

A True Knowledge of God

Jeremiah 9:23-24

Introduction:

- By the way, if you read Jeremiah chapter 1 it will help convince you that abortion is a sin- unlike megachurch pastor, Carl Lentz
- Background: Jeremiah's lament over Judah still in exile
 - Judgment is coming and they must prepare for it v. 7-11
 - The cause and result of judgment- v. 12-16 "Because they have forsaken my law which I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, neither walked therein;"
 - (Jer 9:23-24) How to prepare for the coming calamity: a true knowledge of God.
- The issue here is glorying in the wrong thing
 - To glory in something is to celebrate it, and to proclaim it as the source of one's happiness and satisfaction.
 - There is a contrast between the three fading glories of verse 23 and the three unfading ones of verse 24:
 - Man instinctually has a desire to glory in something- it must be guided to the right thing!
 - Illustr- studying the wrong chapter/material for a test
- The highest wisdom of man, the greatest strength of man, the most lavish riches of man cannot compare to a proper knowledge of God
- God desires that we have a true knowledge of who He is
 - When we study God we also learn a little bit more about ourselves! We are created in his image and likeness- Genesis 1:26-27
 - Without a doubt the mightiest, and grandest thoughts the mind can entertain are our thoughts of God
 - What you think about God is the most important thing about you
- The child, the philosopher, the theologian all ask the same question- what is God like?
 - That is a question we will spend all eternity discovering

- The best question rather, is what Has God disclosed about Himself to us? That question can be answered in a satisfactory manner! Have you read His #1 best seller?
- God is transcendent, and yet He is a personable God whom we can call Father
- God is misunderstood in today's culture because we have gotten away from His Word

I. **LOVINGKINDNESS**

- a. The N.T. uses three Greek words for love. The most frequent is Agapao- which is the highest form of love there is. This is a giving, and sacrificial love. This is the type of love God has for us, as Christians are to have to each other, and to all men
 - i. Love is much more than a nice sentiment, or an emotion that makes you feel dizzy. It is a choice of the will!
 - ii. The next type of love in the NT is Phileo (of which Philadelphia is named after)- this is brotherly love, not brotherly shove. This love is between friends. John 15:12-15
 - iii. In John 21:15-17, Jesus inquires about Peter's love for him. Jesus asks him using agape twice, and Peter replies using Phileo- "You are my friend." Jesus was stretching Peter to move him from phileo love to agape love.
 - iv. We know that God loves us with an agape love
- b. God's love for us is lavish, extravagant, rich, and measureless and boundless!
Romans 8:35-39
 - i. This love is not acceptance of our sin, it is a desire to save us from our sin
 - ii. Jeremiah here is speaking of the hesed or covenant-love of God to His people. This is the unconditional love of God (consider Israel's testimony)
 - iii. His love is incomprehensible especially when placed alongside our sin- for as sinners we are the enemies of God! Illustr- prodigal son- If I come to God, how will He act toward me? That question has already been answered!

- iv. The perspective isn't, "I'm so great that even God loves me," but "God is so great that He loves even me."
 - v. Eph. 2:1-7- His love has been manifested through His grace in redeeming us. For all eternity His grace will be on display as a testimony of his love for us!
 - vi. God's love means that He secures our well-being- He wants the best for us and gives us the best when we **trust** Him!
 - vii. As we were challenged during the Missions conference, there are times when we change our lifestyle so that we can be obedient to what God wants us to do- this is agape love- the same love which motivated Christ!
- c. What is true Christian love?
- i. It cannot be separated from truth, holiness, and obedience (Philippians 1:9, I John 5:3)
 - ii. Jack Van Impe represents the New Evangelical philosophy well- "Let us forget our labels and come together in love, the pope has called for that. Till I die I will proclaim nothing but love for all my brothers and sisters in Christ, my Catholic brothers, Protestant brothers, Christian reformed, Lutherans, I don't care what label you are."
 - iii. This sounds really nice, and is the popular view of love- but it is false and dangerous
 - iv. Biblical love is obedience to God's word! People never like it when Bible believers take God's word and measure other churches and movements by it! Love is important, but as we have seen it is based on truth and obedience to God first and foremost! (II Thess 3:4-6)
 - v. Love is not broadmindedness, non-judgmentalism- Consider Christ and the Pharisees, Paul calling out false teachers by name, etc.
 - vi. There is confusion about the direction of love- I love God and love His sheep who are in danger to wolves teaching false doctrine!

II. JUDGMENT (JUSTICE)

- a. God's attributes are not isolated parts of a whole, but they should be seen all as one. We sometimes think of them separately, but they cannot be separated (love and justice)
- b. All men must stand before God to be judged someday
 - i. The world doesn't like that. They do not like to think that they are accountable to God!
 - ii. There are two main judgments: Great White Throne, and the Judgment Seat of Christ- at which one will you be?
- c. Judgment here speaks more of God's justice
 - i. His discerning between what is right and wrong- as discussed earlier. Sadly our culture is drifting further away from this.
 - ii. "God is too kind to punish the ungodly" is a deadly doctrine poisoning the masses
 - iii. If God ignored sin, His love would be without force or meaning. You will never fully appreciate God's love until you understand His holiness and justice! A society and world that does not carry out justice is not a very loving place to live
 - iv. God is a perfect, holy judge and He does not let sin go unpunished- v. 25-26
 - v. Supreme Court Justice Horace Gray once informed a man who had appeared before him in a lower court and had escaped conviction on a technicality, "I know that you are guilty and you know it, and I wish you to remember that one day you will stand before a better and wiser Judge, and that there you will be dealt with according to justice and not according to law."
- d. The next question we must ask is: How can God be just and pardon the unjust (Romans 6:23)- Redemption- Christ's atonement on the cross. Jesus satisfied God's justice and God's love at the cross!

III. RIGHTEOUSNESS

- a. This is God's absolute goodness, holiness, virtue, honesty, purity
- b. The standard for righteousness and morality must be God
 - i. The fact that God has allowed sin to enter this world only accents His holiness for all eternity. Because, sin will be defeated, and will be no more- and God's righteousness will abide still
 - ii. We rightly recognize there is evil in this world! So we know there is good, and there is a something, someone beyond that goodness who has defined for us what is good and what is evil. What is right and what is wrong.
- c. Only God can make us righteous- this is the theme of Romans
 - i. The righteousness of man is as filthy rags
 - ii. Imputation- Christ not only washed our sins away, He imputed (credited) his righteousness to us (our position)- II Cor. 5:21, Gal. 2:20a
 - iii. Impartation- Christ lives in us allowing us to live holy lives in this world (our walk)- Gal. 2:20b
- d. Christians have gotten away from righteousness. It takes a true knowledge and fear of God to always do right even when the pressure is on!
 - i. Matt 5:6- hunger and thirst after righteousness
 - ii. Righteousness is to be lived out even when nobody else sees!

Conclusion:

- We need to like Moses ask God to show us His glory- hide us in the cleft of the rock like Moses did, and just pass by us O Lord! Speak to us in a still small voice like you did to Elijah, walk with us in the garden in the cool of the day as you did with Adam- when we have that type of hunger and we open up our Bibles- WE WILL KNOW GOD! The problem is we don't open up our Bibles, or we do and we don't have that hungering to find God.
- We need: An encounter with His lovingkindness, An encounter with His justice, An encounter with His righteousness

- A.W. Tozer's secret- "Acquaint thyself with God."
- He also stated, "As the knowledge of God becomes more wonderful, greater service to our fellow men will become imperative." The blessed knowledge of God is not to be enjoyed selfishly, but is to be translated into service!

Decision: Understanding God, and His expectations for my life