

Knowing Christ Pt 1

by Philip Powell

The sermon emphasizes the importance of knowing Christ through obedience, love, and the grace that empowers us to live out our faith.

Duration: 35:41

Scripture: 1 John 2:12

Topics: "Obedience To God", "Assurance Of Salvation"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of keeping God's commandments as a sign of true faith. He warns that those who claim to know God but do not obey His commandments are liars. However, he also highlights the assurance of salvation that believers have through Jesus Christ, who serves as their advocate before God. The preacher also addresses the issue of transparency, urging Christians to live in the fear of God and avoid hypocrisy. The sermon concludes with a reference to Philippians 3:10, emphasizing the desire to know Christ and make Him known as the mission and vision of the Christian Witness Ministry.

Transcript

Chapter 2. We'll read just the first two and a half verses. My little children, these things write I unto you, that you sin not, it is possible not to sin. And if any man sin, it is possible to sin.

You agree with that? We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous. The word righteous there is usually an adjective to describe something, but it's almost used as a noun there, identifying Jesus as the Righteous One, the Righteous. And that is set over against the fact that we may not sin and that we usually do sin.

But He, the One who is sinless, the Advocate, is the Righteous. We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous. And He is the propitiation, expression used only twice in the scriptures, basically means the idea of covering, but not covering up.

God never covers up, He covers. But He covers by first exposing. That's where the church is so very much at fault in trying to cover up.

Because in covering up you can never experience propitiation. You have to be exposed first, that which is brought to the light. That which is hidden is in darkness.

So that which is brought to the light and having been brought to the light, there is confession, there is repentance, there is a turning away and then there is propitiation, there is covering. And He is the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only. But also, this is potentially of course, practically we have appropriated it, but potentially there is the provision.

There are those who teach what they call particular atonement or limited atonement, limited redemption. I believe that Christ died for all. The Bible makes this very clear.

And in that He died for all, says that they which live. There is a distinction between the ones that He has died for, He has died for all and those that live, those that appropriate the efficacy of His work. And not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

And hereby, know we that we know Him. If I were to take a text, it would be Philippians chapter 3, 10. That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings being made conformable unto His death.

We are working on various things in respect of the fellowship and one thing that we are working on is the Christian Witness Ministries Fellowship website. And on that website, when it eventually becomes public, it's just up for private viewing at the moment. We have included our mission and vision statement.

Churches tend to adopt a mission statement. What is our mission? We have decided to, by God's grace, keep it simple and never change it. Very simple statement.

Our mission, our vision is to know Christ and to make Him known. We've predicated that upon a couple of ideas in the scripture. Lots of people say, go into all the world and preach the gospel, that's the most important thing.

No, it's not. The most important thing is to come to Christ and learn of Him. Before Jesus said, go into all the world, He said, come, learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart and you will find rest unto your soul.

Unless we have learned of Christ, we are restless and we can never share His rest, which is the part of the mandate of the command to go. Yes, going is very, very important. But Jesus said, come.

Says He ordained twelve. What for? To preach? No. He ordained twelve that they might be with Him, to associate with Him.

And He said unto them, come ye after Me and I will make you to be fishers of men. If you follow Me, observe what I do, go where I go, put your feet where I put My feet, observe Me, imitate Me. The word literally is mimic Me.

Follow Me. Mimic Me and I will make you to become fishers of men. If we follow Christ, it's inevitable that we will be fishers of men.

Follows as day follows night. It's inevitable. In some way or other, He will turn us into fishers of men.

Some in different capacities. You may be just sharing on the doorstep, but you will influence people if you follow Christ. Hallelujah.

And then He said, go therefore and make disciples. The vision and goal of CWM is up there on the statement. Assembly shall always remain that of the Apostle Paul, or Paul the Apostle.

The word Apostle is never a title, nor was the term pastor intended to be a title. It's a function. It's a designation of our work ethic.

An Apostle is one who is sent, who is sent with authority. Paul the Apostle. Paul never called himself the Apostle Paul.

He called himself Paul, a bond slave of Jesus Christ, called to be an Apostle. So, our vision will always remain that of Paul the Apostle as expressed in Philippians 3.10-11, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings be made conformable unto his death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. No humanly conceived goal or ambition shall replace or override this goal.

We won't set numbers. We will not have number goals because that detracts. We are presenting Christ.

Our goal is to know Christ and to make Him known. We allow Him to deal with the number situation. This is a big problem that has happened within the context of church growth in my opinion.

No humanly conceived goal or ambition shall replace or override this goal which shall remain the mission of CWM Fellowship at all times. Now, the big issue in respect of the first part of verse 3 is how do we know that we know Christ? How do we know that we know Christ? People say, I know Christ, I know you, I know. How do we know that we know? Is it just an experiential thing? Is it just something I know because I know because I know? There is an aspect of truth in that but is there something more than that? John in chapter 2 provides us with a fourfold test of how we know Christ and whether we do in fact know Christ.

It's sort of the answer to four questions. We'll deal with a couple of them only today and then pick up the others next week. The first question is do we keep the commandments of the Gospel? For verse 3 says, Hereby we know that we know Him if we keep His commandments.

So, the conclusion is if we don't keep His commandments we don't know Him, right? I don't think you can make any other conclusion. Now, that's not a Gospel built on works. The Gospel starts with grace and continues with grace but His grace is sufficient for us to keep His commandments.

And so, this is the first test. Do we keep the commandments of the Gospel? The second test is in verse 9. We'll have a look in a moment. Do we love our brothers and sisters? John says hereby that we know that we know Him that we love our brothers.

If we hate our brother, we don't know Christ. It's as simple as that. And then the third test is do we love the Father or the world? The Bible says if we love the world the love of the Father is not in us.

So, we don't know Christ if we love the world. And then the fourth thing is do we have the anointing upon our lives? Because it says here that if we don't have the anointing we don't know Christ. Now, of course you know that my idea about the anointing differs from most of the Pentecostal Charismatic's presentations of it and I think I'm biblical.

The anointing is not something upon a special individual. He may be blessed in a particular way to do a particular work. We all have different functions but the anointing is a general thing upon God's people.

The only differentiation you have of anointing in the New Testament of standards is in respect of Christ. He is the anointed because he is Christ. He is the Messiah.

So, the person who comes up along and says I am specially anointed to do this or that and what have you they are actually jockeying for the position of Jesus and as such they are anti-Christ. Because they are replacing Christ. They are saying I am specially anointed.

We have the anointing and the anointing teaches us all things. That's what the Bible says. Now, that doesn't mean everything in the Scriptures but it does mean everything with respect to our relationship with God.

If you look at it in the context it says you know all things, you don't need that any man teach you. It's talking about the things concerning our relationship with God. Nobody needs to teach me about that.

I know it because of the anointing. It's the inner witness that Wesley spoke about. Okay.

Right, let me just go back and let me just point out very quickly and we will just go through it quickly. I promise I won't keep you very much beyond quarter to six. So, okay.

The chapter 2 is divided with verse 12 and verse 12 to 14 goes back to the theme that John has introduced at the beginning of this chapter and he makes a division so that the first two questions are dealt with in the first part of the chapter and the second two questions are dealt with in the second part of the chapter. So, chapter 2 is divided at verse 12 with verses 12 to 14 as an interlude in which John returns to the theme from verses 1 to 3. So, that's where we'll divide and we'll finish with just the two concepts today. Let me just read again those verses 12 to 14 and then I'll go back to verses 1 to 3. I write unto you little children because your sins, that's the recurring theme.

He's dealing with sin and the sin question and he says that Christ is of course the great advocate, the paraclete, the paracletos. The word paraclete is used in respect of the Holy Spirit in that the Holy Spirit represents Jesus Christ here on earth and he does not represent himself. That is why it's very wrong and the churches have opened themselves up to all sorts of false spirits when they have magnified the activity and person of the Holy Spirit beyond his intention.

He has come to witness to Christ and to point to Christ and Jesus said he will take of mine and reveal it unto you. He will not speak of himself. He will not be grandstanding with regard to himself and this is what the church has done.

They've given the Holy Spirit that grandstand position but Jesus Christ is the head of the church and Jesus Christ said he will take of mine and he will reveal it unto you. So, the Holy Spirit is referred to as the paracletos of Christ. He is the one who comes alongside to help us to represent Christ.

But in heaven the great paracletos is Christ himself and he is standing between us and the Father. He is the great intercessor. He is the great advocate and he is there as the intercessor in respect of the big issue in the world which is the sin question.

You can get healed by various means. I believe you can be divinely healed. That's great.

But you can get healed by a doctor. You can get healed by various professing people and of course they don't actually do the healing. It's God who does the healing but they can be involved as specialists in that

area.

But there is only one who is the specialist in the sin question and that's Jesus Christ and he came to deal with the sin question which is fundamental both to the world and to the church. And once we get that settled in respect of ourselves individually and collectively and the whole big picture I believe that we will again see the supernatural intervention of the Holy Spirit among us in mighty signs and wonders for the glory of his great name. If he were to bless the Western Church today with signs and wonders he would be endorsing our lifestyle and our sinfulness and he's not going to do that.

So let Benny Hinn make his amazing claims and let them all make their incredible claims. When they are put to the test they fail. It does not happen.

That is the issue of the matter. And the reason is very very clear that it is man that is getting the glory, man that's getting the prominence and God has said I will not give my glory to another. And it's when we return to these fundamental considerations we will begin to see I believe the shaking and supernatural power of God coming back to his wonderful church.

Oh God grant it. God grant it for the glory of his great and eternal name. I write unto you little children because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

I write unto you fathers because you have known him that is from the beginning. And here what he is saying is these issues that I'm discussing here I know that you will receive because something has happened in your life. Now let me go back to verses 1 to 3 and we'll come back to that probably next week.

My little children, the apostle reveals here the father's heart both of God himself and of him as an older man in the ministry. And he refers to them as you know the French term is mon petit. My little dear, mon petit.

We have a word in Welsh. It's the word Bach, Philip Bach. They don't say it to me any longer but they used to say it to me Philip little one.

No longer little one but you know it was that concept. It's a term of endearment. And here you can see the great father's heart of the apostle and of God himself when he says my little children, mon petit.

My little ones, Bach. You know, he loves us. Blessed be his wonderful name.

Notice what he says. My little children, these things write unto you that you sin. Oh, the thing that holds up the manifestation of the power of God so often is sin.

Now we can look at it at an individual level or we can look at it at a collective level. I have been profoundly, profoundly disturbed by the way the whole evangelical church has set aside their Protestant beliefs to pursue after the papacy in respect of the death of John Paul II and in respect of the accession of Benedict XVI. Is idolatry sin? Idolatry is sin.

Does the Roman Catholic church practice idolatry? John Paul II commended the keeping of his soul to Mary, not to Jesus. John Paul II committed the future of his own country to Mary. Present Benedict XVI issued a declaration, I have a copy of it, condemning any priest or anybody who went public about the paedophilia that was going on among the priests in the Catholic regime.

He did that with the endorsement of the man who has died. Is that sin? And yet the whole world has gone after them. Incredible.

Billy Graham made one of the most incredible statements you could ever think in respect of the previous Pope. Fred Nile has done the similar thing. You heard us when we read out to you what Brian Houston, the President of the Families of God has said.

The Baptists have done the same thing. We've got the statements here. I don't have time to go into them.

Joel Edwards, General Director of the Evangelical Alliance. Gordon Moyse, Bible talks about the beast that has a mortal wound and that is healed. Could that have been Pope John Paul II when he was shot? I don't know.

Could it be a reference to the declining and then suddenly the upsurge? I don't know. But it says that the whole world will go after it with admiration. That's the word there in Revelation.

Is that idolatry? These things, my little children, we write unto you that you sin not. Is it sinful for the evangelical churches to go down that track and nobody is making a stand against it except some fringe people like ourselves and Dave Hunt? Yet the whole church is going after it. My little children, these things write unto you that you sin not.

If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father. Only one advocate, only one intercessor. Only one who stands between us and God.

Not the saints. Not Mary. Not the idols.

We can talk about the false religions in other countries and rightly so and we should go and try and do something about it. But the reverse is happening in our own country. And it's happening in our churches.

And we will be ineffective and powerless unless we deal with it. It's a cop-out to say, oh well, God will deal with that. Tell Martin Luther that.

Of course, God dealt with it. But He dealt with it through men who were willing to stand up and be counted. Where are we going to go? Where is it going to end? We are on a slippery slope towards the ultimate apostasy.

People talk about it as being revival. It's only a revival of apostasy. And it's increasing in leaps and bounds.

Do we know that we know Him? How do we know that we know Him? Do we keep His commandments? We see the Father's heart crying out here. My little one, my little children. And then you see the passion and provision of the Saviour.

We have an advocate if we do sin, if we do fail in these things or in other things. Thank God, friends, there's an answer. We have an advocate with the Father.

And notice the expression, He stands there alone, supreme above all others. Jesus Christ the righteous. There is none other that you can describe in those terms.

He is the only one that you can say is the righteous. You may say that a person is righteous at a particular time. But there is nobody that you can say in all history that stands and says that He is the righteous.

Blessed be His wonderful name. And so He becomes the solution. The passion and provision of the Saviour.

Oh, thank God for that scene on Calvary. Thank God that we have been taken there today as we gathered around the table of the Lord to behold Him. Thank God for those great hymns and those marvellous words.

And I believe that if we can introduce and reintroduce them, including the Pentecostal hymns, that the people will come to sing those songs, not only to hear the preaching of the Word of God. They have a depth. They have something about them.

And brothers and sisters, whereas there is a situation that has developed in the church where style has taken over in respect of substance, I believe that it is substance that will ultimately triumph. And substance will cause the swing of the pendulum. And we will see people coming again for the substance of the Word of God and the substance of these deep and wonderful hymns.

The passion and provision of the Saviour. The basis of our assurance is contained in verse 3. And hereby do we know that we know Him if we keep His commandments. There is a big debate raging.

There is one man here in the city who is always clanging his cymbal about his reversion to once saved, always saved. Well, I don't know. I don't find once saved, always saved in the Bible.

But I do find in the Bible an assurance of salvation. Hallelujah! I do find in the Bible statements that says these things, right I unto you that you may know that you have eternal life. I do find in the Bible statements repeated over and over again about the life in Christ and the eternal life.

What is eternal life? Now, I am quite sure that in the context it doesn't mean life without beginning because there is a time when our life in Christ begins. Nor am I convinced that it is emphasizing that it is without ending. It's talking about a quality of life.

And the life is in the Son. And if we have the Son, we have the life. And the test of whether we have the Son and whether we know that we know Him is as I am trying to present to you today that we keep His commandments.

Now, we cannot keep them in our own energy and strength. So, we are not kept by our works, but we are kept by the grace of God. And it is the grace of God which enables us to keep those commands.

So, it doesn't become a works salvation at all. It flows from Him. We work out what He works in.

And that's the way it is. Hallelujah! But I thank God I have an assurance of salvation. Blessed be His wonderful name.

And that salvation is in Him. Blessed be His wonderful name. The basis of our assurance.

And verses 4 to 7 really puts the test on. Are we liars? Or are we speaking the truth? Verse 4 says, He that says, I know Him and doesn't keep His commandments is a liar. So, you say I am a Christian, but you don't keep the commandments of Jesus.

You are a liar. Now, I didn't say that. The Bible says that.

But when we realize the implication of it, thank God we turn to Him who is our great Advocate. And there He is at the right hand of the Father on high. And He stands alone as the just, as the righteous.

Hallelujah! And He says as He points to His hands, metaphorically of course, and His side, and He says this, I endured for Him. And as the great hymn writer puts it, God will not twice payment demand. First, at my surety's hand, and then again at mine.

Hallelujah! He's paid the price in full. Blessed be His wonderful name. The answer rests with our reaction to Christian commandments.

I'm not just talking about the law of the Old Testament. I'm talking about the commandments of the New Testament. And the writer here seems to divide them into two parts.

He says the old ones that we have had from the beginning. And then he talks about the new command which Jesus repeated a few times in John 13 and twice, and then John 15. And He calls it a new commandment I give unto you that you love one another.

So this leads us to the next big issue and the big question. Do we love our brothers and sisters? Again, a new commandment I write unto you which thing is true in Him and in you. Because the darkness is passed or really is passing.

That's the idea. And the true light is now shining. The light as it continues to shine.

We learn as we go. I'm learning all the time. We learn as we read the Scriptures.

We learn as we interact with people. We learn as we derive the grace of God. We learn as we pray.

And there's more and more light shining in upon us. We learn as we go out in evangelism and in missions work. We learn.

There is more and more light coming to us. And as a result, the darkness is passing because the light is coming. Hallelujah! Can you see that wonderful picture of the grace of God flooding in upon us and of Christian living? It's not an all in one act sort of thing.

Although in that initial act when we surrendered to Christ we do become new creatures or new creations in Christ Jesus. All things are passed away and behold all things have become new. But through the sanctifying process of the work of the Holy Spirit the darkness is being pushed out by the light coming.

Blessed be His wonderful name. Verse 8 demonstrates this progressive Christian experience. The darkness is passing.

The maturing process. The increasing light. Verse 9. He that says he is in light and hates his brother is again a liar.

He's in darkness until now. Now how do we show that we love our brother? Well the Bible says that if our brother does something wrong we should pray for him. Right? But it also says we should rebuke him.

Right? Then it becomes his responsibility. So love or a lack of love is not evidenced in withholding the sword. If you love somebody you will be honest with them.

We as Christians particularly and human beings in general we are sensitive, oversensitive sometimes. We take offense so quickly. Why don't we learn as a group of people to say well Lord I'm not because I'm a preacher in a position where I cannot be corrected.

We all need correction. The Bible says that if God loves his children he chastises them. Right? If he doesn't then you're not a child really.

You're not a son. You're a bastard. You're an illegitimate.

And so he comes back to his father's heart here where he says little children little children these things write I unto you that you sin not. See verses 10 to 11 makes it clear and we'll finish with this. Love clears the way.

Hatred causes the stumbling. And he that loves his brother abides in the light and there is no occasion of stumbling in him. One of the great cries of the world outside I've been talking quite extensively this last week and it's going to be a big article in the in the Business Review Weekly.

Make a note of the date. May the 23rd. Of the lack of transparency.

Now it's natural in the people of the world but what about the people inside the church? Leaders and ordinary people in the Christian framework do not hide what is appropriate. They hide what is inappropriate. The big cry is transparency.

I'd hate to go to my grave a hypocrite. I'd hate to die a multi-millionaire and have ripped the people off and made merchandise of the gospel. I'd sooner live in the light of the fear of God Almighty and allow him to provide for me.

And he's never let me down blessed be his wonderful and glorious name. Love clears the way. Hatred causes stumbling.

If you hate a person you do your utmost to harm that person. If you love a person you do your best and your utmost to correct the person and to see the glory of God come into the situation. So, how do we know that we know him? Well, do we keep his commandments? Do we love our brother or our sister? Two other things we'll look at next week.

Do we love the Father or the world? You can't love both. Do you have the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon your life? Father, thank You for the things that You have brought us to. Thank You for the progression of divine revelation and insight and perception.

We pray that You will increase it among us all. Thank You for the brothers who've come to share with us. I pray that You will prosper what they have put their hand to for the glory of God.

I pray that You will save them from overstretching themselves and going beyond themselves or beyond their appointment. I pray that the will of God will be done and the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ will always be sought. Save us from carnal human ambition.

Give us a heart like Yours. Give us a heart after holiness. These things I write unto you that you sin not.

And when we do fail, when we do fall, thank God. But if any man sins, we have an advocate. We're the Father.

Jesus Christ, the Righteous. Thank You for being with us.

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