Biblical Knowledge of Christ

Let us turn to our Bibles, to Ephesians chapter 1, verse 17. Ephesians 1, 17-20. Let us listen attentively to the Word of God.

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation and the knowledge of him. The eyes of your understanding be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of his calling, what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and seated him at the right hand in the heavenly places. Let us pray.

Gracious spirits, be with us this morning as we go further into these texts to understand the importance and what and where and how much we should know about the Son, Jesus Christ, to have a proper knowledge, a biblical knowledge, Lord, of who he is and the gospel, and all that's related to him, which would be the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit indeed. Father God, be with us this morning so that we can be encouraged, be strengthened, and rejoice that we have such a prayer upon us, we have a prayer for one another, and your prayer and your desire as you work in us, Lord, as only you can, is to indeed increase in knowledge and understanding of the truths of your word. May this be so for all of us, we pray.

Amen. So these verses express in different words the same care and prayer of Paul, that the Christians at Ephesus would grow in the knowledge of God in Christ. But what knowledge in particular, and how important is the knowledge for the Christian life? I think even asking the questions, we already know the answers.

Knowledge from on High

First part here, verse 17, the knowledge from on high, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you. So he pleads to the Lord God Almighty, as we all should when we have godly desires and requests before him, his prayer, is that God would give such truth and knowledge. The knowledge and revelation, the wisdom of him, that is Jesus, because he continues on in verse 19 and 20 to speak of the resurrection of our Lord and Savior in his reign over all creation.

And although he cries out to God of our Lord Jesus Christ, that would be the Father, that the Father of glory, he specifies him there in particular, may give to you the spirit of wisdom. Because such knowledge can only come from on high, not from anything that we make up of our own hearts or what we supposedly see with our own eyes. And he prays in particular for a spirit of wisdom and revelation.

As I mentioned last time, that the phrase here, spirit of wisdom, depending on your translation, it may or may not be capitalized, the word spirit. So some think it may refer to the Holy Spirit himself, who of course is the author of wisdom, or the essence of wisdom. You speak of the spirit of the matter or the spirit of the law, right? What is the essence? What it really is about? Whatever the case may be, at least if it's a second case, it still assumes behind it the spirit is needed to enlighten our eyes.

He prays to God, he prays to heaven above for such illumination for the churches, as we ought to pray for one another, that such wisdom would be given to them. And we know that wisdom is given to us by the spirit himself. This is the method that God has designed things.

We went over this in prior sermons about the economic trinity, that is how each member of the trinity is involved in our redemption, involved in time and space for our good, the edification of the saints. And one of the jobs or office, the older word they used, of the spirit is illumination, the granting of the gifts in the spirit and applying the work of Jesus Christ. We have that in the opening verses we had finished, verses 3 to 14.

It starts with the Father, it goes next to the Son, the work of the Son, and last ends with the Spirit, and praying especially that the Spirit would be upon them is a guarantee of our inheritance. And how can we have that inheritance and guarantee unless we have our eyes, our spiritual hearts and minds open to the truth? And that's the prayer of Paul here, that they would be given such things. And so Paul's prayer and petition is the blessing for Christians to have wisdom and revelation, more of it from the Spirit himself.

We know it's from the Spirit elsewhere. 1 Corinthians 2.12, for example. 1 Corinthians 2.12 and following.

Now, Paul writes, we have received, not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not words with which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, nor can he know them because they are spiritually discerned.

They are spiritually discerned. That is, they require the Spirit of God to understand these truths of the gospel promises of Christ in particular, as he mentions here in 1 Corinthians 2.12 and following. He cries out before God and says, it is the Spirit who is from God, verse 12, in order that we might know the things that have been freely given in Christ.

We need the Holy Spirit. You cannot have a doctrine of salvation without a doctrine of the power of the Holy Ghost himself being involved in our redemption. And he's involved in giving us truth to know the things, verse 12, and these things that we speak, the apostles and the pastors of the New Testament era, verse 13, not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but men make up false teachings and doctrines that sound holy and good, but with which the Holy Spirit teaches.

They are saying the words that they are speaking are words from the Holy Spirit. Not necessarily divine inspiration, but they're speaking the truth from the Holy Spirit. And the same is true today.

We find that, of course, in the Word of God. The Spirit and the Word always go together. But the natural man, negatively, verse 14, does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, because they are foolish and require spiritual understanding or an understanding that's fueled and empowered by the Spirit himself.

And that's the difference between believers and unbelievers. In a lot of ways, we can look alike and even act alike and believe a lot of things, and that's good. I've mentioned that before.

It's good to have good neighbors, even if they aren't believers, and they do lots of good things. But the gospel is foolish to them unless the Holy Spirit comes upon them. Without the Spirit, there is no wisdom, there is no knowledge.

He speaks of wisdom and knowledge here. Wisdom as insight, understanding, cleverness, right? Sophia, the name we use for girls sometimes. And that's the word they use in the Old Testament, a Greek translation of a Hebrew word, that we will hear about this afternoon as I'm stopping at 2 Timothy and going to take a detour through the book of Proverbs to some extent and come back to Titus.

We're going to learn about wisdom and understanding. Colossians 4.15, walk, we are told, in wisdom towards those who are outside, redeeming the time. That is to walk as those who understand what is going on and how they should act with respect to the world and to use their time wisely.

So here in that usage of Colossians 4.5, the word wisdom is not with respect to salvation, but with respect to one's actions. But here it is clearly, I think, about with respect to redemption, revelation of wisdom in the knowledge of Him, that is Christ Jesus, and the power of God in Him, that is Christ, verse 20, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at the right hand. So Him and Him continually there is our Lord and Savior.

So sometimes wisdom is with respect to moral actions. Other times it's with respect to the gospel, in particular our knowledge and understanding of the gospel. And I think here when we have these two words together, a common way of writing and even speaking, we do this sometimes, we use a multiplicity of nouns or even adjectives to say the same thing differently.

So wisdom and revelation here are coordinated in the knowledge of Him. That the revelation here, that is to make something known, it's the same word we get from apocrypha. Revelation 1.1, the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him to show us unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass, to show forth.

The apocrypha can be of the future or of the present, but it's to bring revelation or understanding or illumination. That's all the word means. And Paul's desire is for the church to have this knowledge of Him, an understanding, illumination, revelation of wisdom, wisdom in the sense of grasping that greater wisdom, who is Jesus Christ.

And the implications, therefore, of this knowledge, right, wisdom and revelation in the knowledge or about the knowledge about Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, means we have to learn about Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, the person and work of Jesus, who He is and what did He do. Now, to note here, before I delve into that, Paul here is writing to believers. Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ to the saints who are at Ephesus, verse 1. I'm writing to you this stuff because you're saints already.

You've been baptized. You're members of the body of Christ. I'm treating you like something different.

I'm giving you truth and knowledge here that you should apparently, in a lot of cases, already know because he doesn't unpack a lot of this stuff. He just says it like, well, obvious. It's obvious.

And it is because they had enough knowledge to be believers. And so Paul's prayer, therefore, is not a minimalistic prayer here. Hey, I want you guys to be saved, to understand who Jesus is, to trust in Him, know what your sins are, but to actually go beyond the basics and to understand the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And that's why he gives more information here, verses 20 through 23, which I'll cover later, about the kingdom of Christ's power and the kingdom of His grace. And so Paul's prayer is about more. The word more isn't used, but that's clearly the case here that they would understand more than what they already have because they already have faith in Jesus, verse 15.

We saw that last week. And love of the saints. But he's saying we need more.

That is not enough. We must continue to grow and never stop learning, brothers and sisters. Paul's desire is that they and we today would learn more, not less.

And that's because we are disciples. We are disciples. We hear that today in English.

I'm not sure what you think of when you hear that. I don't necessarily think of student, but the word can easily be translated. The Greek word used for disciples there, often the gospel of 12 disciples, is pupils.

People who are under the teaching and tutelage of another. That's the idea of a disciple. And so as Calvin likes to say, we are in the school of Christ.

That's the church. And we are His disciples. And what do you do in a school? What do disciples do? But they learn.

And they try to grow and apply such truth into their lives, as we'll hear this afternoon. And so here in Paul's prayer and desire is that we continue to sit at the feet of Jesus Christ and to grow in our understanding of Him, of Jesus, and His power, of course, in particular. As he unpacks in these later verses, he just drills down into the power and omnipotence of God Almighty and what He has done and continues to do in the redemption of His people.

And so as we hear the Bible, he reads to us here in this prayer through the pastors that we may grow and learn into lifelong calling as we listen to the Bible, listen to the pastors, read on our own, and to ever learn and ever grow in knowledge. The source of this knowledge of salvation, of course, is assumed to be the Bible. More broadly, supernatural revelation that you cannot get out of creation, because creation only shows the holy requirements of the law of God.

It shows God's judgment, in fact, that it does not show salvation. You cannot find Jesus. You cannot find the gospel and the good news outside of the Bible.

But you can find Him in the Bible. And revelation here, of course, implies the Bible. It's used often in the New Testament here.

2 Timothy is one of the last books written by Paul. So the New Testament canon isn't closed yet, but he has the letters, and they have the apostles, and they have the pastors who are, what, preaching their own imaginations, their own thoughts and minds? We just read that in 1 Corinthians 2, where he said, no, we don't do that. We follow the things of the Spirit.

The Spirit has given to them, of course, the Word of God. You have the Old Testament, and they have direct revelation as well. And that's ultimately written down.

We have the final canon here, the Bible. Canon just means standard, and this is our standard for anything to be taught today is in the Bible. It's assumed here in the text that they are not to just sit there and just meditate and be one with the universe somehow or some way with the Holy Spirit, so they just have an automatic understanding of these things.

That's not how God works. Yes, he says that the eyes, verse 18, of your understanding be enlightened. That's his prayer and desire, that you have a more understanding, greater illumination, because it is the Spirit that makes it effectual in our lives.

What? The reading of the Bible. Without the Spirit, reading the Bible just falls flat. It just hits a wall of a hard heart unless we are born again.

Paul, of course, can't say everything and every doctrine and every passage, so here he focuses upon his desire and prayer that they would increase in godly knowledge that is doctrinal teaching. All the word doctrine means is teaching, that which is taught. And so this is assumed here, and I'll unpack that a little bit later.

Knowledge About Christ

Verse 18, the second point, knowledge about Christ. We know our knowledge of Christ comes from heaven above. That's why he prays to God the Father and is through the power of the Spirit in our lives and illuminates our hearts.

And what particular knowledge? The knowledge of our Lord and Savior. Here we have this extended use of words, as often is the case of Paul. He heaps up a number of words to say a simple idea, knowledge.

Here he writes, the eyes of your understanding. We may say, I suppose, the eyes of our heart, but clearly the idea here is the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, which is all to say, see more, understand more, and grow more. And so understanding, perhaps, means mind.

We may say, your mind's eye that you would see all the more truth of Jesus Christ. All this to say, enlightened. That you may be enlightened, not left in the darkness like the pagans of old.

In contrast, without the truth of Christ, everyone else is in darkness, as we know. I have a nice little quote here from the Puritan Thomas Watson, in which he goes over a little bit of 2 Peter. I won't read that.

That's the passage that talks about those who wrestle the truth from the Bible who are unlearned and unstable, you may recall. He writes, we see the reason why so many people are unsettled, ready to embrace every novel opinion and dress themselves in as many religions as they do fashions. And that's what he wrote back in the 1600s.

What would he think of America today? Absolutely astounding. It is because they are ungrounded. And he doesn't mean electricity.

He means the earth and the stability of a house or the ground beneath us. He's using that metaphor. They are ungrounded.

They are unstable. See how the apostle joins these two together, calling them, such people, unlearned and unstable. 2 Peter 3.16. Those who are unlearned in the main points of divinity will be unstable.

If we are ignorant about Christ, ignorant about His work and the work of the Holy Spirit and everything else associated around that, you will and we will be unstable, tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, Ephesians 4. First step to protect yourself is you must grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, that your eyes, your mind's eye, your soul will be better understanding of His truth for us and for you. This prayer, in other words, is about growth and teaching and understanding in our lives. He doesn't mention practice here.

Of course, he wants you to grow in practice. We'll find that out in the rest of Ephesians, Ephesians 5-6, where he drills into what it means to be a husband and a wife and the things like that. That's true.

But here, the opening part, he's emphasizing, you got to keep learning. You got to keep growing. You got to keep being a student.

I know the kids, when they're 16, 17, 18, they're already getting senioritis, we used to call it, right, this disease where you're like, I wish I could graduate real soon like a senior. But the rest of your life as a Christian is a life of learning and it should be. And churches should encourage that and not downplay that.

It's one of the dangers and errors we have in the American world. You know this. The temptation is strong even in Reformed churches to hide these things and hide the truth into Sunday school or Bible study or something that wouldn't offend people or it just sounds too heavy or whatever the case is.

Yes, you have to speak to where people are, that's true, but you have to keep going. You can't just stop and teach the baby stuff. Well, you believe in Christ, that's good enough.

No, Paul is clearly not satisfied with that. That's his prayer. Don't let all the details lose sight of the fact that that's the main idea here.

He doesn't cease to give thanks, giving thanks to God, in particular, making mention of you in my prayers that, in order that, to this purpose, you would grow in knowledge and understanding and doctrine and truth. Biblical ignorance is a widespread problem. I'm not going to give you the studies again and again.

You've heard them before. I don't want to be a broken record. But what does that mean for you? It means that you continue to pray for Christians around you that you suspect, or you probably know, and even if you suspect it's not a bad suspicion, the odds are in your favor, I'm sorry to say.

It just simply is. The odds are in your favor that they are, frankly, quite ignorant. And that you can help them, perhaps, if you are able.

And in all such things, of course, to be kind and patient and humble. Now, it's of Christ, the knowledge of him, that is of Christ, twofold, the person of Christ and the work of Christ. A common way of describing it in systematic theology, the person and work of Christ.

Who is he and what has he done or will do or is doing for us? The person of Christ, Christ the man, right? Where did he come from? Who is this man in particular? He's born of a virgin, Virgin Mary. Lived as a Jew because he was a Jew at the house of David. Began his earthly mission about age 30.

He traveled and taught and the like. He is a man, a body and soul, wasn't an illusion, didn't pretend or look like it. He was hungry.

He was tired. This is Jesus, the man. It's important truth.

Because as man, he identifies with us, short of sin, as Hebrews tells us, right? Without that, we wouldn't have a representative. And of course, Jesus Christ, not just man, but God. And this is the offensive part.

The modern scholars and average American doesn't have a problem thinking that Jesus is a man, because they can understand that. They themselves are men. And it's hard for us to get an ounce out of our head.

And so they've, early on, of course, they try to deny that he even existed as a man, the liberals. And I think today, maybe they still do. I don't know.

They've gone so far off the rail. No one really cares. But the average American still believes he's some kind of a man.

He existed. Sure there was a Jesus. But what does it mean? It means nothing if he's merely a man.

What can a man do? Can a man save you? Of course a man can't save you. Can he say wonderful things? Well, they think he said wonderful things. But so do many people think Mohammed said wonderful things, or any other prophet.

But he is, of course, more than a prophet, more than a mere man. He is God in the flesh, which, of course, is greatly significant for us. He's the God-man, right? That's a simple title.

And systematic theology describes his mediatorial role, that there is now a difference in time and space. Because the Son of God, the second member of the Trinity, always existed. And now he has a body.

It's a great mystery, but nevertheless, it's true. And nor a contradiction. He is our mediator, our surety for his people, that we would be saved and delivered.

And he could not have done that if he was not God. Because only the infinite can satisfy the infinite justice, the infinite righteousness of Jesus to satisfy the infinite justice of God. And so to learn of our deliverance from Satan means learning more about Jesus, learning more of who he is.

His office as well, that is, he is a prophet, a priest, and a king. And these are not just a static office, these are what he's doing as well for his people. As a prophet, of course, he taught and instructed his people from the Old Testament through the prophets, from heaven on high, and in New Testament in person, as we say, in the flesh, Jesus Christ walking among his own people, admonishing them, encouraging them, prophesying about the future, and teaching and instructing them.

That's his office as a prophet. And a priest, of course, representing his people before God, praying for them, Christ's great high priestly prayer in John 18, for example, is Christ Jesus living for his people and exercising and working such things. This is the kind of knowledge people ought to have It's on our Shorter Catechism, isn't it? It talks about Christ being a prophet, priest, and king.

The Shorter Catechism is for what? Children, people new to the Christian faith. And yet I fear that many don't even know that Jesus is a prophet, priest, and king. They typically know him as a priest, as that's about it, maybe a prophet.

And I don't think I ever heard him being called a king other than the king of Israel, but that was plan A. Now plan B is he's not. Some weird thing of sensationalism. And as I said, he works through all the offices.

He works on earth. He worked on earth, walking among us, and the Gospels record, of course, his miracles, his travels, and the like. We ought to learn and know these things.

When he says knowledge of him, you may grow and have the wisdom and knowledge of him, of Jesus Christ, that your eyes may be opened, that your heart may be enlightened to

know what is the hope of his callings. We'll talk about it in a bit. He is not simply and only talking about, as they say sometimes, experimental or experiential knowledge of Jesus.

Are you really saved, brother? But first and foremost, do you even know what you're talking about? Who is this Jesus that you believe in? Or is it just emotionalism? You have to know, or it's not real knowledge. His words of admonition, warning, and teaching we learn about in the Gospels. You may not know every detail, to be sure, or name every miracle.

That's understandable, but you'll learn it again. You forget some things, you pick it up again, yes. But you should know, of course, his main mission, the key teachings, and the key actions of Jesus, his life, his suffering, his death, his resurrection, and ascension on high, his work in heaven.

The Gospels record everything on earth up to his death and his resurrection, walking amongst his disciples. In the book of Acts, at the beginning there, show us him walking on earth, and shortly thereafter, he ascends into heaven and sits at the right hand of God Almighty, accomplishing his work. Or, to use the metaphorical language elsewhere, he's before God, interceding for us in his prayers.

And, of course, the rest of the New Testament letters, which gives us more teaching and more instruction about him, about Jesus, and therefore everything attached to Jesus, the good news, his person, his work, what did he do, how is it significant, what does it mean for us today, how do we get access to salvation? By faith and faith alone, by repenting and trusting in him, by fleeing from our sins and the like. Everything associated with the good news, he means when he says him, and that's all of the New Testament. And, of course, the Old Testament also speaks of Jesus, although in a dark mirror, it wasn't as clear, but it's there nevertheless.

You can still learn from that as well. And so our Lord and Savior that we have to learn about him is everything associated around him and his work, which includes our life. Because he brings us out of the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light and illumination and truth, and he transforms us, and he renews us in what? The image, the Father God, and renews us in the image of Christ.

And all these things we have to learn and know and grow. Knowledge of Christ necessitates, of course, therefore, the knowledge of the Bible, as I mentioned before, for Christ is only found in the Holy Scriptures. And nowhere else can we find the good news.

This is why we bring up missionaries. We'll sit there and say, well, you know, they can look at the light of nature and hopefully they'll be saved. This is great stuff.

No, we want to send someone out there so they can hear the truth. But I do have one study for you because I saw it about a day and a half ago. So I said, I'm going to throw it into the sermon, a new study.

Lifeway Research asks more than 2,000 American Christian churchgoers. So the way you do that, of course, is you send out the studies. Now it's probably online.

And you find out by asking them, are you a Christian? Yes. What kind of Christian? How often do you go to church? Those kind of things. And you'll be surprised how honest people can be on polls.

I know lots of people can say, you know, lying statistics and all that. And you can do that. But if you dig behind a lot of this stuff, as I've done over the years, I'm not an expert per se, but over and over again, all kinds of professionals are like, well, you know, it's actually fairly accurate and consistent over the years.

And you're going to see it again here. It's going to match your experience. It's one way you know these things are pretty consistent, as it does here, unfortunately.

The average respondent scored about 51% out of 25 questions. That's an F, right, in a typical school. About 2 in 3 earned a solid F, 65%, because the average is 51.

It's straight F. Almost 1 in 10 received a D. So you're looking at 75% of the respondents below the bell curve, below the C. I'm not going to go through all the questions for you. One of the questions was this. It's only 25 questions.

I took the quiz. Was Matthew one of the 12 disciples of Christ? That was one of the questions. Or does the Bible say God helps those who help themselves? Is that in the Bible was one of the questions.

There's a problem. Paul knew there would be a problem. That's all his prayer here.

You would grow in knowledge. Because if you're ignorant, you're just a disaster waiting to happen. You're going to fall into those traps and lies left and right.

It begins, it doesn't end with knowledge. Because I know one of the things that you'll hear, I know you've heard it. You Calvinists are all about this thinking and learning and knowing and growing in doctrine.

It's so offensive. It's just, come on. Don't you have love? How much love do you have of your spouse, of your children if you have no idea what they want for Christmas? If you don't know their likes and desires? It's not really love, is it? It's just talk or emotionalism.

I feel like I love them. And you hear they are about God, absolutely ignorant and saying, well, there's other ways to heaven or that's one of the poles or this one. Yeah, God helps those who help themselves.

What kind of a church are you going to? Well, the kind of church that loves me. You mean it makes you feel good and it's a big club? In my experience, what I've seen over the decades, no challenge to the Christians. Are you trusting a God? Well, how can you know if you don't know who Jesus Christ is? Because in your mind, doctrine divides.

It can if it's petty. I agree. But that's the debate.

What's the pettiness of it when we have all this Bible here? Look at this. And they're just happy with a little page. You know, doesn't even have a confession of faith of any sort or what do they call it? A statement of belief or something.

Statement of belief. And if they do, it's about this long of my notes. There's a problem.

Don't be. Another way of saying this is don't turn off your mind. Don't be offended.

Don't be put off. And don't be, don't believe people when they say, you guys just, you don't really love. You're just all about knowledge.

No, I love and I love through knowledge. It's based on truth. How can I help somebody if I'm ignorant? You can't.

You've got to know what's going on. And how can I analyze what's going on if I don't understand what the law of God is and how it applies to your life? What the good news is, when you do sin and break God's law, everything falls apart. Knowledge is bare minimal.

Even unbelievers know this. Without it, everything falls apart. Now, there are two things to learn.

I mentioned Christ in particular, right? The person and work of Jesus Christ. And I can unpack more of that. And hear about the Bible, because that's where you find Jesus.

So I'm backing up even behind that. Paul's like, learn about Jesus. Where do I learn about Jesus? From your pastor.

Where did your pastor learn about it? From the Bible. So you can read the Bible yourself and hear the pastor. Do both.

The Bible as a book. God uses human instruments and languages, right? He's given us a book. The book with 66 books in it.

And as a supernatural book. That is, the message therein. The teaching guided by the Spirit unto gospel truth.

As a book. The content of the Bible as a collection of books is part of what we need to know and grow in our knowledge of Jesus Christ. If you think, I can learn about... I ask you the question, where do you learn about Christ's life on earth? I can see that being a question of life weight.

You can ask that as a life weight question, right? That research question. Old Testament or New Testament? You all say, well, New Testament. If I said New Testament, the Gospels or the letters? You'd say the Gospels.

So you're already two steps ahead of a lot of people. That's just basic kind of knowledge I'm talking about. Knowing the Bible, knowing the book, the authors therein.

If you can name the 66 books, that would be great. The genres. That's a little more advanced, but genre just means a type of book or a style of book.

Is it poetry? Is it prophecy? Is it history? Makes a difference if you read historical books. 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Samuel. As though they were poetry, you'd be kind of confused, wouldn't you? And as a historical book, because even the poetry is referencing what? History and events.

Do you know the history and events? Was the walk through the Red Sea in the New Testament or the Old Testament? You already know that. You don't think about it, but that's part of the stuff that people need to know. So they could go to the Bible and get something fruitful from it.

If they're confused about where things are, you can understand how little they're going to grow about the gospel and about the law, about the Word of God. Now, again, you don't have to know every detail. In that questionnaire, there were a couple of questions about orders, for example.

Which happened first, the resurrection or the walking through the Dead Sea, the Red Sea? Well, we already know the answer to that. Questions like that. Now, it's a supernatural book as well.

So it's not just interesting history here, and it is indeed interesting history, I think, but truth for the soul. Truth through direct teaching and truth through indirect teaching, that is, illustrations, the types, and the figures. Right? By direct, I mean it's literally didactic passages, teaching passages, especially Paul.

He's like, this is true, this is not, this is a heresy, this is not. Or the Proverbs, as we're going to have this afternoon, can learn through those passages. They're didactic, although set up in poetic form.

Their purpose is to teach and instruct, right? Not just to illustrate, like a ceremonial law. The types and figures of the Old Testament, the temple, didn't actually say anything, but it was illustrating a greater truth, right? In other words, we have to learn doctrine and practice from the Word of God, and it's a lifetime job to learn, to hope, in fact, more in our Lord and Savior, and to depend upon Him, the hope of His calling of us. Verse 18, halfway through verse 18, that you may know, so he says it again, that, or to this purpose, you may know, and he said that before, the revelation of knowledge.

What is the hope of His calling, of Christ's calling of us? It's unsaid. Of His calling of us, calling us unto salvation and deliverance and redemption, to learn more of the gospel, the hope appertaining to His having called you or to the calling wherewith He has called you, as one commentator describes it. And our hope, of course, is not in mere men or anything men can do or say, not in ourselves, nor in our weak faith, but that's also part of what you have to learn.

Not this. It's one of the, in my mind, strongest ways to learn is the contrast. Not this, but that.

But in Jesus Christ is where our hope is. His calling of us, not our calling of Him. It's His calling.

The hope of His calling you to deliverance and not my weak faith. Of His calling us unto what? Salvation here, and He specifies this in the way that Paul writes here. What are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints? The riches of inheritance of the saints, and it's a glorious and wonderful thing, the saints' possession that we possess this redemption.

Like royalty adopting paupers, our spiritual wealth is more than we could ever imagine, because we have been adopted by the heavenly King. We therefore have a great abundance of spiritual blessings, of salvation, of the saving of the soul, and as well as the saving of the body. Election, calling, regeneration, conversion, justification, adoption, sanctification, and finally glorification.

These are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, the saints' possession, what He's given us. We have this great and marvelous inheritance in and among us. We also have the fruits of the Spirit, and the Spirit Himself living and dwelling within us.

Those are the riches, the abundance of wealth that the world does not understand, because in their mind it's all about money, and prestige, and social power, and positioning. And we have Jesus, and we have God as our Father, and the Holy Spirit within us. We have the means of grace, the tools God has given us, prayer, and the Bible, and the sacraments, and the church as well, and the fellowship, and one another.

These are the abundance and the great wealth that we have, that you have, if you are His, and He is yours. And here lastly, the knowledge of God's power. Paul emphasizes here the power of God Almighty in the remaining verses, 19 through 23, but I'm going to 19 and 20 here.

Knowledge of God's power in Christ, right? And what is, so he says it again, you have the revelation of Him that you may know what is the hope and calling, and that what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us, or towards you who believe. And that power is according to the working of His mighty power, and He raised up Christ from the dead. That's the kind of power he's talking about.

Resurrection power, right? You hear sometimes in charismatic circles, if you want resurrection power, you have it if you're born again. It's not flashy, it's not all great, marvelous miracles and signs that you hear in those circles that I grew up in. That's what they want, that's very fleshly.

That's why God did it, to get their attention, because the Jews were very flesh, that is, they were really beholden to what their eyes and ears and their taste buds, and they really liked something in the desert. They liked it so much, they gorged on it, got sick. Remember that? That's what I mean by fleshly.

And God adjusted, of course, to their weakness, and today, God expects more of us. It's not going to be flashy, the resurrection power that we have. It's not clearly seen by the world, but it's believed by the heart, we know in our lives.

The knowledge of God's power, great, unbelievable, almighty, omnipotent power and might, an indomitable force that cannot be denied, is our God. Beyond our comprehension, by the word of His power, all came into existence. That was nothing.

All sustained thereby by His desire and His power, the planets, the laws of physics themselves. The sun is incomprehensibly huge and large, and it's held together by God, and even you. Such power and majestic might that keeps the magnificent sun burning, and our earth in motion, is directed and guided and works through you and your life, brothers and sisters, for your good, for your protection.

What? To you, toward us who believe. That's you, if you believe, if you rely upon Jesus and not your own perfection. You feel outnumbered, you feel surrounded at times by the Creator God.

Indeed, He's watching over you nevertheless, and His power is directed for your good, in and through and around you. Power that worked through Jesus, as I read already, according to His mighty power, which He worked in Christ, and He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at the right hand of God in the heavenly places. Brothers and sisters, Paul is emphasizing here the might of Christ and of God over all, which is part of what we should learn as well, and I'll talk about that soon.

The knowing and the knowledge of Christ and His work and His Bible should include knowledge of God's sovereign might and our salvation, even here and now. Such wonderful knowledge should indeed humble you, humble all of us, and grant, we pray, and give us confidence in the good news and His work and our sanctification. And may this confidence be with all of you, I pray.

Amen. Lord God Almighty, help us to meditate upon these truths so that we no longer have lies in our lives or half-truths and confusions and darkness of mind, but a fullness of Your grace and Your power and Your love and the inheritance of the saints and the greatness of redemption and the gospel promises that are with us even here and now, that arise beyond our feelings and our emotions, but as a subtle truth, Lord, that I pray all of us would see and believe and to ever learn. We ask this by the blood of Christ.

Amen.