

THE RED THREAD THAT I MAY KNOW HIM

PASTOR JOHN PACE | Publisher of the Red Thread

THE GIFT OF SALVATION

Acknowledge to yourself and to God that you have sinned (Romans 3:23).

In sorrow for your sins, turn from them to God and ask His forgiveness (Isaiah 55:7).

By faith receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, believing that He died in your place on the cross (John 3:16).

WHY & HOW

THE RED THREAD exists to be an encouragement to the men and women currently separated from family and friends in correctional institutions. It is published on the 15th of each month by **Crimson House Ministries** at **1616 North Robberson, Springfield, Missouri, 65803**. Please send all correspondence to that address. Subscription information is available online at: <http://readingroom.crimsonhouseministries.org/>

■ INTRODUCTION

It came through a spiritual gift granted a member of our congregation: "Know Me, know Me, know Me was His plea to Pastor John." Why does it seem that my first thought is one of reproof rather than encouragement? Why do I feel like there is always something more I can be doing rather than truly enjoy the rest He has given me? To his beloved Philippians Paul writes, "That I may know him..." (3:10) and yet that was some twenty years after seeing things that

eyes hath not seen, and hearing words that ears cannot receive. What more

could Paul do? And if Paul needed to "do more" just where does that leave me?

■ CHOOSING VERSUS DOING

Again and again I must be reminded that it's not a matter of doing but of choosing, as Jesus instructed Martha and illustrated in her sister, "Mary has chosen the good portion, which

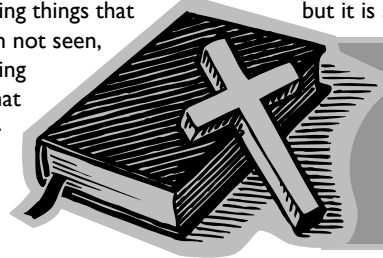
will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:42). Chosen means to pick out; choose; to pick or choose out for one's self; choosing one out of many, as the Lord did is selecting His apostles. In context this choice was not in the general sense of choosing good in opposite of bad; rather, it was choosing the better.

It was 'choosing one that is best out of many' that spoke to my spirit. I thought my devotions were going well, as far as choosing to have them, but it is so much more than that.

being more active in covering all the prayer bases and Bible reading, rather than *contemplative* in the rest by being with Him in that devotion?

■ A REST THAT KNOWS

In *Rules of Engagement*, Derek Prince writes his reflections on Isaiah 6:1-3, "What has always impressed me is what they did with their wings: with two they cover their faces with two they covered their feet and with two they flew. I interpret covering the face and feet as the humility of worship, and flying as service. I be-



Had I had become over-occupied with the work of my devotion by being more active in covering all the prayer bases and Bible reading, rather than contemplative in the rest by being with Him in that devotion?

Once devotions were chosen out of the many other things that could be done, and the discipline established, what then did I choose as best within that discipline? Had it degenerated into Martha's practice of being "cumbered about" by being distracted in my devotional service? Had I had become over-occupied with the work of my devotion by

lieve in thanking God and praising him out loud—even dancing, clapping, singing. But there comes a time when I will put my wings over my face and my wings over my feet in humble worship and listen to hear what God says" (page 71).

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2...)

TO KNOW HIM

A. W. TOZER | ADAPTED FROM *THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE HOLY*

Knowledge of God cannot be gained by study alone. "It comes by a wisdom the natural man knows nothing of, neither can know, because it is spiritually discerned. To know God is at once the easiest and most difficult thing in the world. It is easy because the knowledge is not won by hard mental toil, but something freely given. As sunlight falls free on the open field, so the knowledge of the holy God is a free gift to men who are open to receive

it. But this knowledge is difficult because there are conditions to be met and the obstinate nature of fallen man does not take kindly to them" (page 115).

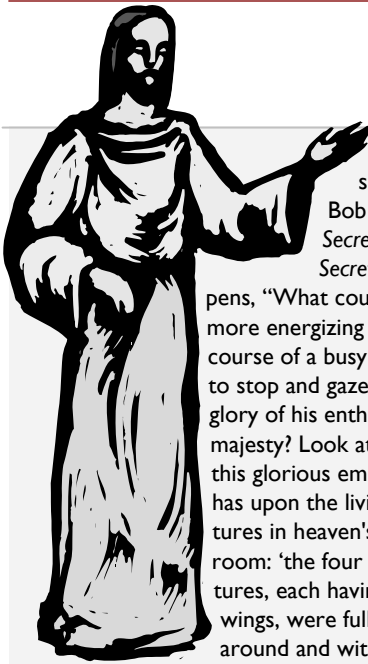
Briefly these conditions are: 1) The forsaking of our sins; 2) we must commit our whole life to Christ in faith and obey His Word; 3) we must reckon ourselves to have died to sin and come alive in Christ; 4) we must boldly repudiate the cheap values of the fallen world;

5) we must practice the art of long and loving meditation upon the majesty of God; 6) as our knowledge of Him increases so too will our service to man as selfishness decreases and servant hood increases. ■



THAT I MAY KNOW HIM

(...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)



Correspondingly Bob Sorge, in *Secrets of the Secret Place*, pens, "What could be more energizing in the course of a busy day than to stop and gaze upon the glory of his enthroned majesty? Look at the effect this glorious employment has upon the living creatures in heaven's throne room: 'the four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!' (Rev. 4:8). How is it that they do not rest? Are they never tired? No, they do not weary of gazing upon the beauty of the Lord for they are living in the place of eternal rejuvenation. Instead of tiring from their service to God, they are actually energized and made alive by it" (pages 153, 154).

I remember being visited by a minister once. He came in our house, sat upright on the edge of the sofa, looked at his watch more times than I can recall, "visited" with us, and left nearly thirty minutes to the second after conferring with his time piece one final time. Indeed, it constituted a pastoral visit—we talked but I couldn't be sure he heard anything I said. Truthfully, it made me feel more like a statistic than a person. There certainly was no rest in our time together.

Then the question: Have I now done the same to the Lord? Hustled into His 'room', sat down as if I was ready to stand up, spent more time talking than listening, and when my preset time was achieved check it off as another task completed while thinking of what needed to be done next. Where is the rest in that?

Oh, but to enter into His presence, rest by reclining at His table and then choosing the best dish of the meal—the Master's Word in fellowship. That is my portion, "My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever" (Psalms 73:26). It is this fellowship of His Word that lets me know Him and has its root in the one thing "that shall not be taken away" (Luke 10:42).

▪ NOT TAKEN AWAY

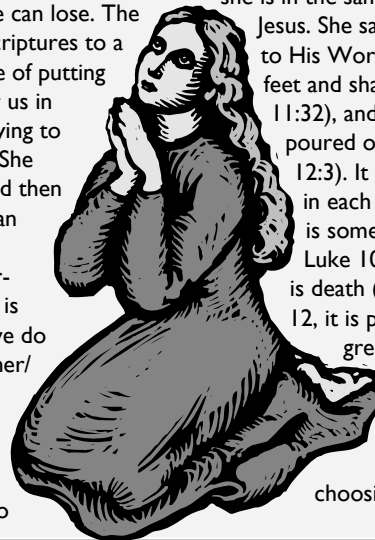
The Lord's words, "shall not be taken away" presupposes there are things we can lose. The word "away" implies in other Scriptures to a forcible removal for the purpose of putting to death. I think that is a key for us in really hearing what Jesus was saying to Martha. Consider her situation. She received Jesus into her home and then neglected Him as she prepared an elaborate meal that He did not need! Certainly a meal was in order, but what we do *with* Christ is far more important than what we do *for* Christ. Again, it is not an either/or situation; it is a matter of choosing correctly. Mary had done her share of the work in the kitchen, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to

serve alone?" (v. 40); yet, the time had come for Mary to choose rightly. What did she choose? "which also sat at Jesus feet, and heard his word" (v. 39). Mary had chosen the Word over works.

Few things are as damaging to the Christian life as trying to work for Christ without taking time to commune with Christ. "For without Me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5), Jesus said. Mary chose the better part, the part that could not be taken from her. She knew that she could not live "by bread alone" (Matt. 4:4) but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. And by listening and allowing His Word to labor in her, Mary gave opportunity for the Lord to work in her—an eternal effort—and one that would not be taken away.

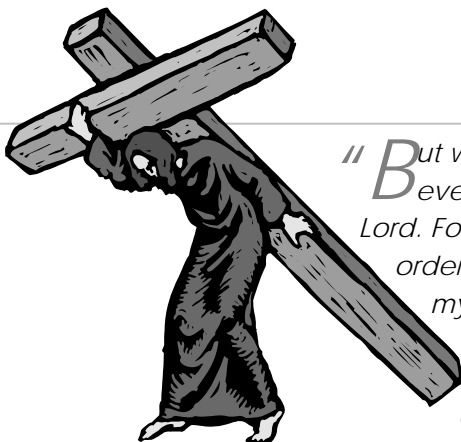
In fact, Mary of Bethany is seen three times in the Gospel record, and on each occasion, she is in the same place: at the feet of Jesus. She sat at His feet and listened to His Word (Luke 10:39), fell at His feet and shared her woe (John 11:32), and came to His feet and poured out her worship (John 12:3). It is interesting to note that in each of these instances, there is some kind of fragrance: in Luke 10, it is food; in John 11, it is death (John 11:39); and in John 12, it is perfume.² Note the progression: food, life over death, and then a sweet-smelling savor.

And just what am I choosing in knowing Him?*



KNOWING HIM

THE APOSTLE PAUL | PHILIPPIANS 3:7-12 ESV



"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-- 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. 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."

YOU SAID IT!

We love hearing from you and so do our readers. Please send your articles, poems, praise reports, testimonies, etc..., to The Red Thread, Crimson House Ministries, 1616 North Robberson, Springfield, MO, 65803.



ABOUT JEANNE GUYON

Jeanne Guyon (1648-1717) believed that we should pray all the

time— whatever one was doing, to be also spending time with God. "Prayer is the key of perfection and of sovereign happiness; it is the efficacious means of getting rid of all vices and of acquiring all virtues; for the way to become perfect is to live in the presence of God. He tells us this Himself: "walk before me, and be thou perfect" Genesis 17:1. Prayer alone can bring you into His presence, and keep you there continually" (Wikipedia). ▪

ON KNOWING THE LORD

T. AUSTIN-SPARKS | FIRST PUBLISHED IN "A WITNESS & A TESTIMONY" MAGAZINE, NOV-DEC 1930, VOL 8-6

"That I may know..." - Philippians 3:10

"Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know Me." - John 14:9

It is of the greatest importance for the Lord's children to recognize fully that, above all other things, His object is that they should know Him. This is the all-governing end of all His dealings with us. This is the greatest of all our needs.

It is the secret of strength, steadfastness, and service. It determines the measure of our usefulness to Him. It was the one passion of the life of the apostle Paul for himself. It was the cause of his unceasing striving for the saints. It is the heart and pivot of the whole letter to the Hebrews. It was the secret of the life, service, endurance, confidence of the Lord Jesus as Son of Man [...] the Lord Jesus as God's representative, the Man after His own mind.

In [Jesus'] life on earth there was no part or

KNOWING HIM THROUGH EARLY RISING

WATCHMAN NEE | EXCERPT FROM A LIVING SACRIFICE

Many readers may have read the life of Madame Guyon. Her autobiography has one special feature: whereas most biographies are written for men to read, hers is both for God and for men. In one instant she speaks to LaCombe (for it was LaCombe who bid her write her autobiography); at the next she talks with the Lord. This is what we call communion. Where it begins and where it ends are indefinite. As soon as one's spirit rises up, he or she goes forth to meet the Lord. It is not necessary to lay down the affairs of the world in order to pray, nor to take them up only after prayer is finished.

Indeed, early in the morning is the best time to gather manna. Learn to blend prayer and praise and communion into the Word of God. For a while you are on the earth and in the next moment in heaven; you are in your own presence for a second and then move on to God's presence the next instant. In so spending your time each morning before God, you will be daily satisfied. You will have fed on the Word of Christ,

for Christ is the Word of God. You will also have allowed the Word of Christ to dwell in you richly. This way of reading the Word of God, of feeding on the manna, is indispensable. To the many weak brothers and sisters staggering in the wilderness, we would like to ask whether they have eaten. They cannot run because what they have eaten is not sufficient to nourish them. Manna must be gathered in the early morning; therefore get up a little earlier lest you miss your food.

Let there be communion, praise, manna and prayer in the early morning. "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee" (Ps. 63:1 Darby). "And returned and sought early after God" (Ps. 78:34 Darby). In both psalms we find the word "early" in the original. Early in the morning is the time for prayer. After having communed with God and fed on manna, one is strengthened to lay all things before God and to carefully pray over them. It takes strength to pray; the weak cannot pray. With the new strength gathered from communion and from feeding on the manna, one is able

to pray—for himself, for the church and for the whole world.

So every new believer needs to know the four things he ought to attentively do before God each morning: communion, praise, Bible reading and prayer. If he neglects these four, the day will declare it. Even a person like George Muller confessed that whether or not he was fully fed before God in the morning determined his spiritual condition for the whole day. His early morning foretold the day. Many Christians find their days hard because their mornings are ill spent. (I acknowledge that a person would not be easily affected by outward circumstances if he knew the separation of spirit and soul and thus the consumption of the outward man. This, however, is a totally different aspect.) To new believers, the exhortation must be directed towards early rising, for once they become careless about this, they will be careless about almost everything. The difference it makes in the day is exceedingly great, whether one has had nourishment in the morning or has gone hungry. ▪

aspect which did not have its strength and ability rooted in, and drawn from, His inward knowledge of His Father, God. We must never forget that His was a life of utter dependence upon God, voluntarily accepted. He attributed everything to the Father: word, wisdom, and works. He is God manifest in the flesh; but He has accepted from the human and manward standpoint the limitations and dependence of man so that God might be God manifested. There is a subjection here because of which He is able to do nothing of Himself (John 5:19, etc.). The principle of His entire life in every phase and detail was His knowledge of God. He knows the Father in the matter of the words He speaks, the works He does, the men and women with whom He has to do; with regard to the times of speaking, acting, going, staying, surrendering, refusing, silence; with regard to the motives, pretensions, professions, enquiries, suggestions, of men and of Satan. He knows when He may not, and when He may, give His life. Yes, everything here is governed by that inward knowledge of God. There are numerous evidences in the "Acts" as

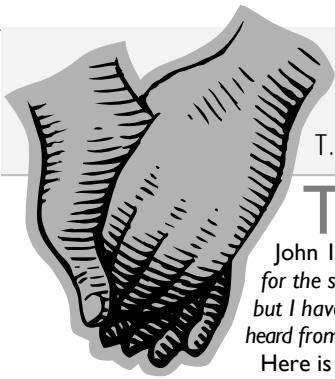
the practical, and in the Epistles as the doctrinal, revelation of God's mind, that this principle is intended by God to be maintained as the basic law of the life of the Lord's people through this age. This knowledge in the case of the Lord Jesus was the secret of His complete ascendancy and of His absolute authority.

Toward the end of the Gospel of John, "to know" occurs some fifty-five times. Our Lord makes the statement that "this is life eternal, that they should know Thee the only true God, and Him, Whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." (John 17:3). This does not mean merely that eternal life is given on the basis of this knowledge. There can be life with very limited knowledge. But life in fullness is closely related to that knowledge, and the increasing knowledge of Him manifests itself in increasing life. It works both ways; knowledge unto life and life unto knowledge.

Seeing, then, that the Lord Jesus Himself, as Man, represents man according to God, we are well prepared to see that the dominating objective of the divine dealings with us is that we may know the Lord. ▪



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THE CENTRAL ELEMENT IN KNOWLEDGE: FRIENDSHIP

T. AUSTIN-SPARKS | FROM *THE WORK OF MINISTRY, VOL. 3*

The central element in [knowledge] is suggested to us in the fragment in John 15:15: "No longer do I call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from my Father I have made known unto you."

Here is a knowledge from the Father through the Son which is based upon this element which is called 'friendship'. "I have called you friends". Surely that means that we have to come into a relationship with the Lord Jesus of a very deep, inward character - of a very confidential nature, shall we say. There is something about that relationship which speaks of understanding born of the very closest communion. Someone may say to you about a friend of yours, that they said a certain thing or that they did a certain thing, and your rejoinder would be: 'No! I am quite sure that so-and-so never said that or did that. I know them too well. I know that they would not say or do a thing like that.' There you have touched the inner meaning of friendship. It is a knowledge which understands quite well what would be expected and not expected, what could come from that direction and what could not come from that direction. But that is a knowledge which is a deep, inside knowledge. You can never get that by

observation; you can never come to that position by simply listening, studying; you have to know, and when you know by communion, by living in touch with that one, you know instinctively what to expect and what not to expect.

The Lord Jesus says that He takes the disciples into that relationship with Himself, and on that basis He opens His heart; that all things that He had heard from the Father He made known unto them, because of the relationship. "I have called you friends...."

What is the point of saying such things? You and I are not going to get the real knowledge of Christ by listening to addresses, by attending meetings. The value lies in the fact that we go away with what is said, into the presence of the Lord, having a background relationship with Him. Things may be true, and of the greatest value as things for our spiritual help, but we have to work those things out in the secret with the Lord. Otherwise we shall be 'meeting-mongers'; we shall simply be attending meetings and getting an accumulation of knowledge. The real value will lie in the time which we spend with the Lord on these things: it will be personal communion with the Lord in the secret place; it will be what is going on deep down in our hearts, between ourselves and the Lord. This knowledge is on the ground of what the Lord Jesus calls 'friendship'. ▪