

WHAT CAN WE KNOW

TEXT: 1 Corinthians 2:12

Sermon notes by Rev. Arthur W Rich

Preached at First Baptist Church, Lakeland, FL April 29, 1959 –Wednesday Bible Study

(Note: all verses are KJV unless otherwise noted)

Text I Corinthians 2:12 *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.*

. Another translation has it: *“That we may appreciate the gifts “lavished on us by God.”*

A young woman said to me: My guess is as good as yours. Her guess would be as good as my guess. But her guess is not as good as mine. How do I know this? My knowledge is based on a "thus saith the Lord"

There are some things, which we do not know and cannot understand. Have you ever carried a lantern? Three circles of illumination: Bright in inner, then light not so radiant in second circle, and then only faint light in outer circle.

1. OUTER CIRCLE: WE CAN'T UNDERSTAND AT ALL

2. SECOND CIRCLE: WE BEGIN TO SEE DIMLY

“Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face.

3. INNER CIRCLE WHERE THE LIGHT IS SO BRIGHT—THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS GIVEN US CERTANTIES.

What are some things we can know beyond a shadow of doubt?

1. WE CAN KNOW THE CONDITION OF THE FLESH

Jeremiah 17:9 tell us: *I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.*

The heart is desperately wicked etc. Exceedingly corrupt.

Romans 7:18 - *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.*

The wants of the human flesh will never change

Romans 8:7 - *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*

My flesh is corrupt; there is no use in trying to dress it up.

A story is told of a Man who got into a taxi. The taxi driver had a great bushy beard. Said the passenger: “I used to have a beard like yours until I saw myself in a glass and then I cut it off.” Said the taxi driver: “You should have left it on! I used to have a face like yours until I saw it in the glass and then I grew this beard.”

If I could say anything to new Christians, I would emphasize the fact that the foundation of Christian growth is the realization that there is nothing in your flesh but corruption.

Philippians 3:3 says: *For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.*

Then I would want the new Christian to know something about the flesh.

Romans 6:6 -*Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

When our Lord died on the cross, our old flesh died with him. There is a difference in our state and in our standing. In our state, the old flesh gives us trouble, but in our standing with God, Christ has dealt with this enemy. Christ should be our victory.

One person put it: “I don’t have mastery of the devil, but I do have the master of the devil.”

II. WE CAN KNOW THE FACT OF SALVATION.

So many Christians lack assurance of salvation.

A story is told of a man who grew up on a farm, and in his youth, got a job in town, some four miles from home. Each day he would pack his lunch and walk the four miles to his job. Sixty years later, he was still living on the same farm, walking the same road to the same job in town. Someone asked him, "Why didn't you move closer?" His reply... "I wasn't sure it was a permanent job." So many Christians hope they are saved but never know it is permanent.

I know I have salvation. My peace of mind depends on this fact. I was only a child when I met Christ. I am not concerned with the exact time, place or the individual who led me to Christ. But I am desperately anxious to know that I am a child of the King.

I John 5:13 states: *These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*

My assurance: THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD IS ENOUGH FOR ME. When John 3:16 tells me that whosoever believeth, shall have eternal life, I know that is true because God cannot lie.

III. WE CAN KNOW THE SPIRITS INDWELLING

Some Christians need to know this positive fact. We often think that in salvation God takes from us what we do not need. We need to remember the other side: he gives us what we do need: the Spirit of God.

I Corinthians 6:19 says: *What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*

Every believer is divinely indwelt. What did Jesus promise in John 14:6? "*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*"

You should know you have the Holy Spirit within you. Paul said: "If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his."

IV. WE CAN KNOW VICTORY OVER THE GRAVE

2 Corinthians 5:1 - *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

You might say: "Paul said that." He might be the only one. Read First John 3:2 –

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

In Romans 8, Paul reminds us:

*38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,
39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*