

Series: Side by Side
Message Title: **#KnowHim**
Date: Easter Sunday, April 1, 2018
Scripture: Philippians 3:7-11
Speaker: David H. McKinley
Location: Warren Baptist Church, Augusta, GA

Introduction

“When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint Him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. And they were saying to one another, ‘Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?’ And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. And he said to them, ‘Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; He is not here. See the place where they laid Him’” (Mark 16:1-6 ESV).

Christ is alive!

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the greatest and most important event in the history of the world, and it is based on the strongest historical evidence. No one ever produced the body of Jesus. The closest relic is the Shroud of Turin—but no body! You don't visit the grave of Jesus in Israel, you visit the empty tomb. And truth be told, no one knows the exact location of empty tomb.

- Abraham—2,000 B.C. is buried in Hebron
- David—1,000 B.C. is buried in Jerusalem
- Buddha—cremated in Kushinagar, India, 7th century B.C. where ashes were scattered and his right tooth is in The Temple of the Tooth, Sri Lanka
- Confucius—6th century B.C., buried in Qufu, Shandong Province, China
- Apostle Paul—buried in Rome, 1st century C.E.
- Muhammad—died in 632 after Christ and is buried in Medina beneath the Green Dome, Saudi Arabia. First two prophets (Abu Bakr and Umar) next to him.
- Mary Baker Eddy (Christian Science), Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, MA
- Joseph Smith (Mormonism), Smith Family Cemetery, Nauvoo, IL

- L. Ron Hubbard (Scientology), ashes were scattered in the Pacific Ocean

Jesus Christ was born in a manger and lived in the region of Galilee. He chose 12 uneducated and unrefined disciples, performed miracles, taught parables and was followed by crowds.

He went to Jerusalem to be personally maligned, falsely accused and ultimately crucified. His body was taken from the cross and placed in a borrowed tomb, but on Easter, those who came to the grave were astounded to learn He was "Not here." Those who followed Him became martyrs for the truth that Jesus had not simply "passed out on cross, then lived out life in obscurity" nor did they steal His body and start the hoax of the resurrection. Because martyrs and charlatans are not made of the same fabric: "Men may live for a lie, but few will die for one."

The disciples of Christ and His followers outlived the direct opposition and sustained oppression of the Roman Empire, and ultimately changed the world convinced of the truth and proof of the resurrection.

We are here 2,000 years later worshiping Him because of their testimony and His ministry.

Why? Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came from heaven to earth to rescue and redeem a fallen and broken human race. Christ became one of us so that He might sacrifice Himself for us. And being the sinless One—pure and perfect—Jesus suffered Himself as the Savior, given for sins of all who come to Him and trust in Him.

What Jesus Christ did on the cross at Calvary was to provide a satisfactory payment for the debt of human sin. What God did on Easter Sunday was to validate the payment through the power of the resurrection and offer a promise of life abundant today and an eternal forever to all who would call upon Him and believe upon His name. This is the declaration and the celebration Easter Sunday!

Because Jesus lives, Jesus can be known.

There is a man named Paul whose story we read about in the New Testament. Paul was a good man, religious man, respected man,

an educated man, but he was a lost man. He looked at external appearances to be close to God, but inwardly, he was far from God.

...“that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection” (Philippians 3:10a ESV).

Paul made it clear that while he lived with respect of others, he was far from God because he did not know God. One of saddest realities in the lives of some people is that they are enshrouded in religion, but far from God.

“My one purpose in life is to help people find a personal relationship with God which, I believe, comes through knowing Christ.”

—Billy Graham

I am speaking today to a wide variety of people in all ages and stages of life. Some of you have had rigorous religious training. You had a “drug problem” (drug to church since childhood). Others of you (who think you are non-religious or cautiously religious) think you are very different from those who have been brought up around the church. The truth is, there are really only two groups of people in front of me today: #KnowHim or #DontKnowHim

It is a curious and important insight to acknowledge that the word “know” is one of experiential knowledge. Paul didn’t just know about Jesus; Paul said, “I know Him.” Paul connected knowing Christ to the reality and experience of the resurrection.

The phrase, “power of His resurrection,” was experiential (power = *dunamis* in the Greek. Dynamite—separates, liberates and alters a state of being). Paul said that knowing Christ “blew up” his former life and reshaped a new life in Christ.

“Most of us know about God, but that is quite different from knowing God.”

—Billy Graham

What does it mean to #KnowHim?

...“that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection” (Philippians 3:10a ESV). This was not just a reference to power that raised Jesus from the dead, but the power of Christ operating in the life of a believer.



Knowing Christ Means Recognizing I Must Come to God on His Terms and Not My Own

“Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith” (Philippians 3:8-9 ESV).

Paul’s biggest surprise that good works could not help him rise above the nature of sin and self-righteousness—the emptiness of good works.

Who am I kidding? The scales of justice will always fall against you! Your need for God’s grace is much greater than you can overcome through religious performance.

“Our society strives to avoid any possibility of offending anyone except God.”

—Billy Graham

The issue is not recompense, but repentance! Not how can you repay God, but what you must do to admit your need for God.

Do you see and know how much you need God today? You will not know until you look to Christ.

Knowing Christ Means Trusting Christ Alone For Forgiveness and Salvation

... “and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith” (Philippians 3:9 ESV).

Jesus is not one of many ways to come to God; Jesus declared Himself to be the only way to God: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6 ESV).

How could Jesus make such a claim?

- **His Nature**—where He came from

... who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:6-11 ESV).

- **His Work**—through His perfect sacrifice

Jesus provided a way for us to be made right with God and through His resurrection, He defeated the ultimate penalty and dominate enemy—death.

This is a great theological truth. Theology is important, but it can be easy to become heavy and complicated.

I heard about a group of 4-year-olds in a Sunday School Class in Chattanooga, TN.

The teacher asked, "Does anyone know what today is?" A little girl lifted her hand and answered, "It's Palm Sunday."

Teacher: "Very Good. Does anyone know what next Sunday is?" The same little girl lifted her hand enthusiastically and said, "It's Easter Sunday."

Teacher: "What makes Easter so special?"

Little girl: "Easter Sunday is special because Jesus rose...." And before the teacher could respond, the little girl continued, "But if He sees His shadow, He goes back in for seven weeks."

What we know and believe about Jesus and the resurrection is all-important. Why? All of Christianity hinges on the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Jesus did not simply come to be a sacrifice, but to be a Savior—a Conqueror, Reconciler and Redeemer.

We live in need of His life because we live in the face and fear of death. We face the reality of death. "And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment" (Hebrews 9:27 ESV).

Are you prepare for Judgment Day? Come to God and confess two things:

1. Confess Your Sin—we have to “own it.”

When Saul (who became Paul) met Christ on the Damascus Road, he lost some things and gained some things. He gave up “self-righteousness” and received “gift-righteousness.”

2. Confess Faith in Christ as Savior and Lord—we have to respond/exercise it.

Think about a commercial airline flight. You get on board because you believe the airline has trained and experienced pilots. You do not see them or meet them, but you trust them with your life.

...“because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved... For ‘everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved’” (Romans 10:9-10, 13 ESV).

The saving work of Christ is more than heaven when you die; it is power and empowerment to live life here on earth. Many reject the Christian faith because they think it is too difficult. They see it as frustration and restraint that is just impossible. And the truth is, you cannot “act out Christianity,” but you can be and are empowered to live because of the resurrection of Christ.

Several years ago, an entertainment network sent a reporter to the Billy Graham Library in Charlotte, North Carolina, to shoot a feature showing one of the points of interest in the city. When she arrived at the library, she was immediately met with a glass crosses displayed at the Visitor’s Center entry. She went in and saw many displays with crosses. Midway through, she said, “Where is Jesus?” I don’t see Jesus on any of these crosses? The host responded, “He is risen and in heaven, and He is present in the lives of all who believe on His name as Savior and Lord.”

With an astonished expression, the reporter said, “That’s right. Jesus didn’t stay on the cross. Christians celebrate a risen Christ.”

Then she said, "I've been around church my whole life, but never heard emphasis put on the empty cross." When she finished the interview and feature, she said this to all who saw it, "This library is a place you must come and see!" That is the message of the angels at Easter: "Come and see the place where they laid Him."

Releasing My Life to Do His Will and to Live For His Glory

"But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith" (Philippians 3:7-9 ESV).

Paul said that he spent a lot of his life trying to add to the credit column of his life—honors, achievements, accolades. But all he wanted to count as credit, he had to move

to debt. His debts he exchanged for credit through Christ and His work for him. Paul could not do enough. Paul (just like you and me) needed what only Christ could do.

Christ will change your life at every level—your view of what matters most (your values, how you count your “wins and losses,” and a confidence in a final victory that will overcome all the slights, injuries and faults of this life).

This includes hearing and obeying the voice of God—experiencing the power of His resurrection.

“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one” (John 10:27-30 ESV).

Knowing Christ Means Embracing Hope in the Face of Heartache

... "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and may share His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead" (Philippians 3:10-11 ESV).

Paul was talking about something he could experience in life, not something he was striving to achieve in life.

The power we lack in the problems and pains of life is the power Christ gives in the face of hardship and suffering.

... "persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies" (2 Corinthians 4:7-10 ESV).

"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us" (Romans 8:18 ESV).

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope" (Romans 15:13 ESV).

Knowing Christ Means Relying on the Fact That He Knows and Cares For Me

When I speak to you about knowing God, I am speaking to you about knowing the God who knows you and all about you.

“O LORD, You have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether... For You formed my inward parts; You knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are Your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in Your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them” (Psalm 139:1-4; 13-16 ESV).

God doesn't just know about you as being model #?—off the assembly line. He knows you personally and cares about you today. This God is not past or distant, but near and present.

Paul goes on to talk about sharing the sufferings of Jesus:

“that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and may share His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death” (Philippians 3:10 ESV).

Just because you know Him does not mean you have your best life now. No. Knowing Christ does not release us from hurt, struggle and suffering. We share the “suffering of Christ” in this life.

Paul, like us, had to give up his rights and earthly goals to exchange the temporary for the eternal. Why? Because he was a new man, with a new focus and a new hope in Christ.

“Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me His own” (Philippians 3:12 ESV).

Paul came to the knowledge of Christ that he might be transformed by Jesus' life and a glorious future.

"But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the power that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself" (Philippians 3:20-21 ESV).

Do you #KnowHim? The single most important thing about you or anyone is this: Do you know God?

"Once you become aware that the main business you are here for is to know God, most of life's problems fall into place of their own accord." —J.I. Packer

You *can* #KnowHim. If you don't know Him, I pray you will, and that you will have the same confidence and assurance that Paul had long ago when he wrote the words we have examined today: "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection." This is the hope in Christ, today and forever!