

LIVING WATER

The Official Newsletter of Southside Church of Christ

TO KNOW AND TO BE KNOWN

by Taylor Hogland

It might be said that one of the deepest longings of the human soul is to be “known” – not merely in a formal sort of way, such as knowing one’s name, but in a richer and more intimate way, to be known as one truly is. This is the foundation on which relationships are built, and we typically rank our relationships according to the extent to which we know and are known by another person. For instance, a coworker may know us in a professional sense, but that pales in comparison to a childhood friend or a spouse who knows us in a much richer sense.

But of course, there are some obvious constraints – even in the closest of relationships. At the risk of stating the obvious, perhaps the most significant limitation to knowing and being known by another person is that we do not occupy the same mind. Due to this limitation, to know and to be known by another person requires that: (1) you share your mind, thoughts, and feelings with them and (2) they share their mind, thoughts, and feelings with you. This is why the most successful friendships and relationships are founded on good communication – it is the only way to bridge the gap between two minds.

But even if two people are effective in communicating with one another, there will always remain the lingering question – *Is that what they’re really thinking? Is that how they truly feel, or is that just what they’re saying?* Thus we are faced with a universal dilemma, one that is summed up well in 1st Corinthians 2:11 -

“For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him?”

This is what makes the Christian experience truly one-of-a-kind: Christ has full access to our mind, and we have access to His. Regarding His access to our thoughts and interior experience, Christ states very explicitly:

“I am he who searches mind and heart” (Rev. 2:23).

Of who else can this be said? Who else can know us without us saying a word? Often communication fails us in trying to explain ourselves to another person – perhaps we don’t know how to word something, or perhaps the other person misunderstands what we’re trying to say. This is not a limitation with Christ. Whether your prayers are clear and well-worded, or stumbling and scattered, or perhaps even ***“groanings too deep for words”*** (Rom. 8:26), rest assured that ***“even before a word is on my tongue, O LORD, you know it altogether”*** (Psa. 139:4).

It is clear that Christ knows us by way of omniscience, or because he is all-knowing. We, however, are not all-knowing. How then can it be said that we have access to the mind of Christ? We have access to the mind of Christ, not by way of omniscience, but by way of Scripture - consider the following passage from 1 Corinthians 2:9-16:

*"But, as it is written, 'What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him' — these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual... 'For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?' **But we have the mind of Christ.**"*

And so what we have with Christ is a recipe for a perfect, harmonious relationship unlike any other. With Him we can truly know and be known in the fullest sense. However, this can only be attained if there is a sincere desire on our part to "get to know" Him - as with any other meaningful relationship, it takes a determined effort if one is to know Christ.

What does that consist of exactly? Well, if the inspired Scriptures are said to be *"the mind of Christ"*, it would seem that we'd do well to study them regularly, for it is through them that we will come to know who Christ truly is. The Gospel accounts are an excellent starting place if you're just getting started, but don't stop there. The rest of the New Testament continues to expound on what Christ is all about, and the Old Testament is said to be about Him as well (Lk. 24:27;44).

Christ has made every effort to know us, and He has gone to extreme lengths to extend to us the opportunity to know Him as well. Let us make full use of this opportunity to know the most wonderful, inspiring Person we could ever know.

- TRH



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