

The Saving Knowledge of God

by E.W. Johnson

The sermon explores the concept of the saving knowledge of God, which is not just knowing facts about God, but experiencing the glory of God in the soul of man through divine regeneration.

Duration: 48:27

Scripture: Jeremiah 31:31

Topics: "Knowledge Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of keeping our sexual desires pure and lawful, regardless of our gender. He also emphasizes the need to respect the property rights of others and not to steal. The preacher highlights the importance of maintaining social order and being faithful witnesses to our neighbors. He also discusses the knowledge of God and how it should manifest in our love for one another. The sermon references the Fourth Commandment and the New Covenant Salvation mentioned in the book of Jeremiah and the Gospel of John.

Transcript

In your study in the Gospel of John, we're now in the closing verses of the thirteenth chapter. This evening I began at verse thirty-one and read down through verse thirty-eight. John, chapter thirteen, verse thirty-one.

Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him. Little children, yet a little while I am with you.

You shall seek me, as it said unto the Jews, Whither I go ye cannot come. So now I say to you, A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another, as I have loved you, That ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, If ye have love one to another.

Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go thou canst not follow me now, But thou shalt follow me afterward. Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake. Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, Till thou hast denied me thrice.

And this evening I want us to focus our attention upon the words of our Lord in verse thirty-five. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, If ye have love one to another. And I want to speak to you upon the subject of the saving knowledge of God upon the souls of men.

If you and I as Christians are disciples, which means students of God, as God is manifested in His glory and grace in Jesus Christ, then you and I indeed have the knowledge of God upon our soul, and have because of that knowledge a thirst after greater knowledge of the Lord. And so what is the knowledge of God as it is known in the soul of man? Certainly God cannot be known apart from the truth, but still men can know factually great truth concerning God, and the information can be accurate, and still they do not know the Lord. The reason why we make this statement is because we know the devils can confess an orthodox creed.

When the Jews said, Thou sayest there is one God, he says the devils also believe and ye tremble. James in that statement is referring to the way that the Jews spoke of orthodoxy. When they spoke of orthodoxy, they spoke of confessing the one God.

They have as the foundation of their faith what they call the Shema Israel. Shema in the Hebrew means here. It is simply a quotation from the book of Deuteronomy which says, Here, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all of thy heart, mind, and strength.

And so James says, Thou believest there is one God. He said, Thou doest well. But the devils also believe.

They also have a basic fundamental orthodox creed and tremble. But then James goes on and accuses some of not truly having the saving knowledge of God as evidenced in the works that this would produce in their heart and life. I want this evening to go into the mystery of man's experience of God.

Exactly what happens when a man by the marvelous grace of God in divine regeneration is translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear son. Which means in the kingdom of unbelief, of darkness, into the kingdom of the true knowledge of God received in true faith. What happens when the knowledge of God indeed dawns upon the souls of men? Such a knowledge of God that of necessity they become self-motivated students of the Lord.

Now, Sylvester, I believe that you're adding to the words of our Lord here. I trust that as you come to develop this message, you will bring in some things that he said in context to this statement. He's speaking about how that not only should we love our neighbor as ourselves.

Now, Lord is not really adding to the commandments of God. He's simply bringing out a deeper application of that basic commandment of God that we should love our fellow man as ourselves. Saying that we should love our fellow Christians in a very special sense.

Now, certainly we could never love our fellow Christians to the extent in which our Lord has loved us as he loved us to the point that he died for us. But still, as he has a special love, we must have the same kind of love for our fellow Christian. And so John, as he in his first epistle reinforces this commandment of our Lord, he said it's a new commandment and yet again it is an old commandment.

You know, you and I may say that all children are in my grace. I just naturally delight myself in children. The most delightful things that we have upon this earth are boys and girls' children.

But still at the same time, I have a very special grace for my own. I've heard it said that you can't make a distinction between common grace and special grace. And we can't repeat that illustration.

A person could have a common, sort of an undistinguishing. So they're all just children, lovely children, but which we come to love our own. We love them as John and Bill and Mary.

We love them in a distinguishing way as individuals. And so certainly we can make that distinction between common grace, people being in our favor, and special grace. And so the law of God is summed up in those two commandments.

Love the Lord thy God absolutely, exhaustively, and love thy neighbor as thyself. Now we know that we cannot obtain under that perfection in the law as long as we're in this present life. We will make progress according to our faith.

But still our faith will not be perfect as long as we see through a glass darkly. It will only be perfect when we see the unveiled glory of God over yonder. Then we should be like Him.

Not that we should be godded into the Godhead. We'll always be just redeemed human beings. But we shall have that likeness to Him in that sense in which we can see Him in His beauty and in His glory.

There are things in this world that you cannot see, not really see, with appreciation. And there are things that we don't see them if we do not properly evaluate them, appreciate them. But as sure as we see with appreciation, we have a conformity unto those things.

Without a basic fundamental conformity, we could not see them. And as we increasingly see them, we have an increasing conformity unto those things. And so we shall have that conformity unto the Lord in the full view of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

You know, much of our joy in this world is in seeing, hearing, contemplating. We contemplate our relatives. And we have a certain joy, delight in that contemplation.

That when we see them face to face, we have, as it were, an increased sense of that joy in them. And so the great joy of all eternity is to be in the fellowship of God. All beauty in this world is but a dim reflection of the beauty and the glory of the grand architect of the universe, if I might use that term.

Whatever beauty that you can see radiant in a human being and a person is but a dim reflection of the beauty of God. And so over yonder that we shall have what we call the beatific vision, the vision that will beatify our souls. This means to render our souls completely blessed.

We know that down here, as we're pure in heart, we are blessed because we see God. And as we increase in purity in heart, we increase in that blessedness. But over yonder we shall come into the full beatific vision, the vision that shall beatify our soul.

But down here, unless we have this basic fundamental knowledge of God, I know that we're in the realm of the spiritual. Within the soul, what is the experience of the knowledge of God? It cannot be divorced from facts. Anyone that has a God, that the facts concerning God are not there.

And that's not only true, but there are other facts that are contrary to God that are there. They may have a God that they delight in, but it's an idol. Though they're made no images, it is an idol.

And so men cannot know God apart from the facts. But still the facts can be there. But still they do not have the knowledge of God.

And so what is this work of divine regeneration? This that the Bible speaks of is the greatest of miracles. You see, Pastor, I noticed you hesitate. I presume you thought we were hesitating when you called.

I'm sure you're referring to regeneration as the greatest of miracles. I believe I can speak of regeneration as the greatest of miracles because it uses a number of terms. It multiplies terms to speak of this.

It calls it a new birth. It causes it a resurrection of the spiritually dead. It calls it a new creation.

And then I quoted the text in Colossians. It's a translation in the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of God's dear son. And so what is this marvelous work in which the soul of man is regenerated? It is quite simple.

We simply are renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him. In the Garden of Eden, something left the heart of man. Man still knows God.

And yet again, he doesn't know God. But in divine regeneration, according to the Colossian letter in chapter 3, verse 10, a man is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him. And so the basic fundamental impression, the imprint of the dye upon the soul of man after the image of him that created him, he is renewed in that knowledge.

But exactly what takes place in the soul of man when a man becomes a self-motivated student? As it passed a few moments ago, he hesitated on that self-motivated student. Why would you make this statement? Because Jeremiah, in the 31st chapter of the book of Jeremiah, in verses 31 through 34, gives us the classic passage concerning new covenant salvation. And he says, in new covenant salvation, you won't need to teach them, know the Lord.

For they shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them. Now, God himself is going to put his knowledge in the souls of people. And as people hunger and thirst for the greater sense of God's glory, certainly there is the place for the teaching, the ministry of the word of God.

But basically and fundamentally, a person becomes a disciple, a self-motivated disciple because of divine regeneration. You know, a number of years ago, I wrote a paper on education of ministers, and I said that ministers ought not to have to have the motivation of earning degrees. If they want to do that, I have no objection.

But they should not have to have that. The pressure of grades. You know, if you're in school, you have a desire to earn your degree, and that motivates you.

And then you have the pressure that you want to grade out well in the classes and with your teacher and so on. And so ministers ought not to have that, have to have that motivation. And studying for the ministry, not that I find any great objection to them, but ministers simply ought to be self-motivated students.

And I base that upon the fact that they ought to be truly Christian. And truly, people that are Christians know something. And knowing something, they want to know more of it.

If a person really knows art, he wants to know more of it. If he really knows music, he wants to know more of it. And so if a man truly knows God, he wants to know more of it.

And so exactly what happens in the soul of man in this marvelous work, when a soul becomes renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him? What happens in the soul of man? That will be our study this evening. Let us pray. Our Father, we're grateful for this Sunday evening meeting, we're grateful for our Wednesday night meetings and all of the meetings of our congregation.

We pray, our Father, that we will indeed persevere in the Sunday evening, these Wednesday evening meetings, and in the radio broadcasts of the gospel and the other preachings as we have opportunity. Because, O Lord, we believe that our presence contributes to the services, but more importantly, we love Thee. We love to meet, to hear the word of God.

We are indeed self-motivated in our hungering and thirsting after the knowledge of God. We know the carnal nature is still with us, and the carnal nature has no time for church, not where the gospel is preached. It has time only for the things of the world.

But we trust the carnal nature is being mortified and that we're growing in the new nature, will help us to grow in this hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Bless us now as we hear some of this evening. We ask it in Christ's name.

Amen. In answer to our question this evening, what is the experience of divine regeneration wherein we are renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created us, wherein we come to know God not just in the statement of orthodoxy, but know God in the heart, in salvation. I'd like to divide this into three parts, as I customarily do, that we might better sort out and understand the answer to this mystery.

What does it mean to be renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him? Man knows already that God is. Man knows that God is holy. If the Gentiles do menage to the things contained in the law, the same being the law unto themselves that conscience bearing them witness, man must know that if God hath written the law, the ten commandments upon the soul, the conscience of men, that the God that did this is a God of holiness.

Man also knows that God is greater than circumstances, that God is not the victim of circumstances, that circumstances are subject to God, not God subject to circumstances. Some of the great stupidity of the time in which we live is referred to Calvinism as fatalism. Actually, Calvinism is the only escape from fatalism.

Beloved, you and I are either in the hands of circumstances or in the hands of a sovereign God. We did not choose the place of our birth. We were more than likely not to choose the place of our death.

And the times and the circumstances along life's way were more or less determined by those circumstances than it was by our free choice along life's way. And so we believe that God is greater than circumstances. Now, I know that fatalism in which men are taught that people are just victim of circumstances, I know that's a form of determinism in which events are actually determined.

And I know that Calvinism is a form of determinism, but that does not make them the same thing any more than to say that a cow is an animal and a horse is an animal would make a cow and a horse the same thing. Beloved, fatalism is the utter death of religion. You cannot praise the grace of fatalism.

You cannot meet to worship fatalism. You cannot pray to fate. You cannot seek the mercies of blind circumstances, but you can pray to a sovereign God.

You can glorify the grace of a sovereign God. You can seek the mercies of a sovereign God, especially as we know that all of the sovereignty of God is contained in the nail-scarred hands of his prime minister, Jesus Christ. And Jesus Christ is not only true God of one eternity of glory and deity with the Father and the Spirit, but he's also a true human being and one undivided person.

And he can be moved at the feeling of our infirmities. And so we should come boldly, confidently to the throne of grace that we might obtain help in time of need. And so, beloved, man knows that God is sovereign, greater than circumstances.

The reason why I know that he knows that is because when circumstances get beyond what he thinks to be his free will, he automatically will clad under God because he knows that God is there and God is greater than circumstances. And so if man knows that God is and man knows that God is holy and man knows that God is sovereign, what is missing? Beloved, the thing that is missing is that he does not know the glory. And so when man passes from death unto life, when man is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him, then the light that went out of the Garden of Eden is turned on again.

Man now can see God in his glory and delight himself in the knowledge of God as he is, in his holiness and in his glory. He says, Master, why should we delight ourselves in a holy God? Beloved, we ought to believe that the God of the heavens and the earth will do right. We ought to believe that the one that rules the universe is just.

I know it's an act of faith as we stand amid the trials and the difficulties and the sufferings of this present life. But still we believe that the God of the heavens and the earth is holy and we love the sight of a holy God. And we believe that God is sovereign, that all things are in the nail-scarred hands of Jesus Christ our Lord.

But we rejoice to know it so. And so what is divine regeneration? It is that spark of life that went out in the Garden of Eden in which the glory of God in the face of the person of Jesus Christ comes to the soul of man. Now you say, Master, I know that you preach that over the years.

You preach that because Jonathan Edwards preached it. But you don't preach it just because Jonathan Edwards preached it. We know that Jonathan Edwards preached it out of his own experience of the grace of God, that for many years he realized that he was an Orthodox Congregational Calvinist, brought up in that faith, but he simply did not know the Lord.

But one time someone was just reading a part of the book of Timothy, the first book of Timothy, where he speaks that in his own time he will show who is the blessed and omnipotent King of kings and Lord of lords. And Edwards says, in hearing that text, the glory came to my soul. And so Jonathan Edwards gave us what we call the New Life Movement, which actually built the Baptist people in this country.

In which Jonathan Edwards defines saving faith, the saving knowledge of God upon the soul of man, as an inward divine and supernatural light, the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ, shining in the soul of man. I know that you've preached that over the years, not because Edwards preached it, but because you believe it is the teachings of the Holy Scriptures. The Apostle Paul makes that quite plain in his second epistle to the Corinthians, that God, the command of the light to shine out of darkness, to shine in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face, or it could be translated, the person of Jesus Christ our Lord.

But Pastor, could you break that down just a little, especially in the light of our text. Exactly what is this glory of God in the soul of man? Beloved, it's not only orthodoxy, but it's also a people in love with orthodoxy. But not just in love with dry doctrine, but in love with the person that is seen in the truth of God, or the truth concerning God.

And so the glory of God upon the soul of man is not only an inward divine and supernatural light, as it shines in the souls of men, that lightens a path in this world as we believe not only that God is, but God in his holiness and in his power and authority is a lovely God. And so we, you say, Pastor, could you break that down in the words of the text. It means we love him, we love him.

You say, Pastor, what is love? Beloved, love essentially is the delight that we find in the objects of our love. I mean speaking experimentally. It is simply a pleasure, an elation that we have as we contemplate or see or hear that which we delight our soul in.

And so we say that the love of God in the soul of man is the true saving knowledge of God upon the soul of men. And you say, what is this glory, this love? It is a delight that we take in the contemplation of God. I know we do not see him directly.

We see him only in the mirror of the scriptures, but still in the mirror of the scriptures we have sufficient light as we receive that light by faith that we can know God and delight ourselves in God. Now you say, Pastor, what is the second point and what does it mean to know God? Beloved, if anyone knows God, in the love of the Holy One, that person also has a love of holiness itself. And it is a pure love of holiness itself.

I mean to that it is a love of holiness for holiness' sake. And a person may love morality because he doesn't want to have a bad reputation or she doesn't want to have a bad reputation. A person may love honesty because he knows that businesses are built in public confidence.

And we must, business people must maintain their business in strict honesty. If they are going to maintain their standing with their customers and so on. But that is honesty with a price tag.

That is chastity or morality with a price tag. But to have a love for honesty as a thing within itself, to have a love for chastity as a beauty within itself, to have a love for good courage as a beauty within itself, to have a love for holiness for holiness' sake is a sign that a person does indeed have a holy principle upon his whole. You say, well now you are bringing in something else about divine regeneration.

I have heard you say that the old theologian says that in divine regeneration, a principle of true holiness is imparted to the soul of man. Now as I often say, we don't know what life is. We just know that life is.

There is plant life and there is animal life and there is human life. We are told in the scriptures about angelic life. We know that life is.

And yet to really know what life is, we know it is something beyond just the mechanics of this body, human life. But what is life? We don't know. But we know it is.

And then we know there are principles within life that reveal itself in the characteristics of the life. And we don't know exactly how those principles are in that life, but still the principle is there. And we know that all men born of Adam have a principle of sin within them.

Little children born into this world, the psalmist says they go forth from the womb speaking lies. The psalmist says that David said, I was conceived in iniquity and brought forth in sin. And the apostle Paul says that we were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

And so we don't know exactly what a principle is. But there's a principle of evil within this man. And we know in divine regeneration, there's a good principle, a principle of holiness that is imparted to the soul of man.

And you say, well, you had divine regeneration. Very simple. You said divine regeneration is the glory of God as he is in truth upon the soul of man.

And you define that glory as the love of God. We love him in his holiness and we love him in his sovereignty. Now you're saying that divine regeneration is the impartation of a principle of true holiness.

Now you put that together. Beloved, there's some things you can't see unless you already have it in your mind. You can't really see art if you have no art in your mind.

You can't really hear music if you have no music in your mind. And so without a principle within, they can't see those things. And so, beloved, how can a man see the beauty of the holiness of God unless he has a holy spirit within him, a principle of true holiness imparted unto him? But I don't think that we ought to look around into our soul to try to look at the mystery of life and the mystery of these principles.

We simply know that life is, and within life there are principles. We simply know that the wind bloweth with listeth what it is. But we hear the sound thereof, but we can't tell what it came and where did it goeth.

And so we know this principle in the fact that we know God and love God. We love the Holy One. And to add a test.

Beloved, if you love a man, if you truly love him, you love his character. Now you can't say that he has a nice appearance physically. You cannot say that he's a very clever fellow.

He has a very pleasant sort of manner about him. You cannot say that you love him if you just can't stand his character. All of that physical appearance is marred to you when you really get to know him.

He's crooked. He's a liar. He's a libertine.

His mind is full of filth. And so I don't care how the physical appearance may be. If you don't like his character, then the physical appearance will quickly fade.

And all of his cleverness also will develop a stench about him if you don't like his character. You can't love a person if you don't like his character. And so, beloved, men cannot love God unless they love the character of God, his holy character.

And men cannot love the character of their fellow man if they do not love the principles of that character. And men cannot love the character of God unless they love the principles of that character. Is that what are the principles of God's character? Beloved, at Mount Sinai, God spoke those principles unto the children of Israel in his own voice.

Then God wrote those principles by his finger. Now, the Bible later on describes the finger of God as the spirit of God, upon tables of stone. And when Moses broke those tables, Moses prepared other tables, but

God himself rewrote those principles upon those tables of stone.

And then those tables of stone was put in the most sacred place of Hebrew worship throughout the days of Moses' tabernacle, throughout the days of Solomon's temple, and throughout the days of the second temple of the Jews. And so, beloved, the principles of God's holy character are contained in the Ten Commandments. He said, what's he dedicated to? He's dedicated what's right.

He said, what's right? He's dedicated the idea that I want to be respected. Thou shalt have no other gods but the one true God. He's dedicated the idea that we ought to worship him, and worship him in spirit and truth, and not in the caricatures of idolatry, to abominate his worship.

And he's dedicated the idea that we ought not to take his name in vain. He's dedicated the idea that we ought to rest in his providence and in his redemption, as anciently symbolized in the Jewish Sabbath. He's dedicated the fact that you and I ought to honor constituted human authority, beginning with the authority of father and mother.

But the principle carries on to all human authority. He's dedicated the fact that human life being made in the image of God is sacred. Thou shalt not kill.

He's dedicated the fact that the sexual powers of the human body, be we male or female, should be kept clean and wholesome and natural and lawful in the bonds of holy matrimony. He's dedicated the fact that you and I ought to respect the dignity of our fellow man and his property rights. We should not steal.

And he's dedicated the fact that we ought to hold the social order together by bearing faithful witness to our neighbor. And he's dedicated the fact that our hearts ought to be clean toward our neighbor's wife and our neighbor's property. Now, beloved, there's a change in the letter of the law, as seen in the fourth commandment, but there's no change in the spirit of these commandments.

There's no change in the principles of right and wrong contained here. There's no change in the intent of this. He said, what is the intent? The intent is that God be respected, that God be honored.

Honored not only in the fourth commandment, the direct honoring of God, but in the indirect honoring of God, in the honoring of God as his glory is revealed in human society. And so, beloved, if we love God, we love his commandments. He said, Pastor, it's a good theory, good doctrine, but are they any scripture? I'll give you two scriptures.

You go back to the book of Jeremiah, chapter thirty-one, verses thirty-one through thirty-four. New covenant salvation. I took your fathers by the hand.

I led them out. I was a husband unto them. I wrote my commandments upon tales of stone.

But in the new commandment, in the new covenant, I write my law upon your hearts. And so, beloved, if the whole world is sanctified in his beauty, in the heart of those that's been born from above, then the commandments of God has been sanctified. You see, give us another scripture.

Paul said in the seventh chapter of Romans, I delight in the law of God after the inward man. Why, Paul, you're trying to be saved by the law. All perish the thought I'm dead to that.

Why, Paul, because you're holding on to the old ceremonial law, all my soul. That old ceremonial law has faded out as it was fulfilled in the cross of Calvary. Why do you delight in the law? Paul has a principle of

true holiness, and he's so delighted in the law that though he had righteousness and free justification, still he wanted to do right just because it is right.

And for that reason he groaned against this old flesh, saying, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? And so, beloved, holy Paul is the interpretation of new covenant salvation, as you can see it in the thirty-first chapter of the book of Jeremiah. And so, beloved, divine regeneration is a great merit. It's worth seeking.

It's worth praying that our children, our grandchildren, that God Almighty might put His glory within them. Oh, that they may truly be humbled under the saving view of the love of God. And so, beloved, what is the glory of God? The glory of God upon the heart of man is the love of the Holy One.

Now, one other thought, and going back to our text. If you and I love God, we have a special affection for everything that makes visible the dignity of God. Now, it is true, we can't see with these natural eyes.

You and I belong to this material, this physical order. Man is the highest of created beings in this material, this physical order. And after the resurrection of the dead that will be in spiritual bodies, still, we will be part of this visible order.

And so, we hunger and thirst for the visible manifestation of our loved one, God, as He is in Jesus Christ. And John says, if you don't love the brethren whom you have seen, you do not really love God whom you have not seen. And our Lord Jesus Christ says that all men will know that you're Christians, you're my disciples, by the love that you have one toward another.

Now, beloved, to spell that out in its greatest sense, you and I should have a love for all human beings. Because however fallen, however defiled, if they have not been saved, human beings were made in the image of God. The text I quoted this morning from the ninth chapter of the book of Genesis, when capital punishment was established in the law upon this earth.

That text proves that to kill a man is not the same as to kill a dog, because the dog was not made in the image of God. And so, beloved, a man with his rationality, his intellect, his marvelous powers, is a reflection of God, though he knows not God. And so, we should have a love toward our fellow man.

We should be a neighborly people. They may reject us as we reflect the glory of God in a special sense, but we must manifest a love toward our fellow man. And, beloved, carrying that principle over, if we love God whom we've not seen, we especially embrace with our hearts our Christians, brothers and sisters whom we have seen.

We seek not outward manifestations of their dignity that might give them honor in this world. They may be among the world's poor, the world's unsuccessful. They may be afflicted, crippled.

But if they manifest the deep sense of the glory of God, so that they show evidence of knowing God, I believe that this beauty will transcend denominational lines and other things, and we can see in them the glory of the Lord. I close with this experience that I had in 1971. Mildred and I were visiting in Spain at that time and visiting with Dr. David Estrada, who teaches in the University of Barcelona.

And whom we supported a number of years as a missionary. And Dr. Estrada is the first one that ever received a Ph.D. degree from the University of Barcelona, who is a non-Catholic, a Baptist preacher. And he graduated summa cum laude, the highest honors.

But anyway, Dr. Estrada wanted me to attend a lecture one evening at the University. And I went there, and Dr. Cannons was the lecturer. He's a layman of the Catholic faith, but nevertheless a very devout Roman Catholic.

And his lecture was in Spanish, and actually I couldn't follow the lecture. I didn't have that much Spanish. But Dr. Estrada filled me in later on.

And during the lecture, I could see that Dr. Cannons was greatly shaken. He had a pretty good size audience. Everyone in the audience was a priest of the Roman faith, except Dr. Estrada and I, and we were Baptist preachers.

And they all knew that we were Baptist preachers too. We were quite welcome. And Dr. Cannons was greatly shaken.

And after the meeting, when Dr. Estrada filled me in, I asked him what happened. And one thing, I saw three priests walk out. They weren't excusing themselves.

They were rejecting it. They walked out. And then later on, someone challenged the statement of one of the higher priests, some kind of bishop or something.

And asked what happened. Now, the first statement, Dr. Cannons made the statement that the Jesuits, with their malignism, has undermined Catholic orthodoxy. Now, malignism among the Catholics is the same as Arminianism is among the Evangelicals.

They speak of Augustine, as we would speak of Calvinism, and then malignism is a form of Arminianism. And the Jesuits are built on that. And when he made that statement, these three Jesuit priests walked out in protest.

Then later on, Paul VI was the Pope. He said, if Paul VI departs from Catholic orthodoxy, I will declare publicly that he is no Pope. And someone questioned him.

But he didn't seem to back off. What a Spanish hat. But what I'm getting to the point is, when that meeting is over, those priests had some kind of little fellowship down the hall.

And they invited Dr. Strada and me to go down and take some refreshments. And Dr. Cannons made a beeline to us. He felt closer to Dr. Strada and me, knowing we were fabulous preachers.

He wanted me to come back up to the university the next day so he could give me an autographed copy of his book he had written. And I could tell he was closer to us. And though he was a devout member of that faith, I know that's a great mystery, but unlike Spurgeon, he said, I believe there's salt all over the earth to keep back corruption.

He based that upon the 17th and 18th chapters of the book of Revelation, when he prophesied of the destruction of that system, this great Babylon. The Lord will say, come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her corruption or of her judgments, for her judgments have come. And so there must be some of God's people in there.

But anyway, I do believe I felt the Spirit of God upon that man. I've been reading through Augustine. There's so many eras in Augustine.

Yet again, even in his writings, I can detect the Spirit of God. I believe that basically and fundamentally he knew the one true God in his holiness and sovereignty and in his grace. And so, beloved, if we know God, we have a delight in a fellow man, though the fallen, but in a special delight in a fellow Christians.

However humble they are, we love the humble people of God. And so, beloved, this is true discipleship. If a person doesn't have that glory, have all the church work, all the systems, do everything you want to try to get them to act like self-motivated students of God.

But with us, they're born from above. They just play in church. They do not really have it.

It takes a work of divine regeneration. All our orthodoxy, all of our preaching, it will not accomplish it unless God turns the light on on the inside. Let us pray toward that end.

We invite the deacons to come forward.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/1/SID1486.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ew-johnson/the-saving-knowledge-of-god/>

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