

August 18, 2019 – Elmont Baptist Church

Text: 2 Peter 1:1-11

Message Series: Church: A Disciple-Making Community

Week 3: "...In the Knowledge of God..."

Introduction:

1. Two weeks ago we began a new series. We began looking at the church as a disciple making community.
 - a. That as a community of Christ-followers, we have one job – to glorify God by making disciples.
 - b. We talked over the past two weeks about heart issues and have been saying that as Christ-followers not only has our eternity has been changed, but the very desires of our heart have been changed.
 - c. We would do well to ask ourselves what do we desire most and is it to know, love, and follow Jesus?
 - d. It is our desires that drive our devotions. We are devoted to the things we desire the most.
2. Today we continue down the path of looking at the church as a disciple making community.
 - a. Every fire needs fuel and if our desires have been changed to want to know, love, and follow Jesus, then that desire must be continually fueled. Desire alone is not enough. It cannot survive on its own.
 - b. The fire to grow your desire for God through Christ is knowledge. To know God. We must become more and more a people that are devoted to knowing God. The desires have been changed and now we devote ourselves to this great work.
 - c. Each of us have a privilege, opportunity, command, and expectation to grow in our knowledge of God.

- d. Since it's a relationship, it is never static. You're either moving closer to Him or farther away. God is not a subject you learn about, but a Person you get to know.
 - i. The Scriptures tell us that Jesus died to not only save us from God's wrath, but also bring us to God (1 Peter 3:18).
 - ii. In John 17:3, Jesus defined eternal life as knowing the Father and Jesus Christ whom the Father sent.

Illus: On July 17, 1999 I married the girl that I loved. I knew her well and loved her much, but 20 yrs later my knowledge of her and love for her are much deeper than they were back then. How did that happen? It's wasn't the magic words "I do" that just made me grow in my knowledge of her. I had to become devoted to doing certain things and those things weren't difficult or burdensome, but came from, and still come from, a place of delight. I don't "have to" get to know her better. It's one of my greatest joys in life to grow our relationship.

And growing in that relationship happens in different ways. It's a multi-layered approach. And it's the same in growing in Christ. We must continually increase our knowledge of God through Christ to fuel our desire to love, and follow Him.

The Apostle Paul often prays for the churches he's writing to that they will grow in their knowledge of God and His will. He knows that growing in knowledge of God is essential to live the life we are called to live and find satisfaction in God alone.

We're going to look at another Apostle's writing to believers over the next few weeks. There's a helpful progression that we will see in how we grow in Christ and display that to the world as a disciple making community. Let's go to 2 Peter 1. We will read verses 1-11, but focus in on just a couple of thoughts about knowledge today.

We grow our knowledge of God by...

1. Spending Time with Him Personally –

- a. Throughout the course of our marriage, the primary way that I have increased my knowledge of my wife and in that grown deeper in love with her is by spending time together.
- b. There is a watching, noticing, studying of her. Picking up on her likes and dislikes. There are conversations that are good and sweet and life-giving, and there are conversations in which we express our creative differences. There are great days and not great days. And all of those things help me know and learn more about her.
- c. The key is time together and being mentally present in that time to notice things.
- d. Just the same, we're not going to grow in our knowledge of God if we don't spend time with Him.
- e. **Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17 & 2 Peter 1:3-4** – There are two essential ways to spend time with God. In His Word and in prayer. You cannot talk to Him in prayer if you don't know who He is through the Scriptures.
 - i. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 tells us the Sacred Scriptures are profitable in all kinds of ways. Teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness. The Scriptures teach us about our heavenly Father and His desires for us.
 - ii. 2 Peter 1:3-4 says that everything we need for a life of godliness is found through the knowledge of God our Father. That through knowing the promises of God, we become partakers of the divine nature. We have to get into the Scriptures to know the promises of God.
 - 1) Don't trust just what you hear or think
 - 2) Know what God has said and grow your trust in His Word

f. Some of us are not far in that journey and others of us have been growing in our knowledge of God for years.

i. If time in the Word is not a habit that you have in your rhythm, then let me encourage you to start here. Go to the book of James.

- 1) It's one of the more straightforward books and it's written by the brother of Jesus.
- 2) Start by asking God to open you to His Word and help you understand it by the work of the Spirit. It's a prayer He wants to answer by the way.
- 3) Just start there and read a section and then rewrite it in your own words. Re-read it and write it again. Let it sink in. Take your time.
- 4) We're going to give you much more help in the area of studying Scripture this fall as we restart Small Groups with a greater focus on disciple-making.
- 5) And let me encourage you from the "after many years" side of things that it only gets sweeter if you'll put in the time.

Illus: After 20 yrs of marriage there may not be any moments that either of us are saying, "Wow! I didn't know that about you!". The new discoveries are not often or ever at this point, but the display of those old discoveries are sweeter and deepens my appreciation and love for her. On Monday of last week, our foster son, Ryder left our home and went to be with his adoptive family. We all knew this was going to be tough and there would be tears. There have been several moments that I have seen my wife cry over Ryder. One night last week we were sitting next to each other and we either got a picture from his new family or she was looking through other ones. Our eyes caught one another and she began to cry. She said, "I'm sorry. I know it will get better." My response to her was, "You have nothing to be sorry for. You loved him much and loved him well." The fact that my wife cares deeply

for children was not a new discovery for me, but seeing that love on display deepened my appreciation and love for her. I would have missed that moment if we weren't spending time together or I if I wasn't clued in at the moment.

Transition: There are plenty of moments that I miss though. Many times that I'm not as perceptive as I need to be. I can get lost in my own perspective at times, and so I try to learn from gifted experts and professionals to grow my perspective of marriage and how I can grow as a husband. Much the same, we grow our knowledge of God by learning from the lives, experiences, and wisdom of...

2. Great Men and Women of the Faith –

- a. In order to grow our marriage, Amy and I have attended conferences, seen counselors, and read books.
- b. We understand there are very faith-filled people that God has equipped and called to write and speak on the subject of marriage and we would do well to listen up.
- c. These resources are good and helpful as they help us remember the big picture of our marriage, and learn how to deal with the struggles we all face in that relationship.
- d. As I seek to grow in my knowledge of God, there are people wildly smarter than me with much more experience than me from whom I can learn. I don't know them personally but they can help me.
- e. We see this in Hebrews 11 as the writer encourages a group of struggling believers by reminding them of the faith of people that lived hundreds of years before them, but finished well.
- f. God hasn't left you alone to figure everything out. He's given you faith-filled experts or professionals to read and listen to. Information is so easy to access today and there are so many great men and women of the faith to learn from.

Transition: And even closer to home than that He's given you the local church. Another way we grow in our knowledge of God from...

3. Other Believers in our Faith Family –

- a. We can't practically attend a marriage conference every weekend or constantly only read books about marriage, but we can constantly see qualities and traits on display in marriages all around us.
- b. None of them are perfect, but many of them display things that we want in our marriage. It may not be a "let's have coffee and talk about the strengths of your marriage", and it won't be just one marriage we learn from, but can be just as simple as watching the interactions and noticing certain things.
 - i. A couple that laughs a lot together (with each other, not at each other). Couples that speak well of each other when the other is not around. Couples that enjoy being together and you can just tell.
 - ii. All of those serve as a testimony and witness to those around them. They help others grow in their knowledge and ambition in marriage.
- c. The church is a disciple making community because it takes a community to make a disciple.
 - i. You cannot see everything you need to see in one godly man or woman.
 - ii. You need several examples to see what faithfulness looks like.
 - 1) From one you see a passion for evangelism, from another compassion for the hurting, from another a desire to know the Scriptures.
 - 2) Spiritual gifts and God-given passions on display all around you.

- d. John 13:35 says that the world will know that we are disciples of Jesus by how we love one another. There is a level of impossibility of making Jesus known if we are not in community with other believers.

Illus: There was a generation of pastors that were taught not have friends in the church.

- a. You just can't. It's too risky. Or, since you can't be friends with everyone, don't be friends with anyone. All very risky ways to live.
- b. Amy and I don't live that way. We take risks. We've run with scissors. We have a lot of kids. We have friends in the church.
 - a. Some are for a season and some are long term.
 - b. Believe it or not, 10 yrs is a long time to stay somewhere as a pastor.
 - i. And it would feel a lot longer and much lonelier if we weren't able to call people in the church our friends.
 - ii. They've been life-saving helps in our marriage and in our loving Jesus. In these relationships there's a faith growing element.
 - iii. There's conversations that help us and help them.
 - iv. There's the sharing of thoughts and ideas, successes and struggles, and all of that relates to growing in our knowledge of God.
 - v. I may not learn something new about the character or nature of God in a conversation with a friend, but I'm reminded of His special grace toward me in the gift of a good friend within the faith family.
 - vi. That deepens my appreciation for God and reminds me that He cares about where I'm at in every respect and will supply what I need according to His riches and glory in Christ Jesus.

Closing

1. We've talked about having changed desires as a result of trusting Jesus for salvation.
 - a. Maybe you're struggling with little or no desire to know, love, and follow Jesus.
 - i. Please come talk to one of our leaders up here in just a moment.
 - ii. Ask the Father to give you a desire to want to know, love, and follow Jesus
 - b. Is your struggle that you do want to know Him, but you've come to believe a lie that you're not capable to understand the Scriptures?
 - i. The God that created you and the Father that adopted you wants you to know about Him. Believe that
 - ii. Start to dig in and ask for God's help.
 - c. Are you resisting growing in your knowledge of God – spending time with Him – because you're afraid of what He might call you to do?
 - i. Let me tell you that if He calls you, He will equip you with a grace given desire and empowerment for that work.
 - ii. He's worth the risk. Because at the end of the day the only risk is holding Him at arms-length and missing out on the greatest blessing any one of us can experience – personally knowing the King of Creation

Let's Pray and then you stand and sing and reflect on what God has said to you.