

# Deeper Knowledge

by Doc Greenway

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*To know God in a deeper way, we must persevere, obey, and depend on the Holy Spirit, and apply the power of resurrection in our lives.*

**Duration:** 30:56

**Scripture:** Isaiah 40:11, Matthew 6:33, John 10:11, Romans 8:17, 1 Corinthians 2:9-10, Philippians 3:10

**Topics:** "Knowledge"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being a channel for God's sympathy and compassion towards others. He shares the story of Colonel Clark, the founder of Pacific Garden Mission, who was able to captivate a large audience of down-and-out men because they knew he loved and sympathized with them. The speaker also mentions the power of tears in conveying empathy and connecting with others. He then discusses the significance of obedience in spiritual knowledge, using examples from the Navy and referencing Jesus' words about happiness coming from knowing and doing God's commands.

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## Transcript

At a fairly select social evening, the guests included a famous actor and a well-known elderly minister who had retired from an active preaching ministry. During the course of the evening there were several musical items of various kinds, all of which were enjoyable, and at last the hostess required of the actor that he would entertain the company, and he agreed to do so. "I would like to recite my favorite psalm," he said.

Psalm 23. And using his well-modulated voice to good effect, he recited the shepherd's psalm so skillfully, with such technical perfection, that at the end the assembled company applauded him for a long time. Then as the applause died down, the actor turned to the minister and said, "I wonder, sir, if you would like to recite for us that same psalm?" The minister replied, "Well, I'm not an Erecutionist, you know, but I'm quite willing to try." And so he began, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not warn." As he drew to a close, instead of loud applause there was complete silence, stillness.

It appeared that the company was gripped by the absolute sincerity in what they had just heard. And then the actor summed it all up when he said to the minister, "Sir, I know the psalm, but you, you know the shepherd. You know the shepherd." And when it is a question of spiritual understanding, there are certainly degrees of knowledge that we recognize.

It was probably this difference in degree that the Apostle Paul recognized when he said in Philippians 3.10, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his suffering being made conformable unto his death and so on. That I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings. Knowing the person, first of all, that I may know him.

Well, didn't Paul know the Lord? Of course he did. He knew him very well. But he knew that there were heights and depths of knowledge to be gained concerning Christ, which he had not as yet comprehended.

And so his longing is that he may know Christ progressively, in the depth of his own being, that he may know Christ, not simply as Savior, but as Lord and King, as the Anointed, as the Prophet, as the Priest, that he might know Christ in full measure. And I think it is impossible for us ever to reach the limit of discovery where knowing Christ is concerned. You know, in the Old Testament days, to know the Lord was the supreme cause for exulting, for rejoicing, for glorifying.

Jeremiah 9.23 and 24 says this, Thus says the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his strength, let not the rich man glory in his riches, but let him who glories, glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practiced steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, says the Lord. So when Paul voices this longing, that I may know him, we are made aware of the great importance which attaches to knowing God, to knowing the Lord.

The question for us is this, I think. What qualities are essential in our lives in order that we may know the Lord in this progressive way? We may know him intimately, know him fully. What is necessary? What do we require? Well, I think in the first place it requires perseverance, the grace of stickability, if you like.

You learn this from Hosea 6 and verse 3. The Orthodox version reads, Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord. The RSV has let us know, let us press on to know the Lord. Will you know him fully for yourself? Remember, it demands obedience to his commands, obedience to God.

If we are to have a genuine knowledge of Christ, it demands that we obey him. It involves obedience. I remember a time in my life when I was a young Christian, and I was passing through a very hard and difficult time, a time of conflict.

It concerned giving obedience to God on one point that he demanded of me, and I could not find the grace in my heart to say yes to him. I well remember a dear old servant of God counseling me as a young Christian. He said, My dear brother, I know you cannot honestly say that you are prepared to obey God, but are you willing to be made willing? Willing to be made willing? I said, Yes, I can say that.

At least I can go that step. I can say to the Lord, Yes, Lord, I am willing to be made willing. Then, of course, he made me willing, and everything was fine.

Are you willing to be made willing? If you are, he is prepared to make you willing, but he demands obedience of each one of us. God places great value on obedience. In the Old Testament days this was very evident.

For instance, in 1 Samuel 15 and 22 you read, Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and heartening than the fat of lambs. To obey is better than sacrifice. We may make great sacrifices in other areas of service, but it never atones for little obedience in the thing that God demands of us.

We can say, Yes, Lord, Yes, Lord, to a thousand different things, but we say no to the thing that he asks us to do, and he is not satisfied with this. Someone was talking a little while ago. He used to be brought up on a farm, from what I can gather.

His father was a farmer, but as a young lad he was told by his father to clean out the stables, and he did not like that at all. Not the job that he would have chosen. So he searched around for something to do, and then he decided he would paint the stable door instead.

He found a can of red paint and painted it red. When his father got home, he saw red, too. Things were very difficult for a while.

It's no use. When God says, I want this, that's what he wants. Nothing else will do.

We have to decide on that, and until we do, we don't make any progress at all. If you know these things, said Jesus, happy are you if you do them. An uncle of my father's that I can remember when I was quite a lad.

He was in the Royal Navy, Uncle Frank. And one thing I remember that he said to us that day when he visited our home, you know, he said, we soon learn to obey orders in the Navy. There are only two things we have to remember, two rules, he said.

One is duty, the other is mutiny. Very simple, he said, but very effective. Now, I may not understand this morning why my obedience is the basis of spiritual knowledge.

I may not understand this, but it is enough for me to know that God's word makes obeying a condition of knowing. Do I want to know him like Paul? Can I say that I may know him? Then let me obey him, for this is God's way. If any man's will is to do his will, he shall know.

Then if we are to know the Son of God in a full measure, it requires our dependence. Particularly it is dependence on revelation by the Holy Spirit, because the agent in revelation, as I said the other Sunday morning, is essentially the Spirit of God. Take these two verses together, Matthew 11, 27.

No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. And John 15 and verse 26. The Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me.

So when Paul says that I may know him, he is as completely dependent upon the Spirit of God for this knowledge as you and I are this morning. He had no secret source of supply, none whatever, apart from the Holy Spirit of God. How much then we should depend upon the Spirit to reveal Christ to us, and to reveal the things of Christ.

Knowledge of the Lord is not discovered on the pathway of human reasoning. You can't ever reason your way to God. Give it up.

It's a waste of time. It's not on the pathway of human reasoning. Christ is revealed to simple faith when the conditions that God imposes are fulfilled.

Simple faith can know God, where human reason will never know him. Human reason can know about God, but not know God as a person, not know the Lord as a living person. This particular revelation of the person of Christ is part of the things which God has prepared for those that love him.

As 1 Corinthians chapter 2 tells us, what has God prepared for me? Not only the things that are spiritual that I enjoy so much, but this deeper knowledge of Jesus Christ as my Lord, as my Redeemer, as my King, as the one in control of my life. This revelation comes in a marvelous way. 1 Corinthians chapter 2 verses 9 and 10 teaches this truth.

What no eye has seen, so it is not by natural observation that I learn these things. Nor the ear heard. It's not by human instruction that I'm taught these things.

Nor the heart of man conceived. It's not by personal intuition that I gain this truth. But God hath revealed unto us by his Spirit.

It is by gradual revelation of the Spirit of God that I get to know what Christ is like, that I get to know the Lord in a personal way. To be taught the truth about Jesus by revelation of the Spirit is to have the most comprehensive knowledge of the Lord that we could ever possess. You can learn more about Christ in ten minutes under the inspiration of the Spirit than in ten years of study otherwise.

Believe me, that's true. Dr. Harry Ironside was a one-time pastor of Moody Tabernacle in America, and he came home during his divinity days, divinity student days, to find his mother had taken in a servant of God who was ill with tuberculosis. He was an Irishman.

And during the daytime he was housed in a tent on the front lawn. Well, Ironside heard about this, and so he took his Bible to open up the word of God to the Irishman and to explain the truth that he had learned in seminary, evidently. He did this, and then the sick man asked if he might be permitted to open up the word of God a little.

And Ironside looked at him and thought, well, all right, he can do it, I suppose. Yes, he said, carry on, brother. So he carried on.

And what he said to Ironside out of the word of God was so amazing to him. He sat there in astonishment. He said, listen, brother, where were you trained? What seminary did you attend? He looked at him and laughed, and he said, my teacher was the Holy Spirit of God.

My seminary, he said, was the cottage I grew up in. All I know he has taught me. What a wonderful thing it is when we are prepared to go to him, the Spirit of God, and ask him to teach, ask him to show us, not to be dependent upon other people, but to be dependent completely upon the Holy Spirit and to know that his truth can never lead us astray, that I may know him, knowing the person, and then knowing the power and the power of his resurrection.

There are two things about the resurrection of Jesus Christ we should never forget. First, it is the best authenticated fact in the Bible. And secondly, it is the most important fact in the Bible, the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

But how is the power of his resurrection to be related to us as believers? Well, we are shown in the first place where we are ideally, that is, from God's standpoint, as God looks at us. Ephesians 2, verses 4 to 6 gives us this. But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.

By grace you have been saved, and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ. This is our spiritual resurrection and ascension with Christ. It has happened now, if we

dare to believe it, happened now by faith, if we can accept it.

By the power of his resurrection, God has already raised us up to heavenly places, far above the realm of dismal failure, above the place of continual defeat. We have been raised far above the realm of conscious sinning, if we dare to believe it. For this is how God looks at us today, not down here beneath the feet of the devil, but up there in Christ, at the right hand of God, with the authority of the throne life at our disposal.

Resurrection is the sequel to crucifixion, as we know, and we should never speak of them as being apart, as though they belong to two different realms altogether. Crucifixion, resurrection, they belong together. When Jesus was crucified, many things happened.

When Jesus was crucified, the law was magnified, justice was satisfied, sin was nullified, God was glorified, and we were justified when Jesus died. But if Christ had not been raised from the dead, then is our preaching vain, then is our faith vain. The resurrection is the sequel to the crucifixion.

Never keep them apart. And then we are shown where we are experientially. That is an experience, 2 Corinthians 5.17. Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation.

The old has passed away, behold, the new has come. The removal of the old and the emergence of the new way of life expresses an experience, the power of his resurrection. It is based on a solid conviction that Jesus Christ was indeed raised from the dead, that death could not hold its prey, Jesus my Saviour, that he tore the vows away, Jesus my Lord.

He really did it. And this morning he is alive in heaven, as alive as you and I are, Jesus Christ risen from the dead. And to know this is to know the meaning of personal victory in our Christian living.

Rachel, the great conductor, on one occasion was completing the final rehearsal of the choir in preparation for Hunter's Messiah. And they sung through to the point where the soprano takes over and sings that wonderful refrain, I know that my Redeemer liveth. She sang it beautifully.

It was rendered perfectly, with flawless artistry. But it was enough for Rachel. He walked across to her and looking up into her face, he said, My dear, do you really know? Know what, sir, she asked? Do you really know that your Redeemer is alive? She paused for a while and thought about it, and then she said, Yes, I really do know.

Well, then, he said, sing it so that I may know that you know. She sang it a second time. With great feeling, great emotion, great power, I know that my Redeemer liveth.

As Paul reminds us in the first Ephesian prayer, we are to know the exceeding greatness of this power to us who believe according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead. This is the great power which is to us who believe, resurrection power. Then we are shown where we are practically.

Colossians 3, 1 and 2. If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things which are above. Where Christ is seated at the right hand of God, set your minds on things above, not on things which are on the earth. Set your affections, set your longing on things above.

Things that are beneath on the earth are material things. Things that are above are the spiritual things. God help us that we may not fail where this is concerned to see what is important to us.

The material things on earth, everybody wants to keep up with the Joneses, and the trouble is the Joneses aren't going anywhere. Material things, they don't last, they don't satisfy, they never will. We need to get our priorities right.

If we know something about the power of his resurrection, then we know, too, it is only the spiritual things in life that can meet our deepest needs. I remember a man in the old country, a businessman, Cousins his name was, he was also a lay preacher. He was in a prayer meeting and someone brought in a telegram, handed it to him, he read it.

Because of some business deal he had just lost three thousand pounds, and it meant something in those days, three thousand pounds. What did he do? Just tore it up, dropped to his knees and began to thank and praise God for the things that really mattered most to him. Never gave into that.

Seek those things which are above. What are they? Well, things like holiness of life, gentleness of spirit, things like fullness of love, broadness of vision, awareness of needs. These are the things which are above, along with many other things which we haven't time to mention this morning, but they are there all right.

If ye then have been raised with Christ, seek the things which are above. They won't automatically fall into your lap, you know. You'll have to be sought after diligently and earnestly and perseveringly until they become your very own.

Knowing the person, knowing the power, and then knowing the passion, the fellowship of his suffering. We use the word passion here in the same sense as it is used in Acts 1.3. To them he presented himself alive after his passion by many proofs. Christ's passion is a name for Christ's sufferings, not only on Calvary, but his sufferings because of his identification with us as his people.

Paul longed to know in a deeper way the significance of Christ's sufferings. It is a suffering which comes through discipleship. Matthew 10.22. You shall be hated by all for my name's sake.

This is because we are Christians, Christ's ones, bearing the name of Christ. Because of this, the world will hate us. Peter makes this very clear, that we may suffer as a Christian.

1 Peter 4.16. If anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but under that name let him glorify God. So as a Christian, you can't escape suffering. Remember that the next time you're going through it.

And then there is suffering which comes through membership, that is, membership or fellow-membership in the Church, the body of Christ. 1 Corinthians 12.25 and 26. That there may be no discord in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.

If one member suffers, all suffer together, which is a reminder that no Christian can live independently. He has to live interdependently, for we depend upon each other. That's one of the first lessons I learned after I gave my heart to the Lord.

I remember our minister saying to the congregation one Sunday morning, my friends, he said in his old Welsh style, my friends, he said, go on with God. He said, for goodness sake, go on with God. If you can't

go on with God for your own sake, go on for my sake, he said, because I need you as much as you need me.

And how true that is. There is a suffering which comes through membership, but there is a suffering which results through fellowship with Christ. This is what Paul is speaking about here, and the fellowship of his sufferings.

Colossians 1.24 reads in this way, Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the Church. Not sufferings for the sake of the world. He has fulfilled those on Calvary, and he cried, it is finished, completed, over, done with.

But these are sufferings for his body's sake, which is the Church. Christ makes the continuing afflictions of his people, his own afflictions, and he feels for them. And it is at this point that Paul would know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, at the point where sympathy must be expressed, for sympathy, sum pathayo, is simply suffering together.

Your pain in my heart, suffering together. Now, says Paul, this is what I long to know. I want to be your channel, Lord.

I want to belong to you in this way. Use me to express your sympathy to your children. Use me as a channel, with nothing that hinders the flow of your Spirit through me.

Let that sympathy, let that compassion be shown. Let me be identified with you in this ministry, he is saying. I am the founder of the famous Pacific Garden Mission.

And he often spoke on a Sunday morning to 600 down-and-out men who came to that mission. Oh, many of them weren't Christians, of course. Many of them were not saved.

Many of them came only for the free breakfast they could get. Six hundred. And you know, the greatest preachers in Chicago couldn't hold them for five minutes when they spoke.

But when Colonel Clark spoke to them, they sat quietly and they drank in the word. They'd sit as long as he cared to speak. Where was the difference? Why the difference? These men knew one thing about everything else.

They knew that Colonel Clark loved them, that he sympathized with them, that he had compassion toward them. That's why they listened. And then one morning while he was speaking to them, he couldn't keep back his tears and he felt ashamed.

Why? He said, here am I, a big, strong, grown man, weeping like a child. Oh God, he said, forgive me. And he tried to keep back the tears and he succeeded.

And he finished speaking to them that morning. He went back again to speak to them, and this time there were no tears, but he had no power. And there and then he had to ask God, oh God, give me back my tears.

And when God gave him back his tears, he gave him back his power. And he flourished and grew and developed on the fellowship of his sufferings. The vision that brings us to our feet in exultation and exulting is a marvelous thing.

What about the vision that brings us to our face before God? That's marvelous too. Do we know something about it? Are we willing to know? Are we longing to know? God is longing to impart this fellowship of his sufferings. Can the Lord Jesus show his compassion to others through me, through me, that I may know him, the person, and the power of his resurrection, the power, and the fellowship of his sufferings, the passion? God help us and enable us that we may know these things in increasing measure, in ever deepening sense, until we see him face to face.

Let us pray. Lord Jesus, there is so little that we know when it comes to knowledge of thyself. Though some of us have been on the way for a long time, yet we know there is never a point which we are able to reach where we can ever say, I know it all.

Lord, help us to go on to know thee and all that concerns thee, thy resurrection power, thy passion, thy love, thy compassion, thy sympathy, thy gentleness. May we learn to know these things, O Lord. And then we are certain that the things that you give to us will never die.

Keep our minds intent upon knowing thee, our hearts prepared to follow thee, our whole lives given over to thee. Lord, have thy right of way in every heart and life before thee this morning. If there should be someone who cannot say, I know him as my Saviour, may that knowledge come before this service is over.

If there is someone who is saying this morning, I don't know him as my Lord, but I long to. Reveal yourself, Lord, in all thy sovereign power in that life. Hear us in our petition this morning, and help us to live as though Jesus died yesterday, arose today, and is coming back tomorrow.

Amen.

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