

Knowing God 2 of 2

Knowledge of God

#0201

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—December 14, 1968

Let us turn to Hosea 6. We were looking at some verses in this chapter last night. This morning we want to go on pursuing this subject of loving God and knowing God.

Do you remember last night we found that what God wants is not our sacrifices and offerings, He wants us to what? Love Him. And to love Him, we need to what? To know Him.

So He says in Hosea 6:6, as we read from the translation last night, “I don’t want your sacrifices, I want your love. I don’t want your offerings; I want you to know Me.”

Now in the third verse, we just began our study of this third verse last night:

“Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD:
His going forth is prepared as the morning...” Hosea 6:3.

If we want to know Him, we need to understand that His revelation of Himself is like the dawn. It begins very gradually and continues gradually until the full brightness of noonday.

I’m glad it’s this way, friend. We’d be blinded by a sudden, glorious revelation of God. Saul was on the way from Jerusalem to Damascus; it took that to shake him up and wake him up. But it left him, even after his baptism and partial healing, with the marks of that encounter with God, branded on his eyes all the rest of his life.

God’s usual plan of revealing Himself to you and me is, is as this text says, like the morning, it’s gradual. But because it’s gradual, it’s nonetheless certain, nonetheless real. It’s lighter now than it was at 4:00 this morning. It’s lighter than it was at 5:00, or 6:00, or 7:00. And especially if the clouds clear away, it’ll be lighter when we leave the service this morning, won’t it?

But that whole thing has been gradual, just a minute at a time, a little more light, a little more light, a little more light. And hardly at any point can one say, “This is it. All was dark before, all is light now.”

So:

“...shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD...”
Hosea 6:3.

Now this indicates that there is some effort that we're to make, some attitude that we're to take.

"Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD..."
Hosea 6:3.

The earth receives this glowing and growing light by turning toward the sun. If it were possible for the earth to have a will of its own, a decision of its own, and if it should decide to stop right at the point when you and I are just beginning to see the light of dawn, what would happen? We'd just stay right there.

Imagine what it would be to always be living in a twilight, similar to what we have, say an hour before the sun appears. It's hard to imagine it because we've never seen anything like it. We're used to the earth turning toward the sun, and keeping it up.

Now God intends that our turning toward Him shall be just like that except for this important fact: it will never get past noonday. Heaven is a ceaseless approaching to God through Christ. And as we leave the midnight experience of separation from Him not knowing Him, and as we advance knowing Him better every day, the time will never come when there will be any cessation, never will there be any diminishing, and so it is written:

"Thy sun shall no more go down..." Isaiah 60:20.

Oh friends, we have ahead of us a glorious prospect, always, on through eternity, nearer to God, a better knowledge of Him. Remember, it begins here. I've told some folks there's only one way to get more out of Heaven, more out of eternal life, and that's to start sooner because there is no end at the other end.

Suppose you go a million years from now and you want to add on something, it's already added on. There will never be any chance to get any more at that end, but at this end, yes, by beginning sooner, and entering in with more of our hearts, we can add to the total. Because, remember this, friends, we pick up in the school above, right where we left off in this school. Don't forget that.

If you've just gone to the third grade when you die, well, you'll pick up in the fourth grade there. If you've finished the eighth grade when you leave here, well you can start right in with high school. I'm only using an illustration, of course, but you see what I mean, don't you?

Oh, how wonderful it is to pack everything possible into *this* life, this preparatory school. And what is the subject? Knowing God. Knowing God.

"Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD..."
Hosea 6:3.

Look at Hosea 4:6, please.

"My people are" what? Destroyed. Why? "For lack of knowledge."

“...because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee...” Hosea 4:6.

Now it’s interesting, the literal translation of that verse is:

“My people are destroyed for lack of *the* knowledge...”
Hosea 4:6.

It isn’t just knowledge in general, knowledge of mechanics, knowledge of astronomy, and on and on and on. The reason that God’s people are destroyed when they are destroyed is for lack of knowledge—the knowledge He is talking about here in the sixth chapter, and the sixth verse.

“...I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings” Hosea 6:6.

Saving knowledge is the knowledge of God—to Know God.

And how are we going to know Him? Hosea 6:3:

“Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD...” Hosea 6:3.

The Revised Standard Version reads:

“Let us know, let us press on to know the LORD...”
Hosea 6:3.

Moffatt translates it:

“Let us make haste to know Him...” Hosea 6:3.

So, this morning, picking up just where we left off last night, let us enter in to a deeper study of *how* to know Him. And remember, this is the Christmas present we decided last night, we were all going to give Jesus. Right? Because He says that’s what He’d like. Wouldn’t it be nice to give Him what He would like? Wouldn’t you like to receive a present that you really want? There’s just one thing God wants. He wants our love; He wants us to know Him. That’s the word He’s sent us.

So we’ve decided to do that. In order to love Him, we must know Him. And in order to know Him, we must follow on to know Him. Wherever we are in the Christian life, it’s our privilege to get closer to Him, know more of His character, His glory.

Now let’s turn over to Matthew 11, and we’ll find out this morning how to know Him. This is a wonderful statement on the part of our Lord:

“At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid

these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes” Matthew 11:25.

Is that really true? There are some things that even children can know that a lot of wise men don’t know? I wonder what it is? Well, that’s what we’re studying about this morning, the knowledge of God.

“Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of My Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him” Matthew 11:26–27.

Now let’s look at this.

Who knows the Son? The Father.

And who knows the Father? The Son. And anybody else? Oh yes, there’s somebody else, and who is he? He to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him. Whosoever! Well, as the song says, whosoever means *me*. It can mean me, can’t it? But if I know the Father, it will be through the revelation that Who has made? The Son. Jesus.

Do you see that? The only way I can know the Father is through whom? The Son.

Then if I want to get acquainted with God, I must get acquainted with whom? Jesus, the Son.

Now let’s turn to John 17:3. Here you see is the wisdom that the wise and prudent of this world don’t know a thing about. That’s why they say so many foolish things. But even children can understand *this*. John 17:3. Will you read it with me?

“And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent” John 17:3.

Can we know Jesus? Yes. And this is what? Life eternal.

“That they might know Thee...” John 17:3.

The Father.

And we’ve already seen that the way we know the Father is through whom? The Son.

Now, let’s go to the 14th chapter of this same book.

“If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also: and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him” John 14:7.

If you really know Me, He says, you know whom? The Father.

Now notice Phillip’s response:

“Lord, show us the Father, and it suffices us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Phillip?” John 14:8–9.

You mean I’ve been here with you all this time and you don’t know Me yet? Oh yes, they might have said, we know you all right, but we’d like to see the Father. What’s the next sentence?

“...he that hath seen me hath seen the Father” John 14:9.

Now let’s look at that. Does that mean that Jesus and His Father were, or are, identical? Does it mean that there was nobody up in Heaven when Jesus was down here? Who was He praying to in John 17? Was He praying to somebody? And where was Jesus? Down there under the shadow of the trees near Jerusalem that night.

Where was the Father? He was up in Heaven. So it’s clear He is not seeking to destroy in our minds the identity of either one of them, the personality of either one of them.

And yet, with this very clear that there is the Father, there is the Son; nevertheless He says:

“...he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father”
John 14:9.

I wonder what it is about God that He’s trying to reveal to us? I wonder what it is that He’s asking us to get acquainted with Him about? I wonder what it is that He wants us to *know* when He speaks of knowing Him?

I think you’ll agree with me when I say it’s His character.

Now doubtless we shall be thrilled when we shall actually see His lovely face. And each one of us doubtless has in his imagination a picture of the Savior. And incidentally, doubtless, that picture changes from time to time. I mean that mental picture in our minds. And that by the way is the reason, one of the reasons that God said in the Second Commandment: “Don’t make any graven images of anything in Heaven or earth and kneel down and worship.”

We have an expression today of “freezing” things. We don’t necessarily mean putting them in a deep freeze. We just mean catching the mold of the moment and maintaining it. The heathen have done that with their concepts of God, you see.

Somebody has made an image of God, and forever after, all the worshipers kneel down before that image. And all paganism testifies that the result of that is that the view of God degenerates until finally they even get to worshiping beetles, and apes, and bulls, and crocodiles, and all manner of things.

Paul says that professing themselves to be wise, they became fools and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man, and to birds, and beasts, and four-footed things, and creeping things. You see friends, God never intended in this life that our concept of Him should be frozen. That lovely face should be clearer today than it was yesterday.

Like the dawn, as we've already seen, He doesn't want us to stop the rotation of the earth even in the glory of the sunrise and say, "Right here we stop. Let's look at beautiful red clouds forever afterward." You know I've thought about it. It's beautiful to see those glowing colors in the morning when the Lord favors us with that kind of a sunrise. But I'm not sure that it would look quite the same to us if it was just frozen there, and we looked at that for seven days straight. What do you say?

No. I think the way the Lord has made it is just right. And so in the experience we're studying this morning, the thing that God wants us to see is the ever-widening, ever-increasing glory of His character, His attributes.

"...he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" John 14:9.

In other words, "I'm so like My Father," watch this point, "if there's anything about Me that you like, you'll find it exactly the same in Him. If there should be anything in Me you don't like, you would find it exactly the same in Him."

You know, sometimes in a home, a child will play off one parent against the other. Those little heads sometimes have quite a bit of a certain kind of wisdom in them. I don't know that the child sits down like a United Nations committee would and reasons it all out, but he seems to know "if there's a certain thing I want to do, I think this particular thing Daddy might be more likely to let me do than Mother." Or perhaps it's the other way around, "I think I will ask Mommy about this. I think she might let me." And what Jesus is telling us is that there's nothing like this as far as Jesus and His Father are concerned.

"...he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" John 14:9.

We can never appeal from the Son to the Father or from the Father to the Son, hoping to get a different decision, a different attitude.

"...the counsel of peace shall be between them both"
Zechariah 6:13.

"I am My Father are one" John 10:30.

That's the way that it ought to be in the home between husband and wife! Isn't it? That's the way it ought to be in the church. Jesus prayed that the unity that

He and the Father have might be seen all through the church so that every member reflects the glory of God, and there's no division, no schism, no unrest, no strife. Oh friends, wouldn't that be wonderful? Won't it *be* wonderful, for the prayer of Jesus is going to be answered, isn't it?

And the way we shall arrive at that glorious unity is not by a lot of theological discussion; it's by entering in to the personal knowledge of God on the part of each member, for when we know Him as it is our privilege to know Him, turn to Hebrews 8 and you'll see what I mean. Here is the real basis of unity, friends.

“And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest” Hebrews 8:11.

This is part of the new covenant promise, as you recognize. Is there coming a time when all the people of God will know Him? That's what this says. His law will be written in their hearts, and then that unity for which Jesus prayed will be answered.

Now back to this thought that it's through whom we know the Father? Through whom is it? Through Jesus, through the Son. And the thing it is that God wants us to know is His character, His attributes.

Now let's turn over to 1 John the fourth chapter, and we'll see the summing up of this:

“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love”
1 John 4:7–8.

If we know God, we recognize that He's what? Love. Now, this doesn't mean that love is God like some heresies teach. Oh, no. But God is love. That is, God is so filled with love that everything He does is controlled by love, motivated by love, and is the fruit of love. And so to know God is to know love—to know Him as the God of love.

But I fear that right at this point it's easy to dismiss the whole matter and say, “Well, that's fine. I know now what God is, that's love. And to know God is to know that He's a God of love. I know that He's a God of love, so that's it.”

I wonder, do you know what love is? “Oh yes,” somebody says, “I know what love is: L-O-V-E.”

Well, let's test it a minute. Let's turn over to Revelation, the third chapter. Let's see if we know what love is. And God is love. If Jesus were to act loving toward us and thus reveal the Father, would we know Him? Would we like it? Would we appreciate it? Would we love Him back in return?

“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent” Revelation 3:19.

As many as I love—what does that mean, “as many”? Well, if I love 10 people, then I do this to them, 10 of them. If I love 100, I do this to how many of them? 100, as many as I love.

Now, what is this that Jesus does to show His love? Is that why He does it, to show His love? Why, yes.

“As many as I love...”

I do what?

“...I rebuke...”

And what?

“...chasten...” Revelation 3:19.

It's bad enough to be rebuked but to then get chastened on top of it. However, some people would rather have the chastening than the rebuking. I've seen times when I would a whole lot rather get a whipping than being rebuked. Maybe you have? But the point is that both are included in the revelation of what? Love, the revelation of love.

“Is that love? Oh, I don't think so. I think that somebody who loves me buys me candy.” There's many a father and many a mother whose attitude is: “Well, I'll try love as long as it works, but when that doesn't, I'll have to do something else.”

That isn't what Jesus says at all, and there's nothing remotely like that that He means. Now, my study this morning is not in child training or the duties of parents. I'm studying how to know God. I'm raising the question, do we know Him? Do we know what love is? For God is love.

Oh, my friends, it's a wonderful thing to love somebody so much that you're willing to do anything to save them from trouble and pain and death. That's the love of God. And the only time He ever rebukes anybody is when He's trying to save them from trouble and pain and death. Is that right? And the only time He ever chastens anybody is when He's trying to save them from trouble and pain and death.

Suppose you were a surgeon. Suppose your child should develop something like an appendix that was about to burst. Ordinarily in that case, the father wouldn't operate on the child at all. He'd turn it over to some other surgeon. But just suppose you were a surgeon, and suppose you were out in some foreign field where you were the only surgeon for 500 miles. You either operate on that child, or it doesn't get operated on.

What would you say? “Oh, I love Mary so much. I just couldn't bear to take that knife and cut her open.”

Do you see what I mean? There are parents who love their children so much, so they say they can't bear to hurt them. They can't bear to do any surgery. They can't bear to do any chastening. But sometimes they do it, when as I say, the love runs out. And they say, "I have stood all I'm going to off of you. I've taken just about all I can."

That's not the chastening of the Lord at all. His chastening is not when His love runs out. It comes *because* of love. We need to learn that both on the receiving and the giving hand.

And so when we kneel down in prayer and study the life of Jesus—watch this point—we should be noticing not merely the times when He takes the little children in His arms and blesses them. That's a beautiful scene. It's very real. He did, didn't He? But we should also glimpse the scene, and meditate on it, when He takes that scourge of cords and drives the money changers from the temple. Is that the same Jesus? Oh, yes. There's a time to take the little children in the arms, and there's a time to drive the money changers from the temple. It was the same God, in the same Jesus, manifesting the same love.

Now, there are hundreds of scenes in the life of Jesus each one of which is designed to reveal some facet of the love of God, some attribute in the character of God. And that's why the Holy Spirit used four different men to write the life of Jesus here on earth: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.

If you were studying this building, the only way that you could say that you'd really studied it, even from the outside, would go there on the south and look at that end. Go on the west and examine this side. Go on the north and look at it there. And go on the east and look at it there. Is that right?

Then you could say, "Well, I've been around that building. I know all four sides of it."

And so God has given us in Matthew one side; in Mark, another side; in Luke, another side; in John, another side. And all are important. Each one gives us a glorious revelation of the life of Jesus. And the purpose of this is to reveal who? The Father. And remember, what we're looking at is to see His character.

Do you know what a person's character is? It's the thing he habitually does, and why he does it. And so as we look at the life of Jesus, we become more and more acquainted with the way God acts, and with the way God thinks. And this is important to us as human beings for He says, My ways are not your ways, neither are your thoughts are My thoughts. (see Isaiah 55:8)

Can it be possible, my dear friends, that through meditating on the life of Jesus, we could come to the place where our understanding of God would be completely different from what it used to be? This is what He *intends*. And He wants this to be so in order that we may be ready to meet Him.

And so—watch this point—it is written:

“It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones” *The Desire of Ages*, page 83.

As we thus dwell upon His life and upon His sacrifice, we will be transformed into that wonderful image. Aren't you glad, friends? And so as we approach the last day of this old year and look forward to the wonderful New Year, oh, I pray that every one of us shall do what we read here. Let us know the Eternal. Let us make haste to know Him. Let us know, eagerly strive, to know the Lord. Let us press on to know the Lord.

“Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD...” Hosea 6:3.

Every day we can know Him better. Every day our understanding of what love is, how it acts, every day our understanding will be clearer. And thus, thank God, praise His name, we shall reflect the light which we see.

Do you know we can never reflect light which we don't see? There's a dark side of the moon. You know that, don't you? Why? Why is it dark? Well, it can't see the sun, that's all. The moon reflects the light it sees. You and I are the same. It's the glory we see that we reflect. It's the love that we understand, that we reveal to others.

[Testimony service]

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