

# KNOWING GOD

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JOHN 8:19 • TV126A

A television broadcast sermon delivered  
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7<sup>TH</sup>, 1980

By

**HENRY T. MAHAN**

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Transcribed, edited and published  
JUNE 2<sup>ND</sup>, 2015

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### **John 8:19**

*“Then said they unto him, where is thy Father? Jesus answered, ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.”*

I would like for you to open your Bible today to the book of **John**. I’m going to be reading a passage of Scripture found in the **8 chapter of John, verse 19**.

My subject is: **“KNOWING GOD.”**

In **John 8:19**, *“They said unto him: where is your Father? And Jesus answered; (now listen to this answer) you neither know me nor my Father. If you had known me you should have known my Father also.”*

Now, this was a devastating and shocking charge by our Lord to bring against these people because they were most religious. These men called God their Father.

If you will look down at **verse 41** you have them saying this, *“We have one Father, even God.”* These are the men to whom our Lord made this statement, *“You neither know me nor my Father.”* These were the same men who declared, *“We have one Father, even God.”*

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These were men also who had a strong religious heritage. They had a strong religious background and training in the traditions, customs, and the ceremonies of their fathers.

They said in **verse 33**: “*We be Abraham’s seed.*” Everybody knows Abraham, Jacob, and Isaac, but “*we be Abraham’s seed.*”

Now, it was to these men that our Lord said, “*You neither know me nor my Father,*” men who claimed that God was their Father, men who claimed Abraham as their father. Christ said: “*You don’t know God.*”

Not only that, but these were men who were in their outward lives examples of morality and piety and orthodoxy. Listen to one of them, “*I thank thee Lord that I’m not like other men. I’m not an adulterer, I’m not an extortioner, and I’m not unjust. I fast, I tithe, and I give alms of all that I possess to the poor.*”

But the Lord said, “*Ye neither know me nor my Father.*” Now, that’s the reason this is a shocking charge; it’s a devastating charge. These men had a refuge.

They had a foundation; they were building a hope for eternity and they called God their Father. They claimed Abraham as their natural father and they called God their Father.

And they were men who were steeped in the background or traditions of religion. They were men who lived outwardly and lived moral, religious, lives. Christ said, “*You neither know me nor my Father.*”

Now, the Bible is full of examples of men who were very religious but who did not know God. In fact, **James** says: “*You believe in one God, you do well. The devil believes in one God and trembles.*”

Saul of Tarsus reveals to us that a man cannot only believe doctrine and be very orthodox but he can fight for orthodoxy and not know God. Saul of Tarsus didn’t know God. He was educated in the best seminary of his day.

He said that “*he exceeded many of his equals. He was a Pharisee of Pharisees.*” He was a ruler of the Jews, a teacher of Scripture and didn’t know God.

Then Judas reveals to us that a man can hold the highest office in the church. He was an apostle. There were only 12 of those, and not any today. And yet, this apostle and treasurer of the group did not know God.

Simon Magus made a profession and was baptized and yet did not know God. Then, Herod and Agrippa heard great preachers. You say: “I’ve heard some great preachers in my day.”

You have never heard any great preachers like Herod and Agrippa heard. They heard John the Baptist and the apostle Paul and these men had great respect for the preachers they heard.

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It says in the Word of God that they had great intentions and yet they never knew God. *“You neither know me nor my Father.”*

I want you to stay with me this morning. This is a very important, important statement, *“You neither know me nor my Father.”* Even the beloved disciples, even Christ’s inner circle, they were confronted with this matter of knowing God.

One day our Lord said to them: *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me. If you had known me you should have known my Father also. And from henceforth you know him and have seen him.”*

Phillip saith unto him, *“Lord; show us the Father and it will satisfy us.”* Listen to what Christ asked him, He said: *“Phillip have I been so long time with you and yet you have not known me?”*

“Have you heard all that you have heard and you don’t know me? Have you seen all that you have seen and you do not know me? Have you witnessed all that you have witnessed and you do not know me?”

What a frightening thought and yet it is going to be a reality. There are so many religious people as we have already seen through the Word. Our Lord said: *“Many, (I don’t want to be one of those) but many shall say to me in that day, Lord we preached in thy name and did many wonderful works and cast out devils in thy name.”*

But the Lord said, *“I never knew you (and you never knew me). This is what our Lord is saying to these religious men, “You neither know me nor my Father.” And to the disciples, “Have I been so long time with you and yet you have not known me?”*

Our Lord said: *“Eternal life is to know God.”* You look at **John 17:3**; He said: *“This is life eternal that they might know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.”*

Now, that’s the reason Paul was so concerned about knowing God. In **Philippians 3**, he said: *“I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and I do count them but rubbish that I may win Christ and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but the righteousness of God which is by faith.”*

*“O that I may know him, (not just profess religion, not just be morally straight, not just be an orthodox theologian, not just having an experience of religion) but that I might know him and the power of his resurrected life.”*

Now, I’m going to ask this question and try to give you an answer: how does a man know the living God?

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David said: *“As the deer panteth for the water brook, so panteth my soul after thee, the living God.”* It’s not just to know a god or have a god but to know the living God. Christ said, *“Eternal life is to know the true and living God.”*

Now, how does a man know the living God? Well, there are three important things:

**First of all:** God is revealed in his Word!

Now, I know *“the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork.”* I know that. And I know that the law of God is written on every heart, our conscience excusing or accusing us. The law of God is written on every heart.

I know that *“There is a light that lighteth every man that cometh into this world”* but no man can know the living God apart from the Word of God; now that’s a fact.

You might know that there is a God by the things that are made. You may know that there is a God by the movement in your own conscience. You may know there is a God because He has given you that light of creation when you were born into this world.

But to know God in His saving grace, in His saving mercy, in His true attributes and character, you cannot know Him apart from the Word.

Now, the Scripture says in **Romans 10**; now listen to it; *“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. But how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed and how shall they believe in him of whom they’ve not heard and how shall they hear without a preacher?”*

A man cannot believe in God if he has not heard of God, if he has not heard the Word of God. Listen to **Romans 10:17**: *“Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.”*

Listen to **John 5:24**: *“He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation but is passed from death unto life, (he that heareth my word). God hath chosen by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”*

So, you can have absolutely no right thoughts about God. You can have some thoughts about God but the Scripture says: *“His thoughts are not our thoughts. There’s a way that seemeth right unto men and the end is destruction and condemnation.”*

God said in **Psalms 50**: *“You thought I was altogether such a one as yourself.”* You can entertain some thoughts about God but you cannot know God apart from what God has been pleased to reveal and that is through His Word. God is revealed in His Word.

The Bible is the only source of information about God, about life, death, judgment, and eternity. All spiritual questions and all spiritual matters must be referred to the Word of God. We must look to His Word. The Word of God is the only rule of faith and practice.

The Scripture says man was created in the likeness of God. That's the only information that we have about that. The Scripture tells us that man was tempted by Satan and fell. What other information do you have on that?

The Scripture tells us that God has been pleased to elect a people in Christ and determined to save them and make them like His Son. He predestinated that all whom He hath chosen will be like Christ. What other source of information do you have on that subject?

God almighty sent His Son into the world and Christ lived on this earth and died on a cross, was buried and rose again and ascended to the right hand of the Father where He is the only Mediator between God and men. What other source of information do you have on that?

The only source of information, the only accurate, serious, source of information about anything spiritual, is the Word of God. God is revealed in His Word, not apart from the Word, but through the Word of God.

Isaiah said in **Isaiah 8:20**: *"If they speak not according to the word it's because there is no light in them."*

How can a man know God?

**First of all:** Through his Word!

**Secondly:** God is revealed in Christ!

Phillip said: *"Lord; show us the Father."* Our Lord Jesus said: *"he that hath seen me hath seen my Father. I am in the Father and the Father is in me."* Again He said in **John 10:30**: *"I and my father are one."*

My friend; I declare unto you that Jesus Christ is none other than God incarnate in human flesh. Who is this, who is this man of Galilee? Who is this carpenter of Nazareth? Who is this Son of the Virgin Mary?

This is God almighty incarnate, in human flesh. God was in Christ: *"I and my Father are one. He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."* And the Father said of the Son: *"Thy throne O God is forever."*

When Paul left the elders at Antioch he charged them *"to preach the gospel."* He charged them to *"feed the church of God which God purchased with his own blood."* God was incarnate in human flesh.

*"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. And all things were made by him. Without him was not anything made that was made and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory."* God is revealed in Christ.

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In **John 12:45** the Saviour said: *“He that seeth me seeth him that sent me.”*

And Paul declared in **Hebrews chapter 1**: *“God who at sundry times in different manners or ways spake in times past to our fathers through the prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son: by whom he made the worlds, whom he appointed heir of all things who being in the brightness of his glory and the express (or exact image) of his person.”* Jesus Christ reveals the Father.

Do you want to know God? Go to His Word. Do you want to know God? Come to know His Son. A man cannot know the Father except as he knows the Son. *“He that seeth the Son seeth the Father. He that honoreth the Son honoreth the Father.”*

He that worships the Son worships the Father. He that adores the Son adores the Father. He that believes on the Son believes on the Father because Christ came to reveal the Father.

Every attribute of God is seen in Christ. You can take His whole life and you can see every attribute of the Father. You see omnipotence. Our Lord Jesus Christ could still the waves, still the storm, and quiet the waves.

Our Lord Jesus Christ had omniscience; that is He knew all things. He knew peoples thoughts. Our Lord Jesus Christ had omnipresence; He said to Nathaniel: *“When you were under the fig tree, I saw you.”*

Our Lord Jesus Christ had perfect righteousness; *“he knew no sin.”* Our Lord Jesus Christ had perfect holiness, perfect love; He loved even his enemies. He had perfect grace, perfect justice and perfect mercy.

Every attribute of God is seen in the Lord Jesus Christ. He reveals the Father. Do you want to know the Father? Come to know the Son.

Christ Jesus not only came to reveal the Father but He came to reconcile the Father. Listen to **2 Corinthians 5:19**: *“God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.”*

You see, we were under the judgment of God. We were under the wrath of God. We were enemies of God. God was angry with the wicked.

The Lord Jesus Christ came into this world to reconcile us unto God. *“He is the Prince of Peace.”* He brought peace from heaven to earth between God and men. He enabled God *“to be just and justifier of those who believe on him.”*

He came not only to reveal the Father but He came to reconcile an angry God. He came to reconcile an angry God and to enable God in His righteousness to be both just and justifier.

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Not only that; He came to redeem sinners: *“In the fullness of time God sent forth his Son into the world, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were born under the law.”*

You see, my friend; Jesus Christ is not just an example. He is an example but He's not just an example. Jesus Christ is not just a martyr; He's not a reformer.

Jesus Christ is a sin-offering and a substitute. He came to reveal the Father, to reconcile the Father, and He came to redeem sinners.

There are two words that every person needs to learn in relationship to Jesus Christ and His person and work, that is the word **substitute** and the word **satisfaction**.

Charles Spurgeon once said: “The Gospel is summed up in these two words: Christ is our substitute. He's our substitute before the law, He's our substitute before justice, and He's our substitute before the courts of heaven.

He takes our place and everything that God commands of us Christ fulfills. Everything that God demands of us, Christ produces. Everything that God requires of us Christ produces.

Then, He's our **satisfaction**. The perfect law of God demanded perfect obedience. Christ rendered it. The justice of God demanded that *“every soul that sinneth, it shall surely die”* and Christ died.

He's our substitute in our stead. *“He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement, of our peace (of God's peace) was upon him and by his stripes we are healed.”*

He's our substitute and our satisfaction. And you remember these two things; first, God almighty being a holy, just, and righteous God, cannot accept any man as righteous until that law has been fully satisfied.

Now that's so! God cannot, will not, accept any man as righteous until his holy law has been satisfied and that's what Christ did for us as our representative, as our substitute.

Second, God cannot accept any man as justified until the justice of God which requires that man's death is fully satisfied

He cannot accept us as justified. He cannot accept us as pardoned. You see, the Lord God cannot just erase sin as if it never existed. He cannot just put sin away. Sin has got to be punished. His justice and righteousness has got to be honored and satisfied. This is what Christ did.

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Do you want to know God, the righteousness of God, the holiness of God, the grace, the truth, and the mercy of God? You understand that as you understand Christ, as you come to know Christ.

How does one come to know the living God? It's by his Word, by his Word. Bury yourself in God's Word. Study the Word of God.

Somebody said to Mr. Spurgeon one day: "Mr. Spurgeon; salvation is to be found somewhere in the pages of this Book and I'm going to bury myself in this Book until I find the way that God saves sinners." God is revealed in his Word and God is revealed in the person of His Son.

**Thirdly:** This is most important: God is revealed to the heart!

Now, our Lord Jesus Christ said to Phillip: "*Phillip; have I been so long time with you and yet you have not known me? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.*"

Now watch the next question in **verse 10**: "*Believest thou this? Christ said; do you believe, Phillip do you believe? You can't speak for another person. I can't speak for you and you can't speak for me.*"

*"Do you Phillip believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? Do you believe that?"* I want to know the living God. I don't want to hear Christ say to me: "*you neither know me nor my Father.*"

How am I going to come to know Christ? There are only two sources and these two are really one because Christ is the Word. He is the Word incarnate and he is the revealed written Word.

So, the Word of God in Christ; that's the only way I can come to know Christ, not through experience, visions or dreams, or new revelations or through preachers or literature. I've got to come to know Christ, God almighty, as He is revealed in his Word and in His Son.

Now, the question comes: "*Do you believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me?*" The Word of God declares it. Christ Jesus the Lord declared it but do you believe it?

Listen to Paul as he lays the burden on every one of us, "*that if thou shall confess with thy mouth, Jesus to be Lord, and believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead.*" He is no ordinary man. He was raised from the dead and He's no ordinary man.

*"Behold; God will give you a sign, a virgin shall be with child and thou shalt call his name Immanuel (God with us). Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given. His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, and the everlasting Father."*

Do you believe that? "*If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus to be Lord and believe in thine heart God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*"

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It's a heart belief. It's not just giving mental assent to some facts: "Well, I believe the Bible preacher." That's not enough. "Well, I believe there is a God." That's not enough. *"With the heart man believeth unto righteousness with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."*

I'm not going to play upon your emotions. I'm not going to stand here and talk about meeting mother in heaven and talk about the mansions in glory and talk about the streets of gold. I'm not going to play upon your fears and play upon your emotions and take advantage of your bad health. I'm just going to state some facts to you.

I've got a message from God and that message is this: *"This is the record; God hath given us eternal life and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son of God hath life and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things are written to you that believe on the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life."*

Would you know God? Then my friend, I say this to you: study his Word. You have no other source of information. The Bible is the only rule of faith and practice. There is no other source of information about life and death, and the fall, eternity, heaven, and hell. There's no other source.

The philosophers may tell you what they think and the religionists may tell you what they think. The old fathers may tell you what they think but God's Word tells you that which is true. Christ said: *"I speak that which I've seen and testify that which I know."*

This is not guesswork. You have got to go to the source, the Word of God. God is revealed in His Word and God is revealed in His Son. The Son not only reveals the Father but He's the substitute and sacrifice who has reconciled the Father.

So, we need not an angry God but because of Jesus Christ we need a reconciled God. We don't need a God who will punish us. We need a God who will forgive us in the Lord Jesus Christ because He came to redeem us.

He bore our sins and sorrows, our sicknesses and our diseases, our sins and our transgressions and iniquities in His body on the tree that we might know God. If you would know God, look to the Word; look to His Son.

**Fourthly:** If you would know God commit yourself to him!

Now, I'm not asking you to take my hand or write me a letter or fill out a card. I'm asking you to settle this issue between you and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you know what Paul said to Timothy? In his last epistle; we believe that the book of **2 Timothy** is the last epistle that Paul wrote. He wrote 14 of the Books in the New Testament and this is the last one.

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In his last epistle he said this: *“I’m not ashamed. I know whom I have believed.”* I know that Christ is my rock and my fortress. I know that Christ is my refuge and my foundation. I know Jesus Christ; He is the Son of God.”

He came into this world to be my Redeemer, my Saviour. I know Him and I know who He is, I know who He is. I know where He came from (the throne of glory).

I know why He came to this world and I know where He is now. He’s at the right hand of God as our Mediator. *“I know whom I have believed and I’m persuaded, (I’m convinced by the Word of God, by the testimony of His Spirit) I am convinced that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him.”* I’m convinced of it!

*“Christ is able to save them to the uttermost that come to God by him. Christ is able to keep you from falling. Christ Jesus is able to present you holy, faultless, without blame, before his throne with exceeding glory and Christ is able someday to raise your vile body and make it like unto his own.”*

*“And to as many as received him; I know that he came into the world and the world knew him not, he came unto his own and his own received him not, but as many as received him, to them gave he the power (right, privilege) to become sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.”*

Christ looked to the religious people of His day with all their heritage, background, tradition, orthodoxy, and all of their customs and ceremonies and rituals and he said: *“you don’t know me and you don’t know my Father.”*

Don’t let that be said to you. I hope it’s not said to me. I’m going to the Book and I’m going to the Son and I’m going to with my heart, commit my soul to Him. And all that I have I surrender it; commit it to the Lord Jesus Christ!