

## Life Link

### Title: "Knowledge of God"

**Big Idea: Introductory Illustration:** The Book of 2 Peter opens up with a statement to identify to the reader who is the author of the book. Peter uses the term "bondservant" thus implying that he, Peter is a slave to no man but by his own choice he has chosen to serve and submit to Jesus Christ. Peter's life is no longer his but, he is under the absolute direction of God the Father through Jesus. Peter's statement obtain this "precious faith" (vs.1:1) not by his own righteousness but it is the of God and Savior Jesus Christ. One could ask the question just how precious is this faith to Peter? The answer is clear and simple. Peter has dedicated and committed his life to the teaching and leading of the Spirit of God to the point of dying for Him.

Five times Peter uses the word "knowledge" to bring home the point that "knowledge" of Jesus brings us to different way of living in this life and that dedication to the "knowledge of Jesus Christ" will keep us from stumbling as we travel this life as pilgrims and sojourners (1 Pet 2:11). Therefore Peter reminds us of the **"Knowledge of our Calling"(vs.3), Knowledge of Self-control" (vs.5) and "Knowledge of Our Sure Election"(vs.10).**

### **Read Sermon Text: 2 Peter 1:1-11 (Greeting the Faithful)**

1 Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ,  
To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: 2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, 3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. 8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; 11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

NKJV

#### **1. Knowledge of Our Calling (vs. 3)**

**2 Peter 1:3** as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, NKJV

#### **Text Illustration:**

In his book *The Screwtape Letters*, C. S. Lewis describes what is like a parable that is ongoing through different episodes of how a Senior Demon, whom he calls Screwtape trains his young and vulnerable apprentice nephew Wormwood how to disrupt, derail and hinder the growth and

progress of Christians in their knowledge of the love, grace and mercy of God and His sovereignty. In one of his letters to his nephew Wormwood, Screwtape gives these insights: "A moderated religion is as good for us as no religion at all. ... "You see the idea? Keep his mind off the plain antithesis between True and False. Nice and shadowy expressions---"It was a phase" ---"I've been through all that" ---don't forget the blessed word "Adolescent" (New York: Bantam Books, 1982, p. 27). Deception is the key behind this book and how it strikes true to life in the minds and hearts of men. And Satan is the master of that deception because he is the father of lies

**John 8:44** You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, **for he is a liar and the father of it.** NKJV

### **a. Called by God's Divine Power**

**"The Message" 2 Peter 1:3** Everything that goes into a life of pleasing God has been miraculously given to us by getting to know, personally and intimately, the One who invited us to God. The best invitation we ever received! (from THE MESSAGE: The Bible in Contemporary Language © 2002 by Eugene H. Peterson. All rights reserved.)

- i. Peter reminds us that we cannot save ourselves it only through the atoning work of Christ on Calvary that we have hope in this life and in the next. Peter has reminded the readers that our inheritance is reserved (1 Peter 1) for us in the heavens by God Himself. It was God who loved us first, it was God who saw our need, it was God who filled that need with the blood of Jesus, His Son, it was God who called us out of darkness in to His marvelous light and it is God who secures our eternal inheritance forever and ever. "It IS GOD"!
- ii. We must remember it was our own self-will that brought us to the judgment of God and as a result of God's love for us he sent His Son to redeem the whole world. That redemption came with a price, it cost God His only Son as He was humiliated, beaten and nailed to a criminals cross even though He had committed no crimes or sin, He paid the price for our sins that we should have hope and life eternal.
- iii. When it is all said and done it began with God and it ended with God and it was Jesus Christ who made our eternal security possible. Peter states that God has given us the power to have a personal and direct relationship with the Father through Jesus.

### **b. The Knowledge of Him Who Called Us**

- i. Many who come to Jesus live their post-Christian live as if they have arrived to the fullness of all that God has to offer and then they stagnate in their Christian growth. Paul and Peter reminds us that the Christian life begins as a babe in Christ and it is up to us to develop, grow and increase our knowledge of the Father and the Son to fullest potential. But, we must use that which God has provided and empowered us with to become who He wants us to be.

- ii. One might ask how do I do that? Glad you asked! By living in Christ! Jesus said in **John 15:5** "I am the vine and you are the branches", we must abide in Christ. The results of abiding is that we bear much fruit. The growing, developing and strengthen of our spiritual man/woman is a result of God working in our lives and yielding to God in every area of our lives. Remember, Samson of the Old Testament, he was known for his great physical strength. Yet, Samson also had a tremendous ego, he believed he was invincible and nothing could bring him down. He was able to defeat any physical threat by his physical might, yet it was that same pride that brought him to his knees. At the end of his life when he had lost all he turned back to God and brought down the house not by his own might but through the might of God. **(Judges 16:28-30).**

## 2. Knowledge of Our Faith (vs. 3)

**2 Peter 1:5** (Fruitful Growth in the Faith) 5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, NKJV

- i. Peter states in verse 5 that we are to "give all diligence" to the growth process. The word he uses is "diligence" he is imploring us to make haste, to eagerly develop our faith. We must exercise self-control, the world has so much to tempt people with. We are bombarded with enticements to feed the flesh and no encouragements to feed the soul.

**Text Illustration:** In his book "The Great Divorce," C.S. Lewis gives an allegorical story about a ghost of a man consumed by lust. And in this story lust is depicted as a red lizard that sits on his shoulder and whispers seductively in his ear. When the man is bothered by this lizard on his shoulder, an angel volunteers to destroy it for him. But the man is conflicted because he wants to hold on to his lust but also wants the lizard gone. What he is afraid of is that the death of his lust will be the death of him. He offers all these excuses to the angel because he wants to keep the lizard (even though he doesn't want it).

After much discussion the man finally lets the angel kill the lizard. The angel grabs the lizard, breaks its neck and hurls it to the ground. Now that the spell of lust is broken the man who once ghostly is wonderfully remade into a real and solid person. And what's so cool is that instead of dying, the lizard is changed into a spectacular stallion. With great tears of joy and appreciation the man gets on the horse and rides off into the heavens. (Illustration Source Sermon Central)

- i. We too are plagued by the enticement of the "red lizard", the things of this world will not satisfy it is only when we rush head long into God can a empty life be filled. Peter sense of urgency enjoined us to rush, get there as quick as possible. God told Abraham to leave his home, the place where he had chosen to live and raise his family and go to a "land flowing with milk and honey". We too like Abraham must wait for that city who's builder and maker is God.

**Heb 11:8-10** By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same

promise; 10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. NKJV

- ii. It is faith that brings us to God, it is faith that keeps us from the lust of this world and it is faith that keeps us secure until the time when Christ returns and carries us to be with Him.

### 3. Knowledge of Sure Election (vs. 10)

**2 Peter 1:10** Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; NKJV

- i. It is not very difficult to tell when a Christian is not growing and developing into Christian maturity. Warren Wiersbe identifies three characteristics of a stagnate Christian:
  - (1) They are barren, or idle; that is, they will not work for Christ.
  - (2) They are unfruitful; that is, their meager knowledge of Christ does not produce fruit in their lives.
  - (3) They are blind, lacking spiritual insight, spiritually "nearsighted." Behind this lack of spiritual development is a poor memory, forgetting what God has done for them through Christ. (from Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament. Copyright © 1992 by Chariot Victor Publishing, an imprint of Cook Communication Ministries. All rights reserved.)
- ii. People often lose sight of what God has done for them. Their focus is clouded by the things of this world. The deceiver wants Christians to focus on today and self. While there are many things that distract us from serving God we must keep our spiritual eye our focus on what is really important in life and serving God is the most important.
- iii. Peter had lost his focus, he took his eyes off Jesus. When Peter and the other disciples were in a boat on the sea of Galilee and they saw Jesus coming to them walking on the water, Peter said to Jesus that he wanted to come to Him. Jesus said to Peter come so Peter step out of the boat and began to walk to Him. But, the moment Peter took his eyes off Jesus he began to sink. That is what happens to Christians when we quite look at Jesus and look to self. We sink in the quagmire of life. Traveling through this world is like filled with obstacles, traps and the landscape is covered with areas of quicksand. At the time when we think we are secure it is the time we need to keep our eyes on Jesus the most. Peter realized that we are only safe while our focus is on Jesus. He says to us to be "more diligent". Give even more attention to Jesus to keep us on the pathway to life and not disaster. When your eyes are on Jesus, Peter emphatically states that you will "never stumble". Our path will be sure and the way is clear when we follow Jesus.

**Conclusion:** What was C. S. Lewis trying to help us imagine? Lewis is drawing us to the bond between killing our lust and finding life. We who have given into lust so much that it feels like we are going to die without it to die, it feels as if we are going to die right along with it will find that instead of destroying us, we find a new life we never imagined.

Instead of giving into desires that are off limits, we begin to experience a pure desire - - a God centered desire, which is birthed in us to experience the greatest joy possible. The joy that comes from knowing that God isn't just saving us from our sin, but that He is up to something far more profound: God is saving us for a life of love and joy and faith and peace and self-control.

(Illustration Source Sermon Central)

Jesus said to His disciples when they asked "How can we know the way" Jesus responded to this question by telling his disciples and us **"I'm the way, the truth, and the life and no man comes to the Father except through Me!" (John 14:6)**

It is only by dying to self and the lust of this world and finding life anew in Jesus and living in the security of Jesus that true joy and everlasting security can be found. Let messenger of God (Jesus) destroy the "red lizard" and live in the peace and security that can only be found in Jesus today! Don't build your house on the sinking sand, build it on the solid rock of Jesus Christ.