

Does Jesus Know You
Luke 13:22-30

In the passage of scripture that we will study today, there is a word that the Lord Jesus uses that I have found to have a much misunderstood meaning. It is the simple word "know", K N O W, "know". But though this word be simple, it is filled with profound and eternal meaning and consequence. Listen carefully to these precious words of the Lord Jesus, here given in Luke chapter 13 beginning in verse 22.

²²And He (the Lord Jesus) went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. ²³Then one said to Him, "Lord, are there few who are saved?"

And He said to them, ²⁴"Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. ²⁵When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from,' ²⁶then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.' ²⁷But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.' ²⁸There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out. ²⁹They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God. ³⁰And indeed there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last." (Luke 13:22-30)

Here in this passage, the Lord Jesus had been teaching about the "Kingdom of God", about how His Kingdom had come to the earth and was all around them as they went about the activities of their daily lives.

And take careful note that Jesus was not only teaching His faithful disciples these words of truth, He was also speaking to all of His fellow Jews, reminding them of the Old Testament promises given through Abraham, Issac, Jacob and the prophets, and warning them that their entrance into the Kingdom of God would not be simply because of their bloodlines.

Perhaps that was what prompted some of them to ask this question that they were asking about who the Lord would receive into His Kingdom, asking "would it be many people, or would it be few".

And folks, that is a question that really should be on each of our hearts. "Lord, who will you receive into your kingdom, and who will you not receive?"

And the answer seems to hinge on this one word, "know", "know". What does Jesus mean when He uses this word, "know"? Who is it that Jesus "knows"? Does Jesus know you, does He know me?

And when this word is used to tell us about whether Jesus "knows" us, it's not speaking about some "general familiarity". Folks, Jesus is God. He created us all. And He has an intimate knowledge of everyone that has ever existed and will ever exist in all of eternity.

And when Jesus speaks about "knowing" someone, He is most often speaking about a "relational knowledge", an "intimate Knowledge", a "love relationship", one that bespeaks being a part of the family of God, part of the "Bride of Christ".

And as I read through the words of the Lord Jesus in this passage about whether or not He "knows" someone, my thoughts have gone immediately to all those many people of our day, people who each week sit in churches all across our world, and especially all across America. And I picture their faces as they sing hymns and they listen intently as the preachers give forth the precious truths of God.

And it's my hope that all of them are deeply devoted, on-fire, evangelical believers, worshiping and praising God with their whole heart, soul, mind and strength and in the way and manner that God deserves to be worshipped.

But sadly, I do know that my thoughts are more "hope" than "reality", that while some might truly be fully surrendered over to Christ, many more of them are barely saved. And even worse, many of them are not saved at all.

They seem to want to be. And they make most of the outward efforts that it takes to look as if they are saved. They go to the church services, at least somewhat regularly, and they put some amount of money into the offering plate as it passes by them. They often speak well of the church, and they even sometimes criticize other people who don't go.

But sadly, without even knowing it, many of those dear ones have themselves not really taken all the steps that are necessary to salvation, steps described here using the word "strive". Verse 24,

²⁴"Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. (Luke 13:24)

Please note carefully within this verse that our Lord seems to give a strong distinction between the word "strive" and the word "seek", here telling us that merely "seeking" to enter in is not enough. That we must go further and "strive". . . "strive", giving our whole heart and soul to Him. To do as Jesus described to Nicodemus, we must be "born again", "born from above".

But again, and sadly so, there are many well-intending people, who are really only going through the motions, pretending to be someone that they really are not.

If I were to say these words that I am saying to you now, out of context and without these scriptures speaking so clearly to us, you would think that I am being far too critical. Some might even respond angrily to me, accusing me of being judgmental.

But folks, it is not me that has said these words. It was the Lord Jesus Himself! And His words are always true.

And He was not speaking about those people who are obviously of a wretched nature, murderers, drug dealers, robbers and thugs. No! These scriptures address those average looking church goers who sit in church pews most every Sunday.

Listen to these words again!

²⁴"Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. ²⁵When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from,' ²⁶then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.' ²⁷But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.' (Luke 13:24-27)

Isn't this so very sad? Here in these words, Jesus is answering several questions that often come to our minds. The first question is the one that was asked in verse 23, "Lord, are there few who are saved?"

This is a question that I have pondered so very often over the years. Will there be many people who will be permitted to enter into that very special place and that very special condition of soul called "the Kingdom of God", both here during this life and then later on in eternity? Will there be many, or will there be only a few.

From His words here, we can't know the real answer to that question, because we can't know how many a "few" really is. But we must accept His words as He has given them, and He did use the word "few".

He is saying here that there really is a terrible misconception taking place within the souls of many people who call themselves Christians, people who do often participate in Christianly activities and behaviors right alongside devout believers, but they themselves never quite enter into the Kingdom of God, in most ways, looking like they are on the inside of the Kingdom of God, but really remaining on the outside.

And please know that Jesus gives this warning to us on several occasions within these gospels. In Matthew chapter 7, He tells us,

²¹ "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!' (Matthew 7:21-23)

And I'm also reminded of the parable about the Ten Virgins. In that parable, all ten of those virgins thought that they were saved, but sadly only five of them were allowed to enter in and be with the Lord. And Jesus said the very same thing to them. He said, I don't "know" you. And here again, each of their eternities rested on this one condition, Jesus did not "know" them.

Again, in answer to the question first asked, "Lord will there be few who are saved", it seems that each of these parables keep saying that there truly will be only a few!

Listen to these words given in Matthew chapter 7, where Jesus speaks again about a “narrow gate”. There He said,

¹³“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. ¹⁴Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. (Matthew 7:13-14)

Note in these words that Jesus said that there are many who choose the “broad gate” that leads to destruction, but that there are few who find that “narrow gate”, the one that leads to His kingdom and to eternal life.

Where does this leave us in our understanding? It leaves us with the knowledge that there are many that we spend time with each day, dearly beloved friends and family members, who know how to say the right words and even know how to do good things, but who really have not taken that final step that leads to surrender and salvation and eternal life.

A comparison comes to my mind of a similar circumstance involving all those people who live together out of wedlock. I'm told that it is over 50% of those who would otherwise be married, but have refused to make a commitment to a relationship of marriage.

As you visit with them in their homes, eat with them, sit next to them in church, go with them to their children's piano recitals and baseball games, they look married, they act married and they in every way pretend to be married, but they are not. They simply have not given their whole heart to the relationship and they are “not married”!

Folks, that is the same sad condition that all those “many” that Jesus spoke about here are caught up in. They really do look like believing Christians. They do most all the things that believing Christians do, but they simply are “not Christians”.

They have not given their whole heart to their relationship with Christ. They have not surrendered their heart, soul, mind and strength to Him. And because of that, His Spirit has refused to enter in and to bring them to real salvation.

These scriptures are clear folks, so please understand. Jesus knows every thought and every attitude of your and my heart. He knows everything. Everything about us is “laid bare” before Him at every moment of every day.

Yes, He might have our attention, even to the point of our bodies physically attending church. But we might never really have fully given Him our heart. And that is what He wants. And that is what is needed for eternal salvation to actually take place.

These thoughts remind me of a story that I have shared with you on other occasions, the story about a demonstration given by our friend, the “Horse Whisperer”, Lew Sterrett. In one of his “Sermon on the Mount” demonstrations, he was loading an unbroken and resistant horse into a trailer.

The horse had gone through quite a lot of training and was doing well in most of its trials, but when it came to climbing up into that horse trailer, it balked. Time after time, Mr. Sterrett led that horse up to that trailer, sometimes the horse would put one foot and then another into the trailer, and sometimes he even got three of his four feet into it, but always kept his right back foot on the ground, refusing to fully and completely surrender himself to the task.

Mr. Sterrett said that yes, he could force that horse to get into the trailer. He could hit the horse on the backside and the horse would take that final step. But if he did that, he would have only won the horse’s body and not the horse’s heart and his will.

That horse finally did get up into that trailer, but only after he had been taken through some other experiences with Mr. Sterrett, training work that built a relationship between him and Mr. Sterrett, a relationship that led to trust. Once the horse began to trust Mr. Sterrett, he got up into that trailer of his own will and volition.

That demonstration has been a powerful witness to me about the souls of men and women, and especially about my own resistant soul. And I believe that that demonstration reveals the real difficulty that lies in the path of those who would want to be real Christians, but are not.

Yes, they give their physical bodies by coming to church and even tithing and doing other religious things. But they have not finally and completely surrendered their hearts to Christ.

Their trust remains in themselves. They can't quite get that other foot into the trailer. They can't quite get both of their feet, and their heart into the Kingdom of God.

Consider that word picture for a moment, people standing in church every Sunday, singing hymns and appearing to praise God, but with only one of their feet inside of the Kingdom of God. They hold back on giving their other foot and their whole heart and soul.

And what are the consequences of not taking that final step? Listen again.

²⁴ . . . many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. ²⁵When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from,' ²⁶then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.' ²⁷But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.' ²⁸There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, (Luke 13:24-28)

Oh how sad this is, how very, very sad!

Dear friends, may I say those words again that I said to us a few moments ago? The conditional requirement that is necessary to our being able to enter into the precious Kingdom of God seems to rest within this one word, "know".

And the question is . . . does Jesus know you? And please be reminded that when Jesus uses this word "know", He is speaking about intimate knowledge, knowledge that bespeaks love and a caring relationship, the same kind of "knowing" that a husband and wife experience in their lifelong intimate loving and caring relationship, a relationship in which the husband would love his wife so much that he would die for her.

The question again . . . does Jesus know you? Are you His "Bride"?

And then also, does the Lord Jesus know those who are most dear to you, your family members, your friends, those people who sit next to you in the pew each Sunday? Does He know them?

This is a serious matter folks, and the answer to this question, “Does Jesus “know” us and our loved ones is of an eternal nature and consequence.

And what must we do with what we learn from these words of this passage? How must we respond?

May I strongly urge you and me to respond to these words first by checking our own souls. To fall on our face before God and to plead with Him that our own relationship with Him be more than a “casual familiarity”, to instead be one of love and commitment, one that is complete and secure. Those words given in 1 Corinthians chapter 13,

⁵ Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves.
(1 Corinthians 13:5)

And then, we need to get about sharing the precious gospel of God with everyone who will listen, beginning with those that already look very saved. It can't hurt them. It can only help them.

How do we do that? We do it simply by allowing God's Spirit to “pour forth living waters” out from us into the lives and hearts and souls of everyone that we encounter. We are to be His witnesses, witnesses of His person and of His character.

And folks, He has promised that His Holy Spirit will do the rest. Some of my favorite words in these scriptures tell us, “Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit saith the Lord!”

If we are faithful and allow the Spirit of Christ to flow through us, then He will be faithful to fulfill His promise to “draw all men unto Himself!”

As we close, let me plead with you and with my own soul, that we first make our own salvation sure. And then next, that we reach out to others, even to the seemingly most devout of believers, perhaps that person in the pew next to you, sharing the gospel at every opportunity, remembering always these words of the Lord Jesus.

²⁴“Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. ²⁵When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open for us,’ and He will answer and say to you, ‘I do not know you, where you are from,’ ²⁶then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.’ ²⁷But He will say, ‘I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity. (Luke 13:24-27)

Let's pray.