**Knowing God 2 1 December 2019**

Last week I spoke about knowing God and I read a really scary scripture verse that I want to start with today.

Read Matthew 7:21 – 23

And what these verses tell me is that:

* You can call yourself a Christian and not know Jesus
* You can be doing God’s work and not be close to God
* You can be involved in effective ministry that God is blessing and is growing and not be close to God

You might ask, well how is that possible? And the answer is…

* God cares about people more than we ever will.
* He can use you and bless you in spite of the fact that you may not be close to him or growing in your relationship with him or pursuing him

But!

NB.

- that is not what Jesus intended for us

- That is not what he invites us to

We are called to do the things God has called us to do but :

* as the years go by
* as we become familiar with our abilities, talents, strengths
* as we become comfortable with church life and serving in whatever way

we can lose our sense of priority

Mark 3:13-15

* Jesus called his disciples to be with him before they did anything
* he called them to be his regular companions
* he called them to be with him in a one on one relationship
* and then he sends them off to do stuff

My first point this morning **= we have to keep the main thing - the main thing**

Often what happens = we become Christians, commit our lives to walking with Jesus (the main thing) then we want to find what were called to do and soon the second priority becomes the main priority

* we exchange the second thing for the first thing
* doing Gods work becomes the most important
* being with God and just being his companion becomes secondary

**To know God**

The first and main responsibility you have as a follower of Jesus = is to develop a relationship of intimacy with God

And its out of that place of companionship and life in Jesus that we do the work he has called us to do

# Romans 8:29 New Living Translation (NLT)

**29**For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8%3A29&version=NLT#fen-NLT-28107a)] among many brothers and sisters.

i.e. Becoming like Jesus is the Fathers eternal hope and desire for us

The difficulty = we live in a culture and a society that is totally committed to doing, doing, doing

Our world is about being productive, getting things done, checking things off your to do list and if you’re anything like me, when you tick everything off your to do list at the end of the day, when you wake up the next morning, guess what?

There’s another big long list!

And that’s often how we behave as Christians.

**Q = Are you happier to do something for God or just to sit quietly and be with God?**

You see when doing something for God becomes a bigger part of our lives than being with God….the essence of our effectiveness begins to fade

e.g

There’s a famous, huge church in America called Willow Creek and a smaller church visited them and decided to adopt their model of how to do church. So they adopted the model and they grew to about 3,000 people – that’s a big church!

After a number of years, the leaders reflected on where they were up to and they wrote this….

“the outward success of our church came with a steep price tag. We had grown the church but we were not more like Jesus. Growing the church didn’t require that we be like Jesus!”

As we walk into the next stage of the life of the church here

* - we can develop stuff
* - we can reach more people
* - we can involve more people

But will we be more like Jesus?

**Jesus = the model that the Father is calling us to be like**

Jesus is the model

And becoming like Him is the Fathers hope and desire for all of us

Illustration – the kids did this in Sunday school a few weeks ago

If we keep the right thing (our relationship with God) in the primary position,

(Put rock in jar) everything else will fall into place.(put rice in jar)

But when we get that backward…you can lose everything

**To be made more like Jesus**

I know many of you here would love to know

* what the calling on your life is,
* what were you made for,
* what does God want you to do

Here is a radical truth for you….

**True ministry = is entering into and participating in what God is already doing**

In John 5 Jesus says “I only do what I see the Father doing”

**And ……understanding what God is doing is the result of a deep relationship with Jesus**

I don’t think finding out Gods will or what God wants you to do is some big mystery.

I think he wants us to know

In that same chapter it says – “the Father loves the son and therefore He shows Him what He’s doing”

Well, does the Father love you?

Yes!

.....He wants me to know what He’s doing! Because the Father wants His kingdom to advance.

So ministry / calling = entering into what God is doing

So you don’t have to try and be something,

The aim = to get to know Jesus

….And a direct consequence of that, will be you will find your thing

Jesus was not an lone ranger, just doing what he wanted because he was God. We often picture Jesus like that but

Jesus was a human being

Who voluntarily set his God attributes aside to function as a human being

& the way he functioned was…

1. he heard the Father and He did what He saw the Father doing
2. He went away when important times were coming up to be alone and be quiet, to listen and to hear
3. And then he went and he did that

i.e.

He was reliant upon the Father, and as He was reliant, the Father told Him “this is what you do here”

**Jesus ministry was a direct result of that loving, caring, personal, interactive relationship with His Dad.**

And that’s what we are called to aswell.

John 15:1-11 tells us that

Fruitfulness is the natural outcome of learning to remain and abide in close relationship with Christ

If you do that, you will be fruitful

You see we can know loads about God but knowledge of Him without getting to know Him is not what God intended for us.

NB. Knowing more and more about God and losing that intimacy you may have once experienced because you’re so busy now = a bad trade off

2nd radical truth this morning….

A deeper relationship with God requires 1 thing…..

TIME!

**a deep / real relationship with God cannot be developed or sustained on the run**

* it takes time.

Last point = Knowing and experiencing the love of God is essential

Q = Do you know God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life?

That’s often the starting point when we’re telling someone about God for the first time

“God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life?”

But that’s not just the starting point…

The Father’s love for you - that’s the starting point, the middle point, the end point, **it is the point!**

If you want to know where to begin in having a deeper relationship with God

It starts with GOD LOVES YOU!

It’s the key thing, & I don’t think it gets any deeper than GOD LOVES YOU!

**Application**

If you want to take hold of what I’ve said this morning and begin to apply it to your life,

Take some time out this week, create some space, go somewhere quiet where you can be alone and dwell on those words, repeat them to yourself

‘GOD LOVES ME.’

I’ll finish with something the apostle Paul said

Ephesians 3:16-21

**16**I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. **17**Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God’s love and keep you strong. **18**And may you have the power to understand, as all God’s people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. **19**May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

We started today by asking “how fulfilling is your life”

Paul says that desire is fulfilled by the experience of God’s love.

When we experience a deepening level of God’s love for us…..then we will be filled with life and power that comes from God.

If you’re a bit sceptical that that could happen in your life, the next verse reads

V 21 Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.