

# **“I Never Knew You”**

## **Could God say that to you and me someday?**

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Summary: Have you ever met God, had your personal encounter with the Highest -- and come to know Him and know that He knows you? We are often challenged by the question if we know God. Paul said his greatest aim was to know God (Phil 3:8-10). Listen how Scripture makes it clear that the Creator says He also wants to intimately know each of *us*. Find out why, and how He defines knowing you. This is sobering, frightening and yet also inspiring and heart-warming to learn the Highest says He really needs to, and wants to, get to know *you*.

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### **TRACK 1**

Greetings again my brothers and sisters in Christ. Starting with this sermon, I will be putting “tracks” into the Cd recordings so it will be easier for you to skip back and forth to various sections within the recording - - especially if you want to listen to the last section again or skip a section. (Unfortunately Track 3 did not record on the cd in this recording, but it’s OK on the web recording).

Today I have a question that some of you may feel has an obvious answer, but I hope this question will really make you think – especially in this pre-Passover Season we’re in. Can you imagine bragging to all your buddies about being best friends with a famous celebrity, but when that celeb comes face to face with you and all your buddies, he looks puzzled and even a little angry that you claimed to have an intimate closeness with him. And then the celeb says in front of everyone, as he points to you, “Folks, I don’t know who this person is, and I’ve never known this guy. Who IS he?”

***Here’s my question: “Does GOD know you?”***

I’m not asking if you know the Eternal Living God, but if God knows you. Whenever I’ve brought up the question with believers, I’ve received a uniform response: “Duh, of course God knows me and everyone else. He knows the number of hairs on my head, my every move, every thought and every word on my tongue. What a stupid question.”

But is it? Please be turning to Matthew 7.

We like to ask people if they “know the Lord” – but I say we need to also be asking: “Does God, YHWH the One True God, know *you*”?

### **Matthew 7:21-23**

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I NEVER knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

Whew! King Jesus could say He *never* knew me...or you? Never?

Would you ever say that about *your* brother or sister, your son or daughter, your friend or even your enemy? That you never knew them? Whew! Isn't that phenomenal? The Son of God who knows every little detail about everyone – can say to anyone – “I never knew you”. So God knowing us is something much, much deeper than just knowing intimate details about each of us.

This also puts a whole new light on going to church services, doesn't it? We have far too much emphasis on religion, and not nearly enough emphasis on our *relationship* with God, one-on-one. Pure religion is good, as long as it results in each of us knowing God and being known by God – but all too often religion becomes meaningless formality and ritual and we end up wondering if we ever met God in the process. *My sermon today is about “meeting God” and having that encounter that lasts forever.*

**Another time, in the familiar parable of the 10 virgins waiting for the wedding**, when the 5 foolish virgins tried to come into the wedding after they had to leave first to find more oil for their lamps, notice what the Lord says:

**Matt 25:11-12**

"Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' 12 But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, **I do not know you.**'

Those who teach a soft theology that “it’s never too late” have to answer that verse, directly from our Lord’s mouth. He didn’t open the door for them. They were too late. Verse 10 says the 5 wise virgins went in, and the door was shut. Then the 5 foolish arrive, and they were not allowed in and Jesus did not know them.

We don’t want that to happen to us! So that’s what this sermon today is about – how to be sure that the Eternal Living God knows you and me. Instead it would be nice to have the Lamb of God who was sacrificed for you and me say He is not ashamed to call us His brother or sister (Hebrews 2:11-12, quoted from Ps. 22:22, a prophecy for the Christ). That’s what each of us really wants, isn’t it?

**TRACK 2: “To KNOW” in Biblical terms**

Part of the problem is in understanding this word “know”. Today, it is very possible for me to say I “know” President Bush, meaning I know some details about him and know who he is. But do I really know him?

In the Bible, to “know” someone meant to be intimately familiar with someone, to know someone deeply, and – let’s be frank about what the Bible says -- in some cases to even have had sexual intercourse with someone. For example, Mary obviously knew about a lot of men, she knew who a lot of people were, but she still says to angel as she questions her pregnancy: “I’ve never known a man” (Luke 1:34). For that matter, Joseph is said not to have “known” Mary until after her **FIRST**-born Son Jesus was born (Matthew 1:25). When Adam “knew his wife” (Gen. 4:1), they had a baby. Get the point?

In Old Testament Scripture, to “know” someone was to be intimately attached as one, with that person, especially in marital sexual union when you are literally as close as you can possibly be with

the one you love. In fact, you are in one another. I'm being frank, but that's the clear indication of Scripture. Knowing God and God knowing us is when we are every bit as close to our Redeemer in as profoundly deep loving affection as a man is with his dear wife when in loving embrace in marital union. We become one with Christ, and are said to be "in Him" in fact – and part of His very body.

**Ephesians 5:29-32**

"For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. 30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' 32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church"

So knowing Christ, and Christ knowing me, is going to be a very profoundly close relationship, or Yeshua will say He doesn't know me and never has. Same for Abba, our dear Father in heaven.

Most of the time in the New Testament, the word for "know" is "*ginosko*" or "*oida*" – and both often signify more than just having knowledge of, but having a relationship with. That is a key point to understand. There are literally hundreds of verses that use the Greek "*ginosko*", so you can study that on your own. It's about intimate knowledge of someone or something. In so many cases in Scripture, that word indicates it is about being in a strong relationship with another.

Actually, God knows all humankind in a way – but rarely do we read a scripture that says "God knew" a specific person, but here are a couple:

**Deuteronomy 34:10** "But since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the LORD *knew* face to face..."

**2 Timothy 2:19** says "The Lord knows those who are His."

God walked with Enoch. He calls Abraham "the friend of God".

I ask again, does YHWH know you and me? As a best friend? As someone He loves to be with?

*Have you ever had your own personal encounter with God? Have you "met" God and opened your heart to Him – and feel like you've received HIS heartfelt intimate acquaintance as well? Have you? That's what we're talking about!*

**TRACK 3: WHY is it so IMPORTANT for God to know you and me so well?**

Why? I'm sure God has all kinds of reasons for wanting to get to know you personally and intimately. [note: track 3 did not record on the cd, but did on cassette and on the website. ]

Here's one: God the Father is the One who calls you and then gives you to Jesus Christ to prepare you for the Wedding. God the Father has selected *you* to marry His Son – the coming King of Kings. I need that to sink in. That possibly means more to you women than to us men, who have to get used to the idea of the relationship of being a help-meet to the King of Kings, and not the sexes here, of being male or female. *Any Father wants to know very well the person marrying His Son!*

My point is, you women – more than we men ever do – grow up with lots of children's fairy tales and love stories of the lowly maiden being able to marry the handsome prince. Cinderella stories.

We're the lowly maiden at all. And instead of a prince, we have the very Son of God. God wants to be sure you will be ready to marry His Son. You are being groomed for a very, very high divine calling; to be part of a grand purpose, a great cause, that pales all other agendas and causes. You and I are being groomed to marry GOD.

But before that happens, we will have to be made ready – by our groom, Jesus Himself. He is the One preparing the Bride, removing the spots and wrinkles in her covering, her wedding garment, which symbolizes her righteousness. It is by His righteousness that He is gifting to you and me that we will stand worthy and be covered and attired properly for the wedding. (I carefully demonstrated that in the 3 part series on Righteousness you can find on the website).

**Ephesians 5:25-27**

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that *He* might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that *He* might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.”

How will we be cleansed and presented without spot or wrinkle – but holy? By our work? No, it is clearly because of what Jesus is doing for and with His Bride-to-be, with her eager and willing cooperation of course.

*So again: why does God want to get to know you? Because the Eternal has picked you to marry the Son of God and so God (YHWH) wants to know you very, very well. There are other reasons besides this, but I know as a father myself, that I'm very interested in anyone who may end up being my son-in-law or daughter-in-law.*

God will grant us white linen wedding garments, symbolizing righteousness of God which becomes ours, when you understand it fully. You really need to be sure you've heard my series on Righteousness I recently gave, available on [www.Lightontherock.com](http://www.Lightontherock.com). The wedding takes place in heaven, officiated by the King, who puts on the wedding for His Son (Matthew 22:1). The Son is obviously Jesus, and the King has to be His Father. God the Father is in heaven, and stays in heaven until Rev. 21-22 after the new heavens and new earth. Every indication of Rev. 19 is that the Marriage Supper is in the City of the Bride, Heaven, and HER city. The loud voices and hosannas are voices in heaven (Rev. 19:1).

**Revelation 19:6-9**

“And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, “Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! 7 Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” [by putting ON the wedding garments offered her and accepting the cleansing and becoming holy by God's presence in her by His Holy Spirit] 8 *And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.*

9 Then he said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God.”

Blessed indeed, brethren. God has carefully chosen the Bride for His Son – and that could be you. You were chosen not because of your own righteousness or what you “bring to the table”, oh no –

but so no flesh could glory except by and through the grace of God. But God will take your lowly body and change it into a glorious, incorruptible body. See the picture, seize the opportunity, and appreciate it for all its worth. I don't think we can even begin to imagine to what we've been called.

If you and I aren't ready, if we run out of oil and don't make it to the wedding (Matthew 25:1-12) in time, or if we refuse to put on the wonderful wedding garments offered to us but come in our own filthy garments, we will be thrown out (Matthew 22:1-14, especially verse 12) and rejected.

We will be ruling with Christ, sitting on His throne with Him, part of all the double blessings of being firstborn with Christ, married to Him. We will be co-heirs of the entire universe when Father gifts it all to King Yeshua, His Son.

Oh yes, it is vital that God knows you and me. For you see your high calling, brethren – or do we? I personally think we don't think often enough about what we're being called to.

So yes, God has to know you. And you have to know God and know Jesus the Christ—intimately.

I bear my heart to you in this message, only because I suspect I'm not the only one who needs to be thinking about all this, especially in this pre-Passover season when we customarily examine ourselves and aspects of our relationship with God and the family of God.

#### **TRACK 4: OUR HIGHEST GOAL NOW – KNOWING HIM**

Right now, I am even evaluating how much I can really say I know God, fully, deeply, as much as I wish I could. Or how much He knows me, which is my subject today. I'm not alone. The Apostle Paul, 20-30 years after his conversion, is saying it's still his goal "that I may know Him..." – **Phil. 3:9-10.**

##### **Philippians 3:5-11 TEV (today's English Version)**

"I was circumcised when I was a week old. I am an Israelite by birth, of the tribe of Benjamin, a pure-blooded Hebrew. As far as keeping the Jewish Law is concerned, I was a Pharisee, 6 and I was so zealous that I persecuted the church. As far as a person can be righteous by obeying the commands of the Law, I was without fault.

7 But all those things that I might count as profit I now reckon as loss for Christ's sake. 8 Not only those things; I reckon everything as complete loss for the sake of what is so much more valuable, the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have thrown everything away; I consider it all as mere garbage, so that I may gain Christ 9 and be completely united with him [be found in Him—NKJV] ***I no longer have a righteousness of my own, the kind that is gained by obeying the Law. I now have the righteousness that is given through faith in Christ, the righteousness that comes from God and is based on faith.***

10 **All I want is to know Christ** and to experience the power of his resurrection, to share in his sufferings and become like him in his death, 11 in the hope that I myself will be raised from death to life."

Jeremiah says pretty much the same. He said God said we should glory only in being able to say that we know God – and not glory in our might, our wisdom or anything else (**Jer. 9:23-24**).

Our highest goal is to be able to say we know God, know Christ, and are known by God and Christ. If we can, we also will be gifted with the righteousness and holiness of GOD, by faith, not by works of our own doing. If enough righteousness could come from obeying the law so as to save us, then Christ died in vain (Gal. 2:16,21). But He did not, and I must ask God to let me know Him, and to gift me with *His* righteousness by faith (Romans 5:17; Heb 11:7; 1 Cor. 1:30-31). In so doing, God comes to know me and I come to know God and His holiness.

When you lead in opening or closing prayer, or in your private prayers, do you thank God for the relationship He has offered us – or are most of our prayers thanking God for the knowledge He has given us? Relationship trumps knowledge any time. Love triumphs over prophecy and knowledge. Start thanking God more for the relationship He has offered you and me.

In this Passover season, let's remember what's going on!

***God offers us a swap!*** And what a swap it is!

\* I give Him my life – as empty in value as it is—and He gives me His.

\* I give Him my dirty rags of my own attempts at righteousness and He gives me His spotless white garments of perfect holiness, and His righteousness as a gift.

\* I confess that I have often in the past left Him, and He confesses He will never, ever leave me or forsake me (Heb. 13:5).

\* I offer Him my sin debt, my penalties of death – and He gives me a receipt that says “Paid in full, with the Blood of the Lamb of God”. I offer Him my guilty verdict, and He offers me the supreme pardon from His Father, God in the Highest.

\* I give him all the times I denied Him by my actions, and He assures me He will never deny me, as long as from now on I proclaim Him openly (Matthew 10:32-33). If I continue to deny Him, He WILL deny me before the angels and before His Father.

\* I give Him all that I have – essentially nothing of real value – and He gives me all that He has, the entire universe. I give up my own wisdom and He gives me HIS wisdom (1 Cor. 1:30-31).

\* I give up my glory, my might, my wealth (ha!) – and He gives me 100x in this life and in the life to come (1 Pet. 1:7; Heb 2:10; Mark 10:28-31).

\* We renounce our identity with the god of this world – and we become, by His Spirit, adopted and begotten children of the Highest, and we now can boldly call the Creator - “Abba” – Daddy (Romans 8:15-17).

\* Through Jesus, we now have access, by one Spirit, to come into the Holiest, boldly and directly to the Father (Eph. 2:18; 3:12; Heb. 10:19-20), who prior to this was beyond any hope of access

Are we “getting” it? Passover is so much more than just being about God passing over our sins, which all by itself would be plenty!

So what's the result of all this? We can now come boldly (Heb. 4:16) before the throne of grace, to the Mercy Seat in the heaven of heavens, to Abba in the Highest himself, for we are seen as being the very body of the Son of God. From now on, when you and I pray “In Jesus Name”, it is so much more than just a formula of words. It is the very key to being able to stand before God as Christ

Himself, for He is holy, spotless, and perfect – though while in this flesh WE are far from that. God sees our new life in Christ. He sees Christ Himself. And that is what He wants to know – that we have chosen Christ as our Saviour and acknowledge Him and are now in Him and He is now in us, and as such we are getting to really know each other!

***I can now have by faith that which I could have never earned!*** Oh, I'm *rewarded* by my works, but I'm *forgiven, justified, sanctified, saved* and given eternal life only by grace, so no man can boast (Eph 2:8-10). And the righteousness that must clothe me and you – is gifted to us by faith (Phil 3:8-10). Go back and hear my sermons on righteousness if you're unsure about that.

Now God can hear me, for the sins that have kept me from being able to draw to God have been removed. Now I can stand in His presence, and boldly at that. And now Father can come to know you and me.

### **TRACK 5: HOW GOD COMES TO KNOW YOU AND ME**

#### ***Death Before Resurrection***

The beginning of our relationship with God is clearly shown in Scripture as God the Father calling you and me, opening our minds to see spiritual truths, and calling us to a relationship with Him and Christ (John 6:44, etc). We have to accept that high calling, respond positively to the invitation to come to the Wedding Supper (Matthew 22:1-12) and accept the wedding garments of righteousness offered to us – and put them on. We are not to stop halfway, like Laodecians, who had taken off their filthy garments, but didn't finish the task – and so stood before God naked (Rev. 3:17-18). They had gone far enough into the relationship that were considered part of the church, but then they stopped.

I believe the Bible shows us over and over, in various ways, that before there can be eternal life, there has to be death of the self. Before there can be a resurrection, "the old man" - our old carnal ways, have to be buried, pictured by our watery baptism. The Bible pictures it also as a complete surrender and accepting Jesus as your Lord and Master, and proclaiming Him King of your life.

**Jesus set the example for us.** He Himself said He could do nothing of himself. Every word He spoke was what Father had told Him to speak. Everything he did was what Abba wanted Him to do. He was not here to seek his own will, but the will of him who sent him. Jesus was one sent. The one doing the sending is greater – the Father. Take time to prayerfully study these verses: John 5:19-20, 30; 6:38; John 8:28-29, 42; John 14:10. In them, you will read of the complete and total submission of Jesus to the Father. That's the example. And AS Jesus did, He was one with Father in mind, goal, being, purpose and joy.

And then He died – in the Father's will also. But Jesus was crucified from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8). ***Are we getting this point: Jesus died to Himself long before He gasped His last on the cross. I used to think of Rev. 13:8 narrowly: that it meant that was the time the decision had been made. Now I understand it so much deeper. That is when the Word died to Himself, so He could live for the Father, for God the Highest. And the Word was SO in tune with the Higher God, that it could be seen as though they are ONE. But Jesus was sent by the HIS God. Yes, Jesus – though He is also God – HAS a God (Eph 1:3, 17; John 20:17), and Scripture is clear about that even AFTER the resurrection of Jesus. WHO resurrected Him? God the Father! Jesus***

*really did die, completely. No part of Him was left alive. He was DEAD. A separate and Higher being called God the Father resurrected Him (Gal. 1:1; Eph. 1:19-20 and many more!)*

*Anyway, back on point: We cannot give ourselves fully to God until we die to our own desires, give up our own lusts, our own cravings, our own needs – and seek a higher calling, a higher will, a higher outline for our lives. A complete and total surrender occurs on our part.*

For there to be a deep relationship with God and a new life – there has to first be an unconditional surrender of the old life. For there to be a resurrection with Christ, there has to first be a death of the self. There can be no new crop to God's glory until the wheat seed first dies and is planted in the ground, with Christ, and then it springs forth with a great yield (**John 12:23-26**). That's what Jesus did for us – and for us to be part of that family, we also must give up the self, our will, our goals, our dreams – and fall into place with what Abba wants for us. We must die figuratively at least, before there can be a resurrection.

**If you get nothing more from this message about God knowing you and me than this one point – it's my main point: Spend yourself, give up your pride, ego, sinful ways – surrender – let the old self die – and then watch what God can begin to do for and through each of us.** In doing this, we are following Abba's example – and King Yeshua's example – who gave up all he had and emptied himself of all his glory in heaven and emptied himself on that rough tree, so your sins and mine could be passed over. We remember this every year at Passover.

The Son of God gave Himself for you – and even me. That is so amazing to me in this pre-Passover season. It amazes me that God, who is holy, holy, holy – could possibly know me, let alone love me so much as to offer His only Son for me. I've lost a son, my only son at the time. I know some pain. But Father offered His only son to die for me, a sinner. That just amazes me. So many *don't* have a capacity to love someone they consider the cast offs of society, that I'm just amazed that Abba does love me and other sinners.

It is when we sacrifice ourselves, our wishes, our heart, our goals, our dreams and turn ALL that over to YHWH – and get in line with God and what HE wants for us—that YHWH can begin the process of being able to say He knows us. But not until then.

In this Passover season, it would be good to review the messages on Gal. 2:20 I gave – where Paul said so beautifully, so humbly, so surrendered: “I no longer live, but have been crucified with Christ. The life you now see in me isn't me anymore, but it's Christ now living His life in me. I now live by His faith, not mine. You see, He loves me and gave Himself for me.”

How tender, how vital, how succinctly Paul spells out the process of knowing Him, and allowing Him to know us. We must die to the self first, and now live for His will, His purpose, His design – which, if we weren't so stupid to insist on our own will – we'd recognize that what Father wants for us is so much higher than we could ever dream or imagine!

In Gen 18, God had told Abraham that He knew him (Gen. 18:19). But it was only after Abraham was about to obey God's order to sacrifice Isaac, that God stopped Him and said:

**Genesis 22:12-13**

**“And He said, ‘Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.’”**



13 Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns.”

This is not meant to be a story that makes us all say “wow”. No. This is a story to show us what we must each do. We must each sacrifice in our hearts our equivalent Isaac. God has to know that nobody, nothing, comes before Him. More on that in a minute.

You know what really had happened here? God was testing Abraham to see if Isaac had become #1 in his life, instead of God. Abraham was well over 100 years old by this time. He’d waited his lifetime to have one son, an only son from his union with Sarah. There was no other son from Sarah, his beloved wife. Hebrews 11 says Abraham went over God's promises, over and over. All the promises were supposed to come through Isaac. All he knew is that God won’t lie, and so God would somehow have to resurrect Isaac. But no doubt, during the 3 day walk up to Mt Moriah, on the very spot where the altar of the temple would someday be, Abraham died a thousand and one deaths, going over and over the fact he had to do God's will, and not his own.

As a father who has had his own son die, let me add this: any loving father would have gladly given himself for his son. Abraham died a thousand and one deaths Himself on the way up Mt Moriah. Make no mistake about it: I assure you, he spent himself. He bought gold refined in the fire. It was the same as what Paul said: “I am crucified with Christ”. We must all be crucified to the world and its claims on us – including our very loved ones.

Before Abraham could even think of sacrificing Isaac, as a loving father I assure you *he had to first sacrifice himself*, his pride, his heart, his dreams, his wife and all her love and dreams. You don’t sacrifice your only adult son you’ve come to love with all your heart – without a gut-wrenching surrender of everything you hold dear! *Abraham died to himself that day long before he was willing to sacrifice Isaac*. Understand that. It’s a huge key in the steps towards God coming to know us.

It was after that, when God said, “NOW I know....”.

At baptism you proclaimed your willingness to do the same. And in the same process of humble obedience that is based on love and trust for God, we become known of God.

**Luke 14:25-28 in Today’s English Version (TEV)**

Once when large crowds of people were going along with Jesus, he turned and said to them, 26 "Whoever comes to me cannot be my disciple unless he loves me more than he loves his father and his mother, his wife and his children, his brothers and his sisters, and himself as well. 27 Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple."

**Nahum 1:7**

“The YHWH is good, a stronghold in time of trouble, **and He knows those who TRUST in Him.**”

Everything we hold dear, all we count as gain, everything that is important to us has to be sacrificed on the altar of really coming to know Abba and Yeshua our Lord. When we do, the amazing thing is that God says he will grant us 100 fold what we ever wanted! We sacrifice and give it up, and we gain the whole universe – in His time, in His will, in His way. Jesus assured his disciples of this when Peter just wanted to be sure. You can read of it in Mark 10:28-31.

When we do this, we possess by faith – what we could not earn: the surpassing gift of all that God IS and all that God has. And Father comes to know us. It's when we can say "Father, you're my all, you're everything I live for, you're all I want – and I love you LORD, I give myself to you and for you..." and live in such a way that backs up those words --- that we're on the way of being known by God.

**Brethren, we must first die to the self and all we hold dear – and give everything up – before new life from Abba can happen.** Paul said – and please hear my sermons on Gal 2:20 – "I have been crucified with Christ. I no longer live. The life I now live I live by the faith of Jesus, who died and gave Himself for me."

So first we die to the self and live for God and His purpose.

**Track 6: IN THIS SUBMISSION, IN THIS DEATH OF THE SELF, WE MUST SURRENDER PRIDE. God KNOWS THE HUMBLE.**

God will never know us, if we have too much of self in the picture. The word "sin" can be written with a big capitalized "I" in the middle of the word – as in sIn. God is repelled by vanity, ego, self-seeking, pride, self-aggrandizement, having to be the #1 person in the organization, thinking the world revolves around us, wondering what everyone is thinking about us, needing recognition and approbation of man... you get the picture?

OK, I've just described me – and you – when we're not filled with God's spirit and with the humility God likes. I do have to wonder how many of the well known televangelists, preachers, and out-front leadership types, with the loud voices, flashy diamond rings, opulent lifestyles and huge mansions are really known by God.

God resists the proud. He doesn't know them, in the biblical sense. He can't stand it. So that is why, right after the Passover, we have the days of Unleavened bread. UNleavened. No yeast, no rising up, no puffed up bread – just flat bread – to picture sinlessness and humility. God gives grace to the humble. God enjoys the lowly and humble. He lifts them up in His time and way. **(Read 1 Pet. 5:5-6; James 4:10) He is near to those of a contrite spirit (Ps. 34:18).**

So if we want God to know us, we gotta surrender pride. And boy oh boy, do you and I have a ton of it! I know I do, and I hate that about me, and let's pray for one another than we can humble ourselves, so God doesn't have to. Isn't that a lot of the symbolism behind the Footwashing ceremony we do at Passover: to accept that we are our sister and brother's servant?

**Isaiah 66:2b**

".... To this man will I look: to him who is of a poor and contrite spirit, and who trembles at my word."

There you have it. Want God to notice you? Quit trying to impress others – and seek now the praises from God. The whole world is about image, looking good to fellow man, Botox, false hard water-balloon breasts, tummy lifts, plastic surgery, and liposuction – and in the end, it's all false, all for vanity, and it repels God. Don't go there. Or, it's about the car you drive, how much your house

cost, having a trophy wife or a husband who is a senior VP or CEO making hundreds of thousands of dollars -- all this is dung in God's eyes.

“To *this* man will I look...” That’s why Passover is observed with Unleavened bread, flat bread, not puffed up. Humble. Meek. No pretenses. Contrite heart. Poor in spirit. No ego.

I’d love to give a sermon on humility, but I’m not qualified to. And I don’t know many who are. It’s a human fault to be proud. Let’s repent of it and learn to give up that vain self. I will give a sermon on it, because I need it and will preach to myself as I give it, but not because I’m qualified. I’m too proud still. But that pride has to go, and by God's grace, will go. By the way, I openly confess I am not qualified to preach on ANY topic, and I’ve said over and over that these sermons are really Bible studies I prepared for myself, to myself, and then decided others may benefit from them. This topic today is just like that. It started out as a question I have been asking myself: “Would God say He knows you, Philip?” It’s been very sobering to me.

### **TRACK 7: Next, we submit to His tests – and we obey, in a deep humility that trusts God**

**Tests don’t just build character, they reveal it.** Tests do not just create character – and I think they do build us – but tests even more than build character, reveal the character we already have – or not. God therefore comes to know us better in times of testing and refining. Peter tells us that we should therefore value a trial more than we would a 24 carat gold brick. “The trial is more precious than gold that perishes.” (1 Pet. 1:6-7). I don’t know too many of us, though, who would pick a trial of losing our own child – over a brick of solid gold worth hundreds of millions of dollars.

**God also tests us, so He can REALLY know our hearts** and what we’ll actually do under pressure. **That IS one way God comes to know us: He sees how we act in times of testing.** Remember that God tempts no one, but He does allow Satan to tempt us. And sometimes we are carried away by our own desires, when we’re not feeding the spirit of God in us so that it is strong in us. But that’s another way God knows us – to see what we do under temptation: do we seek HIS strength and resist it, or cave – when we think no one will know. . . . except God, the Word, the 4 Living Creatures, the seraphim, the 24 Elders around His throne and hundreds of millions of angels!

In the same way, we get to know our children better when we see how they react in tough times, when they can’t have it their way, when it rains during the campout, when they strike out at bat, when their boy friend likes a different girl better, when they lose the race – badly lose – those are times we come to KNOW our children better.

### **TRACK 8: God knows those who trust & OBEY HIM – as they hear His voice, and follow Him**

#### **John 15:9-10**

"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. **10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love,** just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

I’ve used a passage over and over before where John says those who claim to know Him, but don’t keep His commandments, are liars and don’t have the truth. If we say we abide in Him, we should walk as He walked – obediently, submissively, humbly to the Father’s will (1 John 2:3-6).

No good to call him “Lord, Lord” but not do the things He says (Luke 6:46-47).

God knows those who hear his voice and follow him! Are we? Or are we still very much on our own track?

**John 10:26-27** “But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you.  
27 My sheep hear My voice, and *I KNOW them*, and they follow Me.”

**The children of God act like God overall**, though we all sin and stumble from time to time, and will continue to stumble – but not as a way of life – until this corruptible flesh is transformed to incorruptible spirit. But overall, our way of life is consistently God-like, or else we risk the Creator saying He doesn’t know us, and never did. \*\*

Jesus taught us that when we act like God, who lets it rain and shine on the just and the unjust alike – when we are kind to those who are not kind to us, when we are nice to those who are not nice to us – That we are proving we are children of God (**Matthew 6:44-48** – read it!). These are they whom God knows.

So the key is to hear Him, obey Him, give your complete attention, heart and soul to God – but listen, and do what HE wants, seek HIS will. We end up following God’s leading, not our own desires. As we do this, God comes to know His people.

### **Track 9: GOD knows YOU if you have given Him your HEART**

Let me start by saying something my wife Carole said to me: “If we’re not obeying Him, we haven’t given Him our heart. We’re delusional!”

So we must obey – but God wants us to obey with our heart in it. We can actually worship God all in vain, for nothing! Did you realize that? Oh yes, we can, if our hearts aren’t in the worship.

#### **Matthew 15:7-9**

“Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:

8 ‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips,

***But their HEART is far from Me.***

9 And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”

God told Israel to love Him with all their heart, soul and strength (Deut 6:5) – not just with all their obedience. Jesus said it was the greatest commandment: to love God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength and He added “with all your mind” (**Mark 12:30; Matt. 22:37**).

Our heart has to be in it, or it means little to God. He warned the **Ephesian church** in Rev. 2, that though He knew their good works, and commended them for those, He said it didn’t mean as much because “you have left your first love”. He’s telling them in Rev. 2 that “your heart’s not in it anymore”. It’s like He’s saying, you are like a dutiful wife keeping up the house, the cooking, the cleaning, the shopping, and yes - you even have marital sex with your husband – but your heart’s not in it anymore!”

God wants a passionate wife for His Son. He's a loving husband, and wives want a kind and loving husband – but man alive, if a wife just go through the motions, but without any passion or heart in it, does it count as a strong relationship?

So God is saying this:

- claiming you love me, but not obeying me, makes you a liar and the relationship nonexistent
- obeying me without your heart in it, is just as worthless to me.
- Give me your heart, your passionate love and affection – **WITH** your obedience – then I know you trust me, love me and want me a deep relationship with me.

A tough example of how we can obey but be meaningless: a new soldier can do everything a harsh drill sergeant demands, but is the soldier doing it with his heart in it? He's obeying – but without the heart in it. God wants our heart in our obedience, and He is NOT a harsh drill sergeant.

What God loved so much about David: he was all heart. He was, in fact, a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22). He had a heart “loyal to God” (1 Kings 15:3).

So we prove our love for God by obedience AND a passionate affection for him. Guess what? God knows those: **1 Cor 8:3** – “If anyone loves God, **THIS ONE** is known by Him.”

So obey, but with your heart in it. Do give God your heart.

#### **Ephesians 3:17-19 TEV**

“...and I pray that Christ **will make his home in your hearts** [NKJV:  **dwell in your hearts**] through faith. I pray that you may have your roots and foundation in love, 18 so that you, together with all God's people, may have the power to understand how broad and long, how high and deep, is Christ's love. 19 Yes, may you come to know his love--although it can never be fully known--and so be completely filled with the very nature of God.”

When you love someone, and your heart is on someone, you don't find it hard to be with that person. You make time together, you enjoy spending that time. You “hang out” with each other! You just do – or else you can't get close and aren't close yet. ***We can't come to know anyone, unless we spend a lot of private time with that person.*** It's no different with us and God. We abide with Him and in Him, in fact.

***Are we spending time with God?*** When we diligently seek God, we will find Him! Enoch walked with God, and pleased God. When we walk with God, pleasing God, and seeking Him, we *will* be found of Him (**Heb 11:6**) and God will come to know us better too.

By the way, when my own children tell me they want to spend time with me, and they initiate it, that means so much to me. Could God be any different? He loves hearing from us, and having us initiate it. God wants to know we want Him, want to be around Him, we want to hang out with Him. . . .

#### **Track 10: GOD GETS TO KNOW US BY COMING TO LIVE IN US**

My wife asked me: “when, and how, do you really get to know someone?”

After thinking hard and long, because I could tell she had already figured out what she felt was the right answer: I asked her!

She says, “Honey, it’s so clear. It’s when *you live with* a person that you come to really know them. And they come to know you, when they come to live with you.”

I laughed, and said she must really love me then, to continue to live with me, after having to live with me for 33 years and know me so well. Our pastor in Kenya has just gotten married, and I guess Susan is getting to know him now better than before. I’m sure they will be surprises on the way. Ha!

My wife was right on! We all love our friends and even relatives, but didn’t someone once say that “fish and visitors stink after 3 days”? Ha! Why is that? Actually in some cases we are left very impressed with people when we visit with them in their homes, or they with us. We find out they get up at 5 am and pray and study every morning. We watch and realize their marriage is for real, or we’re left impressed with how much they respond to God’s Spirit in a life of gentleness with their loved ones and everyone they meet. Or perhaps their love for the things of God just overflows out of their heart, and we see the love for God in their eyes and in their words and actions . . . or not.

Yes, it’s when we’re with someone 24/7, for many weeks, that we really get to know them, and they get to know us. We may even have an argument or two, a hart feeling here or there – but in the end, we either call them our friend, or we part company.

Even God and Moses had a couple tough moments. When God told His friend Moses that He was ready to blot out Israel and start over with Moses, here was a case where God Himself could see that Moses was a real friend: Moses told *God* what enemies would say about Him if He did that. Moses told His friend, God, not to do it. Moses even said to His Creator, “if you’re going to blot them out, then blot *my* name out of your book of life” (**Ex 32:32-33**).

Another time, in the aftermath of the Korah rebellion in Numbers 16, God ordered Moses and Aaron to get as far from the rebels as possible, as He was sending a plague to kill all the rebels. But what happened? Moses told Aaron – read it for yourself – to stand up to God, to run into the midst of the rebels who were dying, and to hold the incense at the line between the dying and the ones not yet impacted. Remember God told them to *distance* themselves from the rebels – not to run into their midst! This was another time when God listened to His friend Moses, and showed mercy on people intent on killing Moses. Why? Because in this incident, as God “lived with” Moses, He was getting to know His friend very well. I think Moses was also showing the heart of God Himself here – a heart of intercession, of forgiveness, of tenderness, of deep mercy, of putting his own life on the line – and God was moved by that, and spared thousands of people (**Numbers 16:41-50** – read it please!). As it was, over 14,000 died before God relented.

*When we live with different ones, we get to know them.*

***God wants to know you, so what does God do? He comes and literally resides inside us by His Spirit. He comes to live in us, with us.*** Is He going to get to know us? Of course! We become His body temple, the “*naos*” in Greek, meaning His Holy place – actually the Most Holy Place, where God resided above the Mercy Seat in the Holy of Holies. I will certainly speak at length on this in the next sermon. But here’s the gist of it: God’s spirit in us makes us the Holy of Holies of God’s presence. He abides in us.

That same SPIRIT of God, which is also the spirit of Christ His Son, now allows God to experience everything about us. Now that's scary, isn't it? What we see, He sees. What we speak, he hears. What we listen to, He hears. He's right there, all the time. Where we go, He goes... to a point. Are you walking *with* God – or taking God places He really wouldn't want to go? He is ever with us, and we can go nowhere without His presence with us. If we persist in going in a direction He wouldn't go, if we persist in viewing sin, hearing sin, doing sin – we may find God's spirit leaving us!

That is why David pleaded with God in Ps. 51, when repenting for murdering Uriah, “take not they spirit from me” and he pleaded “renew a right spirit within me.” We can read how God sent His spirit upon Israel's first king – Saul – and Saul “became a different man” (**1 Sam. 10:5-7, 9-11**). But later, as Saul persisted in walking a different direction than God would take, God's spirit left Saul (**1 Sam. 16:13-14**).

**God's dwells in us by His Spirit (2 Tim. 1:14; James 4:5).** So God really gets to know us. What impressions are we giving God? What are our eyes making God see? What are our mouths saying – and what are we making God hear? Where are our feet taking God? I mean 24/7 – not just the hours we are publicly praising God with other believers? I mean the times we're by ourselves and no one sees where we are, what we're doing, what we're thinking, where we're going, what we're watching – and we think no one sees or knows – except God, and Jesus, and the 24 elders, and the 4 living creatures, and seraphim above His throne, and the billions of angels?

We need to live 24/7 with that realization – that we are ever with God, and He is ever with us, and in us.

In the same way, as I'll show next sermon, we dwell *in God*. Even though we are flesh, when we have His Spirit in us, we become one with Him, we become part of His body. I can hardly wait to get into that sermon.

**Galatians 4:6**

“And because you are sons [children], God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!””

Your spirit unites with God's spirit – and everywhere you are, God is. You're His daughter, you're His son. He cannot forget you. He cannot help but think of you. You're “in Him”, and He's in you. God's Spirit makes you His precious child, and He has set up His very Holy of Holies inside your body -- whether you are in Nambale or Kitale, Kenya or Pennant Hills, Australia or in Wellsville, NY or Yakima, WA.

*We need to deeply grasp the significance of this! We academically know it, but I don't think we remotely understand how profound are the ramifications that the Highest dwells in each of us.*

***I came to understand this concept*** so much better in describing to ***my son*** one time when he was about 17 or 18 why I was so troubled if he wasn't home by a reasonable time. I blurted out, “You may not always think of or about us. But son, you're always in my heart, even if I seem busy or even angry at you. ***You're always in me, and I can't ever take you out of me.*** You're a huge part of my life, a part I cherish. So I ache when I wonder where you are or if you're safe or not. Son, I've lost my other son. I don't ever want to lose you. I may not be fully in you – but you are in me.”

And I think that day, I was the one who understood God “knowing” us, being in God, the love of God more deeply – and the concept that you and I are in God's heart no matter where we are.

There's so much more to be said, but the important parts have been said.

**Track 11: QUICKLY – OTHER KEY POINTS IN GOD KNOWING US**  
**GOD KNOWS US WHEN WE KNOW AND LOVE HIS BROTHERS AND SISTERS.**

On my website, I gave a sermon explaining how we can say we know God by knowing His body. The reverse is also true. God knows those who care for, help out, think about, pray for, and who are there for all His family. King Jesus says to those He rewards when he returns, that He is doing so because they took care of HIM when He was naked, hungry and destitute. He went on to explain, that they did it to the least of these my brethren (**Matthew 25:31-40**).

Who is “the least” brother or sister? Have you ever figured that out? Jesus earlier had defined his brothers and sisters as those who do the will of His Father (Matt. 12:48-50).

A child (Matt. 18:5)? A newcomer? A person in a far away remote part of the world who has no clout, no impact on your life? Someone who is not up front and center in church – not a song leader, or sermonette man, speaker or pastor or writer? Who is it? Jesus doesn't actually explain who least is – but you figure it out, take care of those folks in real terms, and that increases the odds that Jesus will say He knows you.

At Passover and from now on, give up this idea that **God is somehow boxed in to your particular organization or preacher's group**. “The True Church” is not any organization of Man, but is composed of whomever has God's spirit. Period. So quit being so exclusivist. Quit recoiling away from other believers who may not practice their relationship exactly like you do – but have that relationship! Reach out to other believers and become one with all of us who profess Jesus as the Christ. Wash everyone's feet whom Christ has already washed. And then get in the chair and admit you need them to wash your feet, accept you, and love you, as well – as they accept also that Christ has already washed your feet too. And in the footwashing, we humble ourselves, serve one another, and confess we are our brother's keeper, our sister's servant, and we all come under the mighty hand of God. It's when we LOVE one another that God abides in us and His love is perfected in us (1 John 4:12).

**Thanksgiving weekend last year**, we had quite a few extended family and immediate family here with us in our home. What a wonderful time it was to see everyone. After it was all said and done, I asked **my wife what the HIGH point of the weekend** was to her. It was very simple, and without hesitation she responded: “when I walked into the hallway, and there were our 3 kids just laughing with each other, talking, sharing, and loving each other. That made my heart sing”.

Is God any different? “How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity” (Psalm 133:1). God loves it when His children come together. In Hezekiah's day, he invited the northern tribes to come down for Passover. And some did. How beautiful that was in God's eyes. You should read about it. It's there for our example! We need to come together now, especially at Passover! You can read about it in 2 Chronicles 30:1-5 and the whole chapter. If you take the time to study this, be sure to especially read 2 Chron 30:18-20, 26-27, where it mentions their prayers went all the way “up to His holy dwelling place, to heaven.”



Are we hearing God's word? Are we going to make it easier for God to come to know you and me? I don't know about you, but I know I don't want to hear my Savior say He never knew me – but rather I hope He will call me to Him, give me my new name, put the crown of life on my head and proclaim He is not ashamed to call me His brother. Wow!

**Hebrews 2:11**

“For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified **are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren,**”

**Hebrews 11:16**

“But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. *Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God,* for He has prepared a city for them.”

Imagine that. His word says so. Did you know that? I am amazed when I let it sink in that Holy God, who is holy, holy, holy – is not ashamed to call me His son, nor is Jesus ashamed to call me His brother, in spite of all I've ever done to bring shame on His name over the years. How could I ever be ashamed of Him? In fact, we can't, we must not. In fact we now proclaim Him and witness all that He has done for us.

I'm out of time.... And there's so much more to cover. I just hope you will now give a lot of careful thought to the concept of not just coming to know God – but being sure God knows us.

We saw that this knowing has to be a very profound and intimate relationship we have with God. *It is having your own personal encounter with God – as profoundly as Jacob did when he wrestled all night with God, or as Paul did when God knocked him off his high horse on the way to Damascus.* Have you not wrestled all night with God? Has God not knocked you off your high horse once or twice? Sometimes I think we are having encounters but are so asleep we don't even recognize them as the encounters that could be changing our lives!

We also saw:

- that we must give up, and spend the self, our pride, our goals and wishes – and surrender all to our new Lord and Master before there can be new life in Christ – the starting point of being known by God.
- Jesus will say to those who are lawless, who don't believe they have to obey God's law – “I never knew you” (1 John 2:3-6; Matt 7:21-23)
- We saw how we must obey God, with all our heart in it, for Him to say He knows us
- Those whom God knows are the ones who trust in Him, love Him, and love Abba's children,
- That God looks to the humble and those of a contrite spirit

It's all about having a profoundly close relationship.

Next time we'll cover, God willing, the joy of being “In Christ” and “In God”. Unless we are in God and in Christ, God will not be able to say He has this profound knowing us going on!

So until next time –God bless you and keep you in His love and way. Email me, let's get to know one another. I could use your prayers and encouragement too. If these messages help you, share them with others. Your brother in Messiah – Philip Shields.



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Let's continue to look at the characteristics of those God says HE knows, as we go through the scriptures. You may find a lot of helpful points also in the sermon I gave titled "10 Steps to Truly Loving God".

To know God and be known of God, we need to start with the steps of salvation revealed throughout God's word. Let me say from the outset, it's about changing our mind and our direction-- then giving God our HEART. It's about wanting to know HIM and wanting HIM to know US, from our HEARTS, with our hearts. Being known by God is an "inside job". It's about what the Bible calls "the inward man" – our innermost feelings and our heart's desires. Let's look at the STEPS towards doing this as outlined in scripture. I've given many sermons on aspects of this, so let me just state now – that we must first:

- **Accept with all your HEART, the great calling and outpouring of love** God is offering us. God initiates the relationship by opening our hearts and minds to come to Him, to repent. We have to respond to His invitation. Matthew 22:1-14 chronicles how many were called, but gave excuses and reasons why they couldn't or wouldn't come to the wedding. That's a warning for us. God knows those who SEE the VALUE of what they're being offered!
- **REPENT of our sins** – breaking God's holy law. Repent means to change the way you see and understand things and as a result you go the other direction now; it's more than just saying you're sorry. It means proving we're sorry by letting God's Spirit *completely* change our lives. Sin is not just doing things we shouldn't do, but sin includes NOT doing things we SHOULD do (James 4:17). I believe very strongly we also must repent of what we ARE prior to conversion: sinners. Like the repentant Publican who went to the temple to repent – we must ask God to be merciful to us, who are sinners. God heard that prayer and graciously justified him. All of us have earned the death penalty for sin. Compared to God and Jesus Christ, there is none righteous, no not one. Really we're all in the same boat: we're all sinners that need forgiving. The process is given clearly at the end of Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost:

**Acts 2:37-42**

"Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?'"

38 Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.'

40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, 'Be saved from this perverse generation.' 41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them."

- **Be baptized by complete water immersion** – picturing an outward demonstration of the change and commitment that has happened to us internally. In baptism we are picturing our death and burial with Christ, and become an actual part of *His* death, burial, and resurrection -- and all that it pictures. This is how we start to be "in Christ". (Rom 6:1-4).

**Romans 6:1-4**

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? 3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

He goes on to say that in baptism, if we truly died inwardly and weren't just getting dunked, the power of the 2<sup>nd</sup> death over us is broken. We are resurrected with Christ, in symbol, He goes on to say, and eternal death has no more power over us (Rom. 6:5-10). Verse 9 – “Death no longer has dominion over him.”

- Next, we have an **elder brother in Christ lay his hands on us and pray we receive the gift of God's Holy Spirit**, which cleanses us and begins to fill us with the mind of God (Acts 8:15-18; 2 Tim.1:6; Hebrews 6:2)
- **God's spirit puts us into the body of Christ**, as a part of HIS very own body and in this we come to be “in God”, as much as God is now in us. God resides in us as His body temple. God's spirit also begets us as real children of God. Without God's spirit we are not His children (Rom. 8:9). Other scriptures also talk about us being adopted into the family of God (Rom. 8:15, 23; Gal. 4:5). And yes, there's no getting around the Greek: the word means “adoption”, not sonship. In a future sermon, I will go in depth into what it means to be “in God” and “in Christ”.

Now we're in a position to be KNOWN of God in the deepest sense. However, let me be clear, that God sees the end from the beginning, and God apparently identifies those who are HIS, even BEFORE all those steps have happened. In Corinth, before many had even heard of Paul, our Lord identifies that “I have many people in this city.” (Acts 18:9-11).

Isn't God awesome? In this Passover season, I also think many of us will be surprised by those God chose and showed His mercy to. Imagine Stephen's surprise to see Paul in God's kingdom? And then to find out that the ringleader in his stoning actually goes on to write the bulk of the New Testament.

## **GOD KNOWS THOSE WHO HEAR HIS VOICE**

**John 10:27** “My *sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.*”

### **John 10:4-5**

4 And when he brings out his own sheep, **he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.** 5 Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.”

### **John 10:15-16**

“As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. 16 And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.”

Remember the Laodecians in the end time? Our king is at the DOOR, knocking... and if any man will HEAR MY VOICE, and the knocking – and please let the King into your heart – He will come dine with us and share His throne with us! (Rev. 3:20-21).

DO we hear His voice? Or are we so busy we don't?

What would make you not hear His voice? Put yourself in a real house and have someone calling your name outside and knocking on the door. What would keep you from hearing?

- We've been hit by Satan's Weapons of Mass Distraction – TV is on, we're distracted by other things in our lives.
- We're dead. We're asleep.
- We don't care.
- We are ashamed – for we are naked and not dressed.

You get the point! We have to be READY to open the door. LISTENING FOR the voice.

Hearing His voice is equated in Hebrews 3 with OBEYING what you hear. We hear His voice when we quietly meditate, have quiet time with God first thing in the morning and last thing at night. We hear His voice when we tune everything else OUT and focus on what HE is telling us in His word. We hear His voice when we APPLY what He is telling us.

Those who hear the voice of God are known by God. We've just read it.

The world has just celebrated Easter Sunday last week, as I wrap up the preparation of this message. They base it on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring, or vernal, equinox. They base it on the "official" full moon, not even the REAL full moon. There can be a difference of 2 days. This method totally trashes the date Almighty GOD set for Passover – the 14<sup>th</sup> of the first Hebrew month of Abib, which comes mid April, not late March. The first day of Unleavened Bread is the 15<sup>th</sup>, the day after the killing of the Passover lamb. Days begin at sundown prior. See Lev 23 for yourself. And Passover can fall on almost any day of the week. In Scripture, it's never a set day of the week, like Easter Sunday. Emperor Constantine was tired of the arguments over Passover or Easter, and when to observe it, so he ordered the council of Nicea to make the pagan Easter a set time every year – totally against Scripture. You can verify that for yourself in your own research.

Anyway, Passover is about the greatest love story ever told. I'd recommend you review some of the messages I gave in previous years in March and April to help get the mindset for Passover, to understand the meaning not just of the wine, but of the CUP. To understand the unity we are to demonstrating – that more HEALING will ensue. King Yeshua, Jesus the Christ, Himself taught "There can be no greater love than for a man to die for his friends" (John 15:12-13). And actually, Jesus did it one step better: He died and paid the Bride Price and the ransom required not just for His current friends, but even for those who were still sinners (Romans 5:6-8) and the ungodly.

God knows everyone's hearts. God the Father sent His only begotten Son to be His Passover Lamb (John 1:29; 3:16) of God, to take away the sins of the world. The price paid was the ultimate

possible price: the life of the Son of God, who was also God (John 1:1-3), who was then resurrected by God the Highest, His Father, His dear Abba – to glory, honor and that WE might have life in Him.