

# **The Bible—the Word of God**

## **Message 3**

### **Knowing God through the Bible as the Written Word of God and Through Christ as the Living Word of God (1)**

#### **Monday**

Eph. 1:9 – Footnote 9<sup>2</sup>

Eph. 3:3-4 – Footnotes 3<sup>1</sup>, 4<sup>1</sup>

Wasn't that a most enjoyable Lord's table meeting? In one of the hymns that we just enjoyed, number 608, it says in the chorus "This gift divine, we never can exhaust." Saints we're enjoying a gift, not a reward, it's a gift. None of us earned it. None of us can say we are here because we earned it, we got a gift. A gift is something given out of love. You know that there in that song it's talking about the Triune God, the Triune God is this gift divine. And actually you could say that God has given us 2 great gifts whereby we can know Him.

On Friday night we began our conference by looking at the book of Ephesians. And in Ephesians there are 2 prayers. Ephesians may be the book that unveils the heart of God, the purpose of God, the intention of God, more than any other book in such a condensed way. This book says that there was something in the heart of God that was hidden for ages. It was hidden for generations, but what was hidden has been made known to the apostle Paul. Then it says that he wrote it; he wrote what he saw; he got a revelation and then he wrote it down. God is a mystery, and actually in the book of Ephesians it refers to this mystery. It talks about a great mystery. This universe is mysterious; it's a mystery. But God in His heart does not want to remain a mystery; He wants to make Himself known.

Sometimes I play hide and go seek with my grandchildren. If you go and hide in such a really, really good place that the children really can't find you, the game is not that much fun. Eventually they just give up. Actually, maybe they start crying "Papa, we can't find you" so what's the use of playing the game? My four grandchildren are

very young; 3 years old, just turning 3, 1 and 1/2, and 3 months old. When you play hide and go seek, you don't go hide in a corner. You hide in a way that you are not completely hidden. Then they come in: "Ahh I found you !" When they find you, that's the fun part.

I have a feeling God likes to play hide and go seek. He was hidden but He really doesn't want to be that hidden. The Bible says that He is a God who hides Himself, but thank the Lord that He is findable, even though He likes to hide Himself. He could remain hidden if He wanted to. He could, if He wanted to, continue to live in unapproachable light, and we would still be here with no purpose. But thank the Lord, while He did hide Himself for a long time, maybe He realized, "It's too difficult, so let Me come a little closer." He was incarnated and He became a man. But actually He was hidden in that man, because many people talked to Him but didn't find God. They were looking, but they kept going; God was right there but they didn't see Him. But praise the Lord, one day we found Him! We could have hours and hours of meetings just for each of us to give our story of how we found Him. Everyone's story is precious. Don't think, "My story is kind of boring." No, don't say that. When you find God, that's a marvellous thing.

## Tuesday

Luke 15:4-7 – Footnote 4<sup>1</sup>

God wants to be known, but how practically can a human being know this God, because He is a mystery and He is invisible. How do we know someone who's invisible? Actually He gave us 2 gifts. The first is the Spirit. He came, Himself as the Spirit and as the song that we just sang says, "This gift divine we never can exhaust." It talks about an astounding fact, the astounding fact that with God now we are one spirit. He went through this process so that now we could receive Him as Spirit. Even a 7 year old boy can receive him as the Spirit. That was my experience, I was just a boy that one night, Friday July 13<sup>th</sup>, but not this year. I was there in our apartment in our home sort of minding my own business. Actually, that night I didn't find Him; He found me. Is that your experience? Some of us, maybe some of the older saints, can say that they were seeking God and they found Him. Me, not so much. I was pretty happy; I was pretty content, but one day God found me.

That night when my sister shared something with me, she used the second gift that God gave us, the Bible, the Word of God. The Spirit inside, the Bible outside, these are two great gifts through which a human being can know this God. So this little boy, that night, my sister she was doing some things there, she was actually preparing some things to teach the children. This was Friday night, on Sunday morning she was going to children in what we call the children's meeting. We were in the denomination; we called it Sunday School. She was preparing to teach a group of eight year old girls in 3rd grade.

I was a second grader and she was doing something that caught my eye, that caught my attention. Do you know what she did with some things that you use for children? She told me a story from the Bible, she just told me a story from the Bible. Through that story I got to know something about God that I did not know. I did not know God that way. She shared with me some verses from this book and I got to know that God was a Saviour, that He was, as we enjoyed this morning, a shepherd. We sang this morning, "Like a shepherd, Jesus will feed His people, / In His arms, He carries them all day long." Wasn't it a rich table meeting?

But I found out that night through a few verses that even though He came to this earth to die for all of mankind, that actually He did it just for me, because He is like a shepherd who has a hundred sheep, but if He loses one, He will go and seek for it until He finds it. My sister told me, “Do you know who the lost sheep is?” I said, “No.” She said, “It’s you!” I said, “Really?” I found out something about God’s love; yes, on one hand, He loves the world, but on the other hand, His love is so personal for each one of us. That’s what I found out that night and that captured my heart as a seven-year-old boy.

## Wednesday

Rev. 3:20

John 5:39-40 – Footnote 39<sup>1</sup>

Then my sister told me another verse, Revelation 3:20. I know that's talking about the church in Laodicea but she sort of borrowed it because there we have the Lord knocking on the door. "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone opens the door, I will come into him and feast with him or dine with him and he with me." Do you know what I found out from that verse? That God is polite. God doesn't barge in to people's hearts. Did you know this about God? He knocks on the door. I thought, "When you are God you can do whatever you want!" I thought, "If you're God, you just go 'whhh' (wind blowing sound effect) and the door blows open, you know, just like in a movie or a video game. I thought, "God, why don't You do that?" But no, God knocks and waits for you to open the door. You know moms are often not so polite. They knock, knock, and open the door right away. Moms have this right; moms don't even have to knock. Moms just open the door, and you go, "Momm." But God doesn't do that! God knocks on the door and if you don't open the door, He waits. I found that out about God that night. How? There's a verse in the Bible that tells us.

Some people don't think that way about God. We should tell them that God is actually a polite God, He waits for us. But you know what we found out, God is persistent though. Sometimes you don't open the door; God will just wait there, very happily and keep knocking. If somebody doesn't open the door, we know what we're like, "Hello, will you open the door?" He will just wait until you open the door. Anyway that night my sister asked me if I would like to open my heart to the Lord. I knelt down next to her, and she said to repeat this prayer. So you know what happened? I received the other gift that night. From that night until this very day, these two great gifts are always with me: the Spirit inside, the Bible outside. Saints, we can know our God. Philippians says *to know Him*. He doesn't want to be unknown by us; He wants us to know Him.

So how can we know Him? We know Him as the Spirit. We covered this in our sessions on Friday night and yesterday morning. He is the Spirit within us. He has made us in a wonderful way; we are surely awesomely and wonderfully made. God made us with three

parts and I know many of us we know this. First Thessalonians 5:23 says that He made a spirit and soul and body. For the first portion of my life I didn't know that.

Listen, even as a believer, even with this book in my hand, I didn't know that because sometimes we read this book but we don't see what it says. That's the point that the outline that's in your hand, that I want to make in a few moments. It's not just that you read this book and you know God; it's not that simple. This book is used as a textbook. In some universities, there are classes that ask you to buy this book, and people teach courses about this book. I'm not talking about the students; I'm talking about the professors. They will teach you a course in Bible literature and after they read, they don't know God. Actually, some professors use the Bible as a textbook to try to convince their students that there is no God! Can you believe that? But that's what happens. There in New York, there are some schools like that. Actually, up and down in the northeast there are some schools that it seems like they major in this, to try to disprove God. Do you know what they use? The Bible itself. That doesn't make sense but it's possible.

It is also possible that as a believer, we could read the Bible and still not know God. That's why we have this subtitle, "The Bible, the Word of God" and this particular outline is entitled *Knowing God Through the Bible as the Written Word of God and Through Christ as the Living Word of God*. In the scripture reading, on the first line, the last reference is John 5:39 through 40. Let's read these verses together: "You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that testify concerning Me. Yet you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life." These verses give us a kind of a secret. I just told you, we have the Bible outside and the Spirit inside. How do we come to really know Christ, to really know God in His economy? You have to combine the two. Whenever we come to the written Word, we need to come to Christ first as the Spirit who is the living Word. When you do, this Bible will show us God.

## Thursday

Luke 1 46-47 – Footnotes 46<sup>1</sup>, 47<sup>1</sup>

In the previous messages I mentioned the functions of the spirit. God made us in three parts, body, soul and spirit. In Luke chapter 1, verses 46 and 47, Mary prayed, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has exulted in God my Savior.” These verses show us the functions of the soul and of the human spirit. The soul is to magnify the Lord, to express the Lord. This matches Genesis 1:26 which says that we are created in His image. But it is in our spirit that we rejoice in God our Savior. Actually, the enjoyment of the Lord is firstly in our spirit. The Lord comes to our spirit. That is why Paul says in his farewell to Timothy, “The Lord be with your spirit! Grace be with you.” Grace is the enjoyment of God with you where? In your spirit.

We saw in the first two sessions that if we talk about the exercise of the spirit, we shouldn't take things for granted. Sometimes, maybe because of our experience in the church life and not paying detailed attention, some have developed a kind of a thought, even a concept, what it means to exercise the spirit. People right away kind of gravitate towards certain practices, such as calling on the name of the Lord, pray reading the Bible, or reading the Bible, and so on. That is not wrong. Those practices actually are the exercise of the fellowship function of the spirit. Our spirit has three parts, or I would rather say, three functions.

The burden of the first two sessions was, how does one really exercise their spirit? We exercise our spirit by exercising the functions of our spirit, that is the conscience, fellowship, and the intuition. If exercising the spirit was restricted to calling and praying reading, how much could you exercise your spirit? Can you go to your class and before the professor starts the class, “Professor wait, I would like to exercise my spirit ‘Oh Lord Jesus!’ ” Or at work, can you tell your work companions or co-workers, “Let's have some prayer, that would be wonderful.” Maybe you're in a place that you can do that; most of us are not. How does one exercise our spirit from 9 to 5? Or starting in the commute to the job, and then 9 to 5, and then at home? You know how? By paying attention to the three functions of our spirit.

Actually our spirit is active all day long. Have you never been in a conversation at your job and there's just a little down time and one of your co-workers says “Can you believe our supervisor?” and starts complaining. Of course, maybe here at your jobs there is no complaining; maybe Canadians don't complain as much as Americans do. But I believe there is some complaining. And then, another co-worker will say, “Oh, I know!” and aren't you tempted to join in and to say your experience, to speak

against authority. Actually, you don't think of it that way. You totally forget Romans 13 verses 1 - 5 where it says, "Every authority is from God!" So do you realize when you complain about your supervisor in that kind of a way, actually that's rebellion. Do you know your conscience may be telling you "Don't say it!" Or after you said it your conscience is active. "I'm not happy." Maybe your conscience would even bother you "Go to your co-workers and say, "You know that little thing I said about Mr. So and So, I'm sorry I said that." They might look at you, "What's wrong with you?" "Are you on his side now?"

Have you never been in a supermarket and the cashier gives you \$5 extra back? And then when you are walking out, you are counting and you realize, "Oh, amen! The Lord provides!" Is that what you say? Or is there a little feeling, oh oh, she gave me \$5 extra. Do you realize that the cashier has to cash out at the end and everything has to match. If they are short \$5 they have to pay out of their pocket. But maybe you didn't realize until you got to the car, and you have your children and you started putting one in the car seat already and then, "Oh no", what do you do? If you pay the price to follow your spirit, to take the child back out, to walk all the way back, and then to wait until they finish with the next customer, and then you say, "Sorry, you gave me a little extra back." This has happened to many of us and don't they look at you and their thought is, "Who does this? Nobody. Oh thank-you, thank-you, thank-you."

You know what? You just accomplished God's eternal purpose because you followed your spirit and you know what happened? Christ was magnified through your soul. You weren't in the meeting shouting "Praise the Lord!" That's your daily life. In the course of our daily life, isn't the spirit all the time speaking, "Don't say that." Sometimes, "Don't look at that." You are on some website: "Don't, don't, don't, don't look at that. Don't waste your time." Maybe you're just in thought, you're driving, you're just in thought and the spirit will speak, "Don't think this way." You know the enemy is all the time injecting thoughts, weakening thoughts, divisive thoughts, bringing us down, bringing us to the past, bringing us to our self. But the spirit is bothered. You know what that is? That's not the conscience, that's the intuition. Unless it's something sinful, then the spirit is acting as the conscience, but maybe it's just a stray thought. The spirit will say, "Don't think this way." You know what that is? That's our spirit! But you know saints, our spirit does not just talk in terms of yes and no. To new believers you only know the feeling in the spirit, good and bad.



## Friday

Psalms 46:4, 10 – Footnotes 4<sup>1</sup>, 4<sup>2</sup>, 10<sup>1</sup>

I don't know if children here play this game "Red Light, Green Light 1 2 3." Do you have this, do you know this game? Suppose Terry's there and I go over here, "Red light, green light, 1 2 3" and he walks closer to me, closer and closer and when I turn around he has to freeze. "Red light green light one two three" and I turn and oh over here. If I see him move, he has to go back. So Red Light Green Light, Red Light Green Light. Our Christian life is not "Red Light, Green Light"; our Christian life is a relationship with a person, not with a traffic light. It is a person who has feelings and speaks to us. You may pray for something: this job, moving, buying, purchasing a house, moving to another city. You may pray over all these things and you have a feeling that is not comfortable. So you say I have no peace. Is that the extent of your relationship with the Lord or do you have His speaking?

Sometimes the Lord will speak to you and tell you, "Not the right burden, or the right burden but not the right time." The Lord will speak to you, "Yes you can do this, but not in that way." The speaking of the Lord can be much richer to us. But how does the Lord speak to us? I would suggest to you that the spirit speaks to you through the Bible. The more of the Bible you know, the richer the speaking of the Lord will be. Why is it that our inner life is not so rich sometimes? Actually, it's directly linked to how much we are in the Word. If we would read the Word more, we would know the Word more; we would have more speaking of the Lord.

I still recall an experience from my teenage years. I was involved already with many services when I was 16. I think I was on 5 service groups. I was on gardening, I was on cleaning and arranging, I was on children's meeting, and I was on a moving service. We even had a moving service. Do you have a moving service here? I don't know why in the 70s saints moved a lot, so much that we needed a service group for moving. Maybe once or twice a month we'd get a call for moving someone. Those are great times because you would have highschool students, college students, you would have young working brothers, and you have older brothers. We got blended together and we also got free lunch. Almost every time a sister would prepare something for us. I realized that I was going through a stretch of time

where I was a little dry in my in my experience of the Lord, and I felt like the Lord was telling me, “Stop.” I felt Him saying, “Stop!” I thought, “Maybe the Lord wants me to quit my services or quit some of the services.” I wasn’t sure and we didn’t have the internet in those days. I didn’t have a concordance, but I borrowed one. I looked for the word *stop* in the Bible and I couldn’t find anything. So then after about 2 weeks, I found Psalm 46:10: “Be still and know that I am Jehovah.” “Be still and know that I am Jehovah.” So I read the whole psalm through; so if you have the time later, read it through. This psalm is so rich, so sweet.

When you read the whole psalm, there’s another verse that says, something like this, “There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God.” Then it talks about if the mountains shake and this and that but God is in the midst of her, she will not be moved. Then it says that He supports her in the dawn. The Lord spoke to me through all this. It’s not that He wanted me to stop my services, but that He wanted me to spend time before Him and to be still, not thinking about this or that. Especially in the morning He wants to be the stream to me to make me glad, so that when I serve, I don’t serve with a long face.

Have you ever served with a long face? You know it says in Malachi, “These people serve me mournfully.” Have you ever experienced serving mournfully? I’m sorry to say, I have to confess I have but I don’t like to serve that way. I like to serve with my heart gladdened. But without reading Psalm 46, all I could understand from that feeling inside was “Stop.” But with that little understanding there’s no richness, there’s no fellowship. Certainly there’s a feeling from the Lord and I could obey it, but I don’t even know how to obey it. But when I link that feeling with scripture, the speaking is so rich. I was a 16 year old boy when I learned this.

## Saturday

1 Pet. 1:22-23 – Footnotes 22<sup>1</sup>, 22<sup>2</sup>, 22<sup>3</sup>, 22<sup>4</sup>

The Lord can speak to us through His Word if we combine the written Word and living Word who is within us. I would like to encourage us all. I know that this is not something new to probably 99% of us here, but I think sometimes we need to be reminded to be still, because it seems like sometimes as believers who love the Lord, we serve on autopilot. Sometimes there's not the gladness in our heart. Even we are serving, but we're not content with our circumstances either at home or at work or in the church life. We need time to go to the Lord and say, "Lord I'm not happy, I'm not happy. But Lord, You can sustain the weary with a word." Actually this morning the Lord brought me to this verse in Isaiah 50: "He can sustain the weary with one word."

Haven't you ever been tired in your Christian life? Just worn out, about ready to say, "I just can't, I can't anymore. It's the same thing over and over. Yes, yes I appreciate God's purpose, but I just can't!" But just one time with the Lord, one word from the Lord, nothing outwardly changed, but inwardly you are just renewed. We need the living word and we need the supply of the written Word.

In his prayer in Ephesians 1, Paul prays for a spirit of wisdom and of revelation, the eyes of your heart having been enlightened. I linked this on Friday night with Matthew chapter 13 and we mentioned that every spiritual experience begins with love in the heart, and we need our love for the Lord renewed constantly, even daily. But do you know when you look at Matthew 13 where the sower goes to sow, this is the initiation of the Lord's ministry? Later in the New Testament it says that you are God's farm, God's building, and then at the end we know there's the reaping of first fruit and the harvest. So this thought of the seed being sown is throughout the entire New Testament. But it says very clearly, the Lord interprets what is the seed that gets sown into your heart: the seed is the Word of God. Peter develops this saying, "Having been regenerated not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the living and abiding word of God." That was my experience as a seven-year-old boy. I was regenerated, how? Yes, my sister preached the gospel but what actually happened? The living and abiding Word of God was sown into my heart. So you could say that the Word was sown, you could

say that the Spirit came in. Then Ephesians 6 links them and says the Spirit, which Spirit is the Word of God. To know Christ in a personal, active way that He could be our reality, we need the Spirit which is the Word.