

10. KNOWING OURSELVES

The knowledge of sin lies in the heart of every single man that has walked the face of this earth. God has planted this knowledge into our conscience, so that we may be aware that as a result of Adam and Eves disobedience, a penalty is to be exacted.

God has displayed a knowledge of Himself in the heavens, and in nature to remind mankind of his duty to worship God. God gave the Hebrew people the 10 commandments that they may be aware of their duties to God, and God's judgement against sin. But man in his deceitfulness decided to worship and sacrifice to idols to placate the wrath to come. It was more convenient to man to worship idols as he could manipulate and decide himself on his form of worship. Nevertheless, it was man's effort to try and placate God.

But it was only the law of God that revealed the sinfulness of sin and its pollution. It is only by knowing ourselves that we are able to appreciate the vileness of sin. And we can only know ourselves through the supernatural revelation by the Holy Spirit in our new birth. So only by Christ is to be found the true knowledge of sin, firstly by His being made sin for us, and secondly by His work in saving us from sin.

Only through the death of the pure and perfect son of God have we been made aware of the vileness of sin and its utter repulsiveness to God - sin will not go unpunished. Nothing less than the death of God's son could satisfy the wrath of God against sin.

It was a sacrifice that God was prepared to make to redeem the remnant from damnation **JN 3:16** "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" Man does not have the means to redeem his own life, or the life of his brother. **PSM 49:7, 8** "No man can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for him - the ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough ..." God looks on the efforts of those who stand in the place of Christ for the atonement of sins, as foolishness.

One of the truths that man has the greatest difficulty in learning, is that man is utterly unable to obey God and live-in agreement with God. **ROM 7:15 FF** The law, or nature do not teach this truth, because it is to be found only in the Lord Christ. **ROM 8:2-4** This is proven to us as we consider the utter inability of man to root out and destroy the power of sin in his life. In our early Christian lives, we tend to hide our favourite sins in the recesses of our hearts, they are our friends, our comforting thoughts, feeding on them in secret. But thanks be to the wonderful presence of the Blessed Holy Spirit in our hearts - His convicting power moves us to deal with these sins. These are the marks of progress in our Spiritual lives - a wisdom hidden in Christ alone.

The whole purpose of God allowing sin into the world was that God's glorious grace in Christ Jesus may be praised in the pardoning and forgiveness of sin. Outside of Christ, sin in its own nature only brings dishonour to God. But in Christ, God is seen to be a God pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin.

All men know that God is a righteous God. Because of His righteousness, no man can stand before Him in judgement. Knowing this, men fear lest their "self-righteousness" will not save them from death and destruction. He therefore looks to the law for his righteousness (Rich young ruler). But in his heart of hearts, the rich young ruler knew the law could not save him, that is why he asked Jesus "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" (works) Man's flesh, weakened by sin, cannot walk in perfect obedience to the law.

But in his continued efforts at self-righteousness, some turn to buying of indulgences, the paying of penances and to purgatory. It is a white washing of the conscience that has no depth or endurance.

They are enemies to God's righteousness, because they reject God's righteousness over their own righteousness.

Once man is brought to realise that he is a sinner, condemned by God's law, knowing that it is useless for him to think that he can stand before a righteous God, and knowing that he cannot keep God's law perfectly, he learns that Christ has fully atoned for his sins. So, in Christ alone is righteousness to be found. This brings him to the realization that **ROM 8:1** "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus". And as one who is in Christ by faith, conscience no longer condemns me for sin. However, sin is never more alive than when it is unable to serve its lusts.

But to say we are not guilty is not enough. We need perfect obedience to God's law, and this is only found in the perfect obedience of Christ. Has not the blood of Jesus covered our unrighteousness and disobedience? Jesus being the perfect righteousness is our righteousness if we are in Him.

We need to know ourselves in respect of Judgement. True wisdom of this lies in the Lord Jesus Christ. We must know the truth of the judgement to come in the death of Christ, and that this is confirmed by His resurrection. His resurrection was the proof that He had conquered death.

We also need to know how this judgement is to be carried out. It will be carried out by Him who loved us. Who is himself righteous, who died for our sins, and it will be carried out against the enemies of righteousness? Against those who have reviled and rejected God's plan of salvation. He is the one who holds out unspeakable joy to the one, but to the other, unspeakable terror. This wisdom is hidden in Christ. So, in Christ, we are made wise as to sin, righteousness, and judgement.

How do we walk with God? To walk with God, we need to agree with Him. The last thing an enemy of God wishes to do is walk with Him. Only in Christ can foolish men learn the wisdom to walk with God.

If we would walk with God, it is necessary for us to walk with Him in the way of holiness. This is hidden in Christ and can only be learned from Christ (We dealt extensively with the process of sanctification - holiness - in our studies in the "Holy Spirit")

We need to be strong if we are to walk in holiness. In ourselves we have no strength, our strength comes from Christ.

We need to walk in confidence. This boldness of faith comes from faith in the atoning work of Christ.

We need to have the same purpose as God. God is a holy, glorious loving father. We must see Him in that light, and what He has done for us in our redemption. God's purpose is to glorify Himself. He is the only one worthy of honour and glory.

To make progress in knowing ourselves calls for self-examination in the light of our relationship to the triune God. This can only be done with a humble and contrite heart. In the world we examine ourselves in the light of our business and career opportunities. But in our Spiritual life we need to examine ourselves in relation to the will of God.

In our Christian life, the Lord has set aside certain tasks for each and every one of us. Let us seek His wisdom in fulfilling these tasks, according to His will.