



But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. -

Matthew 15:9

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I Don't Know You

This past week I've spent some time trying to figure out what I was going to write this week. My thoughts have been taken up with the bathroom renovation and I've had some depression to deal with. The depression is gone, my decision is made about the bathroom, and what is left is what I will write about this week.

It's been on my mind a few weeks to write about ruling. I've got some notes written to myself that are based on the Biblical sense of ruling and during our Bible study last night we came to a text that gave insight into how God rules. But I'm just not yet ready to write on that and I ended up going to bed with nothing written and no clue what to say.

I suppose I could just sit here and discuss the perils of trying to make up your mind and try to pull in some kind of object lesson but I think I'll skip that and go somewhere unexpected. During class this morning a text was mentioned and I knew enough about it to be able to ask questions and provide myself with a plausible answer so I'm going with that. And this will need to be a quick document. It's 10:40 a.m., we have company coming for lunch and I still need to shower and get dressed. Thankfully they are bringing the food. Our part was to provide the dessert and Elkanah baked a pie this morning so all I will have to do is set the table.

Let me start by sharing the text I heard mentioned in class.

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 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 in

your name perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’ – Matthew 7:21-23

When I've read this passage in the past the words of Jesus were confusing to me. He states that he never knew those people that are asking for entry into heaven. How is it that Jesus doesn't know someone? Jesus is fully God and God knows everyone and everything. He experiences all our joys and sadnesses with us. So how could he not know those people?

Perhaps an understanding of the Biblical usage of the word “knew” should be applied here rather than our modern-day understanding of the word. In Genesis it states that Adam knew his wife and she conceived and bore him a son. In our vulgar culture we think of knowing someone in the Biblical sense as the act of having sex with someone.

But there is much more to knowing someone Biblically than simply doing the deed. It means to have an intimate relationship with someone. When you have intimacy with someone you know what they like and dislike, you know what makes them laugh, sharing the bad times along with the good. They are someone whom you love and value as a person. You have an intimate knowledge of what makes that person tick.

This reflects the intimate nature of all “knowing” in the bible. It doesn't have to be sexual. Lots of “knowing” in the bible isn't sexual. But it is relational. The bible's idea of knowing is not just a cerebral exercise.

Perhaps it's the effects of the Enlightenment, but we tend to consider knowledge as a matter of accumulating information. Someone who “knows” is simply a person who's had buckets of data poured into their head.

We think of knowledge quite impersonally. Not so in the bible. In the bible, knowing involves relationship and heart-commitments.

So Adam and Eve were tempted to “know” good and evil (Genesis 3:5). This was more than an addition of information. It was a taking of good and evil to themselves to possess those terms.

Or in Amos chapter 3, the LORD is speaking to Israel and says “You only have I known of all the families of the earth.” Does the Almighty

mean that He's unaware of other nations? Of course not. But He knows Israel. He is in deep fellowship with His special people.

So in this light let's consider Jesus' definition of eternal life in John 17:3

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

Eternity is not a matter of IQ or our ability to pass a theology quiz. But it is determined by our knowledge. Do we know God the Father and His Son Jesus? Not simply, Do we hold orthodox ideas of them? But personally, relationally, from the heart, do we know God in the biblical sense?-- <http://kingsenglish.info/2011/01/24/knowing-in-the-biblical-sense/>

I liked the way that website stated it so I shared it. When Jesus spoke to those who were asking for entry into heaven Jesus told them that he didn't "know" them in the true Biblical sense. He didn't have an intimate relationship with them. And that is by the choice of those who were being denied entry into heaven. They refused to do the will of the Father.

The Father's will isn't wrapped up in behaviorism. It isn't a case of watching your actions and not breaking any of the man-made rules. The Father's will is that we love one another. Jesus stated that if you knew him you knew the Father for he and the Father are the same. When asked which was the greatest commandment he stated to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind. He also stated the second commandment which was to love your neighbor as yourself. At another time he gave us a new commandment which was to love one another and there was no exception clause attached to that.

God's DNA is LOVE. It's what he is and it's how he created the universe to operate. Love does not operate on selfishness. Looking out for our own best interests, watching what we eat, drink, wear, listen to, braiding our hair, wading up to the knee on Sabbath, bathing before sunset on Friday, etc... is just a form of selfishness because our focus is on ourselves. Paying tithe by the criteria the church has set is also a form of selfishness because you're paying it to receive blessings and avoid disasters. God loves a cheerful giver, not when someone is giving because they've been coerced.

So, I have only a few minutes left. May God richly bless you as you seek for him. And if you seek him you will find him if you seek him with all your heart.

Hannah

Addendum: Yes, I wrote it before noon but decided a nap would be nice before our guests arrived so this is posted late. And by waiting you get the benefits of having this edited before it's posted and that's always a positive.

So, as this Sabbath approaches it's end may God be with you for the rest of the day and throughout your week. May you strive to find the true God rather than the impostor.