

Following on to know Him
TO KNOW HIM AND MAKE HIM KNOWN

Phil. 3:8 - "I count everything as loss compared to the possession of the priceless privilege of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, and of progressively becoming more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, of perceiving and recognizing and understanding Him more fully and clearly..."

For my determined purpose is that I may know Him... that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His Person more strongly and more clearly.

And that I may in that same way come to know the power overflowing from His resurrection which it exerts over believers; and that I may so share His sufferings as to be continually transformed in spirit into His likeness even to His death, in the hope that if possible I may attain to the spiritual and moral resurrection that lifts me out from among the dead even while in body. (AMPLIFIED VERSION)

Uncounted throngs enjoyed the priceless privilege of knowing Christ as He walked the dusty roads of Palestine and lingered on the sands of the shore of Galilee.

The sick, the lame, the halt, and the blind were blessed to know Him, to feel His touch and receive his healing power; the leper was cleansed at His word.

Mary Magdalene with a multitude of others knew the joy and peace of His forgiveness; Mary, Martha, and Lazarus shared the precious treasure of knowing Him in intimate friendship.

The twelve favored ones walked with Him daily listening to His words of wisdom, knowing Him as their Master. The inner circle of disciples, Peter, James and John seemed to know Him in even a closer relationship.

Paul, though not a contemporary of Christ, met him "as one born out of due season" on the road to Damascus. The bright light, the voice of Jesus, the vision of the crucified Christ was so indelibly stamped upon his heart, mind and character, that Saul of Tarsus was radically changed into Paul the Apostle

Once he had been committed to the task of stamping

out Christianity--but when he met Christ, he was consumed with a passion to know Him in His fulness and to make Him known to others.

God spoke to Ananias in a vision and sent him to pray for Paul that he might receive his sight saying, "For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."

Many years later Paul wrote the Christians at Corinth listing some of his sufferings for the sake of Christ. Five times received 39 stripes, three times beaten with rods, stoned, shipwrecked three times, spent a day and a night in the ocean, in long journeys, in perils of waters, robbers, and by his own countrymen. In perils of heathen, in the city, in the wilderness, in the sea, among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness.

Yet, after recounting his afflictions, he summed them up by saying, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

Perhaps this is the secret of power of Paul's ministry...perhaps this is the secret of his keen insight into the mind and character of God.--His sufferings.

Paul magnified the ministry of suffering in a Christian's life. He gloried in persecutions that came his way deeming it a privilege to be counted worthy to suffer for the sake of Christ.

If we like Paul pray to know Christ in the fellowship of His suffering, we are asking for a difficult thing. We are asking for loneliness, opposition, shame, reproach and physical suffering. We are asking to be rejected of men, to be misunderstood; we are asking for a burden to bear for others.

Although we shrink and cringe in fear before suffering, it is good for us. Suffering is a burning flame in the heart, a cleansing, refining action, consuming the dross and leaving the individual stronger, yet more dependant on God than ever before.

Gone is self-assurance; in its place is assurance of strength through God. A new wonderful relationship is born, a revelation of a new way of life, a life that is in God's hands, owned by God, kept by God and directed by God for His Glory and in His will.

Such a relationship transcends all human understanding. It's as though the Glory of God is shed in a shining ray to envelop the individual

It's as though a ladder is let down from heaven with angels ascending and descending bringing new revelation and insight into the character of God.

Approval of others becomes incidental. Only one thing becomes important--to know and do the perfect will of God.

Sorrow spotlights foolish self-pride and shows a person how helpless he is without God. It's like the lifting of a fog which has clouded the vision, showing man's true relationship to his Maker. It clears away false ideas and gives true perspective.

A person becomes helpless, frail, humble, and powerless in his own eyes. Self confidence is gone and in its place comes a new confidence born of trust in God giving the individual strength and power to perform God's will.

Why should we shrink from suffering when it works such wonders in our lives. When we embrace sorrow suffering, persecution, or tribulation as coming from God, as He works in and through us, then indeed can suffering have its perfect work in us and through the resurrecting power make us into chosen vessels to bear the Name of Christ.

And that is why we are saved--to make known Christ to the world.

We are living in a day of careless Christians, at ease in Zion. The church has grown lazy, cold, increased in goods, and self-sufficient.

Great satisfaction is achieved in carrying out the

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the physical and social aspects of the church program while men everywhere are dying without Christ. The church has lost the urgency of the Commission. Many ~~Christians~~ have lost their concern for the lost that once added meaning to their church work. *Christians*

We need to ask Christ to renew our vision of Him and of His kingdom work. *For where there is no vision the people perish.*

We are not always aware of our lack of vision nor conscious that our vision has been dulled.

For nineteen years, I was very nearsighted and didn't know it. I thought everyone saw things as I did. It's true that distant objects appeared blurred; I couldn't recognize people across the street--but I honestly believed I had perfect vision.

Then one day at work, I laughingly picked up a pair of horn-rimmed glasses belonging to my boss. I nearly fell over in astonishment. Everything was so clear and bright. I looked down the length of the long office and could recognize every person. Their features looked so sharp and clear. I looked out of the window and the distant skyline of the city of Atlanta took on a beauty I had never seen. The clock on the building across the street came into focus. I didn't even know it was there.

Immediately I wanted glasses of my own and didn't rest until I had gotten them. They opened up a new world to me. The stars were no more just bright blobs against the midnight blackness of the sky. Each little star was a pin-point of brilliance. Every leaf on the tree stood out to itself when visioned through my new glasses. I saw the beauty of the birds and flowers with new appreciation. The sun no longer blinded me. The whole world was new.

Every few years, I find that my vision has faded and things begin to blur. It is necessary for me to go through a test and pay the price before I have my vision clear again.

As Christians, we may find that our vision has faded. It may cost something to get that vision. It may involve suffering or sorrow; it will involve dedication and commitment; but whatever the price, it is worth it.

5 for the most important thing in life is to see Christ--no matter what the cost.

Strangely enough, along with a vision of Christ comes a vision of a lost and dying world and a deep concern to make Christ known.

In this enlightened age, over one billion four hundred million souls exist without any knowledge of Christ or salvation. Seven hundred fifty million souls die during the last generation. These figures would not be a reality if every person who professes to KNOW Christ were committed as Paul was to the Cause of making Christ known.

With world population growing at the rate of 62½ million a year, more than 185,000 must be won to Christ every day, 7708 every hour, 128 every minute just to keep pace with the increase in population.

If our own people of the Pentecostal Holiness Church were fully committed, we would multiply with rapidity in the homeland, and our missionaries would pour into all parts of the world with a zeal to make Christ known to all men. There would be no shortage of workers, no shortage of funds--for every member would be a worker--every member a contributor.

If each of you were fully committed to this cause, it would revolutionize your life. No longer would you feel that church attendance and tithe paying were sufficient. No each of you would have a personal compelling urgency to get the Gospel to all nations.

If we could envision the tragedy of our times...if we could see the dark days ahead...if we could realize how short is our day and how long eternity...if we could sense the nearness of the coming of Christ to this world to catch away His bride. If we could perceive the encroachment of the terrible days of the Tribulation, we would be moved out of our complacency to pray, to dedicate and to witness for Christ.

The hope of the world hinges on Christ. Can we be justified in our silence while others perish?

To make men known is our debt. No Christian is exempted from this obligation. We must in some manner

to carry the message of the salvation we have received.

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US!

First it is necessary to make a personal commitment. God can use effectively only those who are wholly resigned to His will.

o Seek God's will for your life. Do not wait to be asked to work for God. Be a volunteer to get the Gospel out. God will show you His way and His will for you. He will make a way for you to do your part. Be quick to obey Him without excuse.

o Pray for the Cause of Missions. This should be a vital part of our daily prayer:

1. Pray for our Missionaries...this is a ministry that we all may share. Pray with fervency, identify ourselves with our Missionaries. Make prayers specific. Ask God to inspire prayers and make them meaningful and effective.

2. Pray that the Lord of the harvest will send forth laborers into His harvest. This should be a cry from our souls...that young people may be converted, called and trained for His service. Then be ready and willing if He should call you, or one of your children into His harvest field.

3. Pray for the spread of the printed Word. The American Bible Society is working daily to get the word of God published in languages throughout the world. Yet, till this date, there are over 5000 languages and dialects into which no portion of the Word of God has been translated. Yet this has been recognized as the most effective method of evangelism on many mission fields.

Since over 50% of the world's pop. is 25 & under - there is
4. Pray that the financial needs for the promotion of the Gospel may be supplied. God owns the wealth of the world...but He chooses to support His Cause through the love and devotion of His people to the Cause. What we give...our time...our talents, our money, our sons and daughters, our heart's yearnings, all will be treasures laid up in heaven.

How can we make Him known? By getting a new vision of Christ; by knowing Him in the fellowship of His

uffering, and by letting the power of His resurrection
low in and through us to bless the world.

Job was not aware of His redeemer until he went thro
the firey trials; then, and then only was he made
conscious of the power of the resurrection.

The power of the resurrection comes to us only when
we are completely submissive in the hands of Christ.

It is the power of the resurrection that brings us
forth from the death of sin into newness of life,
and transforms us into a new creature in Christ
Jesus.

It is this same power of the resurrection that
must shine forth in our lives to lighten the way
of others.

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The Psalmist exhorted the people to rejoice and his
make a joyful noise unto God; to make known the
blessings of God to others "That God's way may
be made known upon the earth and thy saving
health among all nations.

~~new emphasts~~