

Knowing Christ

Introduction. Paul said that it was his desire to “know him” (Philippians 3:9-11). Some say that when you come to “know” Christ, it will change your whole outlook on the gospel. However, this statement implies a subjective, “leading of the Spirit” or “a leading in one’s heart,” a nudging of “the Lord told me this” or “the Lord showed me that” or “I feel it in my heart” which has grown in prominence over the last couple of decades.

In this lesson I am not admitting that I know everything about Christ — I do not. But I do know that the only source of such knowledge is in the words He left with us, directly and through His apostles (2 Corinthians 5:20; Ephesians 3:3-5; Hebrews 4:12). My opinions, along with those of any other man, do not count. Imaginations must be cast down and not exalted to the level of God’s word.

How can we “know” Christ without knowing His will for us, and His true attitude toward our words and actions? I cannot conceive of a way wherein that is possible. While there may be much about Christ I do not know, there are several facts I do know.

I. I Know That Knowing And Receiving Him Are The Same

- A. When Christ came to His own people, they rejected Him (John 1:11; 3:11, 32; Acts 3:14; 4:11, 26). Could someone rightly say that those people knew Christ?
- B. When someone rejects Christ, not only does he not know Christ, but Christ’s word judges him (John 12:48). The idea behind judging is everlasting condemnation — we will not escape (Hebrews 12:25).

II. I Know That There Are Two Sides To The Lord

- A. God is not all love, concern, compassion, and compromise. He is abundantly fair and just (Numbers 14:18; Joshua 23:15).
- B. The “severity” of God in Romans 11:22 means “to cut off, properly denotes excision, cutting off, as the gardener cuts off, with a pruning knife, dead boughs, or luxuriant stems.” God was willing to cut away the Israelites because of their unbelief, but once Israel’s unbelief is put away, God is prepared to graft her branches in again (v. 23).

III. I Know That He Requires Repentance

- A. This means a “change” of heart and life before someone is prepared to become a Christian (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:8-14; Matthew 21:28-32; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 2 Peter 3:9) — and I know He does not promise blessings until this is attained.
- B. God does not want a wet sinner, He wants a new creature (2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15; Colossians 3:10). He wants someone who has crucified themselves to the world (Galatians 2:20; 5:24).
- C. The bride of Christ must occasionally undergo exhortation, reproof, and rebuke to remain in submission (2 Corinthians 10:5; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Titus 2:11-12). If sin is present, repentance has to occur after becoming a Christian (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:8-2:2).

IV. I Know That He Requires Obedience

- A. I know He is not nearly as nervous about insisting on obedience as are preachers today who want to emphasize grace and knowing Christ almost to the exclusion of obedience.
- B. Someone who knows Christ would certainly love Him, and John ties loving Him with obedience (John 14:15, 21; 15:10). John furthermore stated that obedience was a direct result of knowing Jesus Christ (1 John 2:3-4). What Paul wrote were the commandments of the Lord (1 Corinthians 14:37). He taught “the obedience of faith” (Romans 1:5; 16:26).
- C. I am not aware of anyone who teaches perfect obedience, but I am one who teaches one cannot be saved without obeying. Can we put less emphasis on it than Jesus or the apostles (Acts 6:7; Romans 6:17)? Obedience is my part, and should be emphasized; grace is God’s part, and we know its importance too (Acts 15:11; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:7).

V. I Know That Those Who Do Not Know Him Will Be Punished

- A. The Lord will judge His people (Hebrews 10:30) by taking vengeance on those who do not obey (Romans 3:5; 11:21; 12:19; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).
- B. John said that repentance was needed among the seven churches of Asia (Revelation 2:5, 16, 22-23; 3:3, 18-19). Those that refused would be punished.
- C. Some think they know Him well enough to promise on His behalf that He will not live up to His warnings and commandments. I do not know Him that well!

Conclusion. If I can know all of this through the revelation of scripture, then what is left for me to feel in my heart.

Some have come to know by subjective feeling and imagination “another Jesus” (2 Corinthians 11:3-4) that the apostles did not preach. We have to decide if we want to know the Jesus the apostles knew through what is written, or if we want “another Jesus” known largely through imagination over revelation. Unfortunately, many people know “another Jesus” and do not realize it.