

Sermon – June 7, 2020  
“Know God”  
Crown of Life Lutheran Church  
Pastor Dave Schilling

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father, and from our resurrected Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.  
Amen

Let's pray, "O Lord, speak to each of us wherever Your love finds us this morning, speak to us in our minds, speak to us in our hearts, speak to us by the words of my mouth, and in the thoughts we form. Speak, O Lord, we, your servants, are listening. Amen

Our Gospel lesson focuses on Jesus' activities the night before He would go to the cross to pay the full price for all our sins.

Specifically, He prayed for ALL believers, including all the people in the future who would put their faith in him. Yes, that night, Jesus was specifically praying for each of you. And hear again what He said...

“Father, the hour has come. Glorify your son that your son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life, that they KNOW YOU, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” John 17:1-3

It is verse 3 that really caught my attention as I studied this lesson in preparing today's message. In verse 3, Jesus says, "Now this is eternal life, that they KNOW YOU, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."

So, let's ask ourselves ... Why did Jesus come anyway? What is life really all about? For that matter, what's Christianity all about?

As we think about those questions for a few moments, one of the important considerations I want you to also think about is the fact that Christianity has to be more than just an understanding of heaven and hell. The Christian life is more than our afterlife.

Christianity MUST also be about the here and now. I firmly believe we all need to fully understand that principal.

Let's start by looking at three important things identified in the three verses that we just read. First and foremost, Jesus came to Give Us Eternal Life ... literally, Jesus came to give us eternal life by fulfilling ALL of the more than 300 Old Testament prophecies.

That being the case, we have to ask this, “Why did Jesus die on the cross?” The usual answer, if you listen to us often enough, is that it was all about PAYING for your sins.

Then, you might ask, but why do I need my sins paid for? The ANSWER, of course, is so you can have eternal life.

Now, does that make sense? The whole purpose of Jesus' coming into our world, the whole purpose of the cross and the resurrection, is so you may HAVE eternal life. Life is

what it is.

Eternal is the adjective that describes HOW LONG it lasts, which means the whole reason that Jesus came, died on the cross, and rose again, is so you COULD HAVE life that never ends with Him.

Let me correct some of our thinking here. Some of us may have developed this idea that Jesus came so we could be happy and have "stuff".

We think the purpose of this existence is just that and to never be sick. Our idea may be, "I'll give God a try. I'll get in enough points in the right system, so I can get paid back with an easy life."

I suspect many people do not realize that they think this way. Let me ask you this. Have you ever had something bad happen in your life, and you think to yourself, "God, are you kidding me? I've been to church like six weeks in a row, and You let this happen. Cut me some slack."

There is this idea being propagated by some that if you give your life to Jesus, then all of the sudden, in this existence, everything becomes smooth and fine. But that is definitely not Biblical, it is NOT why Jesus came.

Jesus came so you could have real life ... meaning eternal life. So, it seems important to me that we ALL understand what eternal life is. So, what is the definition of eternal life?

Jesus defined eternal life in our Gospel lesson, didn't He? And He ONLY used two words. He said eternal life IS Knowing God.

Eternal life is knowing God. What this means is that Jesus taught that eternal life is not about a destination like heaven, but a relationship with God.

Jesus said it this way in our Gospel lesson:

"Now this is eternal life, that they know You..." John 17:3

When Jesus says that eternal life is to KNOW God, He is not talking about knowledge of God. He's talking about knowing the attributes of God.

There's a massive difference in BELIEVING things about God and actually TRUSTING in God. Believing things about God is nothing more than an academic event, while trusting in God is all about relationship ... trusting in God is transformational, and all about faith.

When Jesus says that he came, died on the cross, and rose again, His whole deal was that He wanted an intimate relationship with you.

He came to offer you a relationship - NOT JUST in heaven after you die, but right HERE and NOW as you live your life in this world.

One could say that the whole purpose of life is to KNOW God and WALK with Him ... to KNOW HIM and wholly believe in Him.

The things that you have read and heard about God in the scriptures your whole life have all been about knowing and trusting God.

The greatest thing for David was not when he defeated Goliath and became a King. The greatest thing for David was that he knew God.

The greatest thing for Moses was not that God parted the Red Sea through Moses. The greatest thing for Moses was that he knew God, and he had a relationship with God.

And the greatest thing for Simon Peter was not when he walked on the water, but that he had a relationship with God through his faith in Christ.

After I was Baptized and confirmed at age 21 in Colorado Springs, my incomplete understanding at the time led me to initially think that church was all about the afterlife, church was all about heaven and how to get there. It includes that, of course, but oh, church is so much more.

Jesus taught that the reason you're BREATHING right now, the reason that God KNIT you together in your mother's womb, was so you can KNOW God, so that you can HAVE a relationship with God, and WALK with God.

When I was going through my early church years trying to understand who God really was, it seems yearning for heaven was so natural because ... I was going to be rich there. Afterall, I would get a mansion with pearly gates and walk on streets of gold ... sound at all familiar?

But it is important for all of us to realize that heaven is heaven not because of ANY of that stuff. You know why the streets are made of gold? Because gold in heaven is irrelevant. It would be like pavement today.

What MAKES heaven is that God is there, and we will know Him completely. And we will fellowship with Him completely. And our souls will be satisfied completely. Heaven is heaven because heaven is all ABOUT God ... and not about us.

For some of us, we are doing what we think is right. We are living a good life, and generally, what we seem to be after or hoping for is WHATEVER God is willing to give us.

It could be that we are trusting in some OUTCOMES or some BLESSINGS ... INSTEAD OF trusting in Him, the One who actually gives us the outcomes and the blessings.

Life has to be about God. It cannot EVER BE about getting His stuff. It must be about GETTING Him.

If you and I are going to be established in the Christian faith, we've got to start right there. That is the cornerstone of the whole thing ... THROUGH my faith in Jesus, I KNOW God, and so I have eternal life.

But perhaps another way of defining eternal life is that it is simply a relationship with God ... a relationship that NEVER ends.

That is what it is ALL about. It's about relationship. Knowing God and walking with God.

Over the next few weeks, we are going to talk about how that works.

If you are going to have a relationship with somebody, you've got to learn to LISTEN to them, and you've got to TALK to them.

In fact, next week we're going to talk about how to HEAR from God, and how to TALK with God, which will help us grow and be more established in our relationship with Him. Then, we will be better rooted and established in His love.

I pray you will continue to join us each week for this important journey to be better established in God's love. Amen