it toward which we're tending what does it mean for a community to taste of the powers of the age which is to come as it says in hebrews and to become that people in this life who are walking and abiding in the life of the age which is to come while we await the consummation oh god these things are above us these things are transcendent and yet you have said that no man knows the mind of god but that the holy spirit knows the mind of god and searches all things even the depths of god how much more than can your spirit search us who are sons and daughters bruised reeds men and women who have been trampled by the spirit of this age and who have trampled our own souls in sin yet you are the god of recovery you are the god of

restoration you are the god of resurrection and so we ask lord that you would bring us into the identity of that thread that ran all throughout the prophets and the apostles of old and restore foundation to the church we pray restore foundation to the church we pray that our theology but not only the our theology our consequent behavior our mode of being the way that we see one another the way that we speak the way that we listen the way that we handle money the way that we give it the way that we pray the way that we read the way that we discipline our children the way that we play with them every aspect which makes up the reality of human life that it would be charged and suffused with the reality of the life of heaven this is that thing for which jeremiah panted this is what broke his

heart it wasn't just that the theology was inaccurate in judah but that the people were not coming into the knowledge of god and the life of god and thereby had no ability to walk with you so would you come god we invite you by your spirit to come break us in the innermost parts where we've formed for ourselves systems that can't hold the knowledge of you but that will immediately be filled with tainted waters or substitute waters flavored with some other thing that is not the water that's living have for yourself a people in the earth fit and fashioned to set you forth in your actuality for only in the true knowledge of god can men find freedom brand us mark us consecrate us set us apart to this holy pursuit of you and this holy and priestly calling of living before you walking with you

and setting you forth in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation may the lamb that was slain receive the reward of his sacrifice it will give you all the glory and all the honor and all the praise from this time forth and forever

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/23/SID23157.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/bryan-anthony/the-knowledge-of-god-in-actuality/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net