

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

You Still Don't Know Me?

9.11.2022



THE JOURNEY
CHURCH

SCRIPTURE:

John 14:7-14

INTRODUCTION:

There is a difference between knowing God and knowing about God. Many people know about God, but far fewer actually know him.

J.I. Packer gives an illustration about persons sitting on the high front balcony of a Spanish house watching travelers go by on the road below. The “balconeurs” (he calls them) can overhear the travelers’ talk and chat with them; they may comment critically on the way that the travelers walk; or they may discuss questions about the road, how it can exist at all or lead anywhere, what might be seen from different points along it, and so forth; but they are **onlookers**, and their problems are theoretical only. The **travelers**, by contrast, face problems which, though they have their theoretical angle, are essentially practical—problems of the “which-way-to-go” and “how-to-make-it” type, problems which call not merely for comprehension but for decision and action too. The point is that there are those who talk about the road and people who actually travel it. The same dynamic exists with those who know about God, and know about Christianity, and can give answers about Bible questions, and those who actually know God and walk with Him. There is a difference between knowing facts about Jesus and following Jesus.

When I was 21 years old, after reading through the Gospels in like two days, and going through a study called Experiencing God, it was the first time in my life that I realized that the goal of Christianity wasn't just about believing in God or behaving for God. It was about knowing God. It was about experiencing God. Within a few years I was planting The Journey Church at 25 years old with the mission of helping people know the real Jesus. I was burdened by the fact that I grew up all around Christianity, with churches on every corner, and never once did I hear what the Christian faith was truly about. I was mad. I felt cheated. I started TJC because I was convinced there were more people like me all over this community. And I was right. Many of you have a similar story. You grew up all around Christianity and familiar with Jesus, but you didn't truly know him or get it.

Our passage today reflects this reality. The disciples were around Jesus every day for three years, and yet still didn't truly know him or get it.

John 14:7-14 Exegesis:

VS 7 -- Jesus makes an incredibly powerful statement. If they had known him (truly known him, his real identity), they would know His father also. To know Jesus as He truly is **IS** to know the Father. Knowing Jesus and Knowing the Father are the same. Even though God the Son and God the Father are distinct persons, they are united as One. To know One is to know them all in some ways.

Jesus says from now on, they do know him and have seen him. Who is "him"? The Father. To know him is relational knowledge (not just facts). It is revelational knowledge (it is truly grasping who He is because He's revealed Himself to you). Why does Jesus say they've seen him? Because to see Jesus is to see God. He is the visible image of the invisible God. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

VS 8 -- Philip obviously doesn't get it. He tells Jesus that if he shows them the Father, that will be enough for them. This is one of those moments where you imagine Jesus just staring at them in disbelief or rolling his eyes. Right? This is facepalm Jesus.

Philip is expecting some sort of sign or wonder. He has God in the flesh standing in front of him and he's looking for something external. This reminds us of the role and need of the Spirit for us to understand. Apart from the Spirit's work we can't know or see. We don't grasp it.

VS 9 -- Jesus responds by asking him if he's been with him for this long and still doesn't know him. Jesus is frustrated and disappointed. They're asking from something he's already given them. They want to see God, and he's right in front of them. To see and know Jesus is to see and know the Father. One God, Three Persons. They are distinct in their roles, but one in their nature. To see One is to see them all.

VS 10 -- Jesus asks them: Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? "We are one" he's saying. Even the words Jesus is speaking are not his own, but the Father who dwells in him does his works. You see, they don't yet fully grasp the identity of Jesus. They know he is sent of God. They know he's special. Maybe he's a prophet. They don't grasp that he is God incarnate. They don't recognize the relationship between YHWH, the LORD, and Jesus.

VS 11 -- Jesus exhorts them to believe that he is in the Father and the Father is in him. And if they don't believe his words, he implores them to believe his works. His works have been legion: multiplying bread and fish, healing sickness and disease, raising the dead, casting out and commanding demons, he confounded the Pharisees with his teaching and wisdom, he stopped and dissipated a storm raging on the sea, and countless other things. Jesus says, "Believe those things if my words aren't enough!"

VS 12 -- Then Jesus says that whoever believes in him will do the works that he does, and even greater works, because he's going to the Father. The church, filled with disciples of Jesus, will do greater works than Jesus. Now, let's clarify something, the greatest work Jesus accomplished was his sin-atonement death on the cross for sinners, and his resurrection from the grave for our salvation. We can't do a greater work than that. We can't even do that work ourselves.

So what is meant by greater works? It is greater in scope. The quantity of works, the number of people served, the deploying of spiritual gifts by millions upon millions of believers for the kingdom. That's what he's talking about. Notice he connects these greater works to his going to the Father. His ascension, where he will intercede for us, and send the Holy Spirit, is how these greater works will unfold.

These greater works often get confused for extraordinary, supernatural things. Over-the-top charismatic churches and believers think this means we are going to match the miracles Jesus did on earth. I do not think that is the case, nor do I think that is what Jesus was promising here. Can those things happen? Absolutely. But what Jesus is talking about is the work of the everyday believer, filled with the Holy Spirit, who uses their gifts, talents, and abilities to serve the Lord by serving his kingdom.

VS 13-14 -- These two verses lead many Christians into one of two ditches. **One ditch** is thinking this is a magic formula for getting what we want in life. This is the name-it-claim-it prosperity gospel. It's the blab-it-grab-it theology. In this view, because Jesus says "whatever" and "anything" then you should hold God to this by asking for what you want. The **second ditch** is we neglect this promise and fail to ever ask. Most in the room probably lean this direction. We know Jesus isn't giving us a blank check, but we fail to fully grasp the promise and ask for anything. Jesus does make a promise that if we "ask in his name" he will do it. **This is about asking for things in alignment with the will of God.** This shapes what things we're asking for. We are praying, but asking for God's will to be done. In fact, the things we ask for are aligned with God's will.

When our hearts are aligned with God's, and our desires are in service to His kingdom, we should ask with boldness.

1 John 5:14-15 -- *And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.*

Application/Take-aways:

1. Jesus' claim of oneness with the Father demands a verdict.

There are unbelievers today who try to claim that Jesus himself never claims to be God. They say this because there is no explicit statement from Jesus in the Gospels that says "Hey, I'm God." So they think that settles it. Friends, all over the Gospels Jesus says things that led religious leaders to want him dead because he blasphemed by making himself equal to God.

Our passage today shows Jesus saying he and the Father are one. What do you think he means by that? He's not saying they're on the same wavelength. He's saying they're of the same substance. This claim is so radical that if it isn't true, then everything Jesus claims falls apart. If it is true, then we have to reckon with it. He claims to be equal and one with God. To know him is to know the Father. Nobody in the world can say that without putting themselves on equal footing with God. If I were to say to you, "To know me is to know Jesus" you would rightfully leave because that would be a cult. Why? Because I'm making myself equal to God. So Jesus is making a radical statement. How do we know that's true? 1. He says it. 2. He says to look at his works. Let them testify to you about his nature. Could anyone do these things if they were not more than a man. One of the great starting places in helping people work through believing in God or moving away from atheism is starting with Jesus. Start with the claims of Jesus, and then if you recognize the validity of his claims, then many other things fall into place because of the nature of who he is. Jesus is apologetic unto himself.

Looking to Jesus' works is a source of hope in your doubts. Many people struggle with doubts in their faith. Sometimes when you endure suffering or loss, you can struggle with believing that God is there or that God is real. When you find yourself in that place, and your mind is saying "is all this real," look to Jesus' works. Look to Jesus, his words, his works, they remind us that he is Lord. He is God in the flesh. He has proven it by what he's done. You can bank your life and eternity on the hope of Jesus.

2. Beware of twisting Scripture.

It is vital that we learn how to read the Bible properly. We can't read something and just make it say what we want it to. But many people do this, including pastors and theologians. Jesus' words on greater works and prayer today are examples. If we don't learn to read Scripture properly, we will conclude false ideas, and those lead to wrong behaviors/actions.

I've seen people get sucked into the word of faith movements and prosperity gospel due to misreadings of these verses today. "Well, Jesus said we'd do greater works than him." "Look, Jesus said whatever we ask for in his name, he would give us." And this kind of reading of the Bible is detached from the intent of the author or meaning of the person speaking it.

All bad theology comes from failure to read the Bible properly. People who attack Christianity because he speaks about slavery in it, show they haven't read the Bible or aren't reading it properly. People who say Christians pick and choose what to believe from the Bible because we eat shellfish, but forbid homosexuality. They show they don't actually understand how to read the Bible. People who point to certain passages and believe they teach a rapture where Christians are taken from the Earth to Heaven, aren't interpreting Scripture properly.

Learn how to properly read the Bible. **1. Figure out the context. 2. Seek the author's intent. 3. Interpret Scripture with Scripture.** For more equipping on how to do this, take our hermeneutics class on Wednesday nights. Term 2 of MDWK starts on October 19th and there is still room in the class. Sign up through the Connect Card today to ensure you get a spot.

3. Seek the greater works.

Jesus promises two things in this passage that go together. He promises his people will do greater works than him, and that he will answer their prayers. We've discussed already that the works are the scope and quantity, not surpassing their quality, and we will do works. Also, he will answer our rightly asked and aligned prayers. How are these connected? Because as we seek to do the works of the kingdom with our spiritual gifts and resources, Jesus loves to answer our prayers for the blessing of those works. He loves to answer the prayers of opened doors for those works. He loves to answer the prayers of provision for those works.

Are you giving your gifts, resources, and skill to the cause of Christ in the world? Are you in the game? If you belong to him, you should be. And he provides an incredible promise, your prayers in alignment with that, will be answered. He's invested in his kingdom advancing in the world, and so he delights to answer prayers that further that work. As a church, we must continue to always be about that work. And pray in alignment with it. As individuals, we should absolutely do the same. What step should you immediately take to engage in the works of the kingdom?

I want to wrap up today by addressing those of you who have grown up in or around church. Or maybe you've lived in a Bible-belt culture where Christianity was all around you. This kind of upbringing is a blessing in some ways, because we are surrounded by the preaching of the gospel and reminders of the faith. But in other ways, it can be a challenge. One challenge is like Philip, we can be with him for so long and still not know him. The disciples walked with him day-in-and-day-out for years, and still didn't grasp who he truly was. That is easy for us to do when we grow up all around Christianity. But my question for you today, and I truly ask you to examine your heart - do you know him? Do you know him? Have you come to see who he truly is and surrendered your life to him? Have you called out to him as your Lord and Savior? Have you recognized him as the world's true king? Don't keep going through life all around him, but not knowing him. And remember today the works of Christ. His works not only testify about who he is, but his works are the foundation of our salvation. You have heard it said often that we are not saved by works. And that is not completely true. We are not saved "by our own works." That is true. But we are saved by works. They're just not our works. They are the works of Christ. His righteous life and obedience are credited to us when we come to him by faith. And his sacrificial death on the cross is credited to us as an atonement for our sins when we believe. The works of Christ are our salvation. Thank him for those works today. Plead those works as your only righteousness.

QUESTIONS:

1. Do you feel like you just know about God or that you truly know God? What fruit do you see in your life if it's the latter?
2. Why does Jesus start verse 7 off with the word "If"? What does he mean by "from now on you do know him and have seen him"?
3. How do the works of Jesus testify to his deity? Read John 5:19-24 and compare them to these verses.
4. What does Jesus mean when he says "I am in the Father and the Father is in me"?
5. What does it mean that we will do greater works than Jesus?
6. Do verses 13 & 14 mean that we will get whatever we ask for? Why or why not?

PRAYER TOPICS:

- Spend some time practicing verse 14:
 - Name people you know that need to know Jesus and that they will be saved.
 - Pray for our church. That we will disciple everyone in such a way that they will take the gospel to the nations.
 - Pray for our elders to have wisdom and discernment as they lead our church.
 - Anything else you think of that relates to building God's kingdom.
- TJC Pastor: Brady Plunk - Mobilization Pastor
- NAMB Church Planter: Jeff Deel - Marengo, OH - *Word Baptist Church*
- Unreached People Group (UPG): **Makonde** in Mozambique
 - Population: 583,000
 - Christian: 5.0%
 - Evangelical: 0.5%
 - Primary Religion: Islam
 - Primary Language: Makonde
 - Status: **Unreached**