

Be Still and Know that I am God Psalm 46:10

Sermon by Marco deFelice, for Heritage Reformed Baptist Church, North Canton Ohio

Good morning. There is nothing comparable to the Christian life. There is nothing comparable to having the assurance of eternity with God, and having God at work in you now.

But life doesn't always seem to match. So let me ask those of you who are saved some very important questions. Why, in spite of the precious and wonderful promises of the Bible, does the Christian life so often seem to be such a struggle? Why do we so easily fall into sin? Why are we so often burdened with our problems, instead of overflowing with joy? Why is it that so often, there is very little clear spiritual fruit in our lives? Why are we often anxious, instead of enjoying the profound peace with is available in Christ?

Very often, the answer to all of these questions is very simply that we know God very little. We might know the Bible, we know our doctrine, but so often, we don't know God intimately. As a result, we don't really live for the purpose for which God created us.

A life without an intimate knowledge of God will be an empty life, no matter how full of activities, and even service to God, that it is.

A life without an intimate knowledge of God will be a wasted life, a life which does not bring glory to God. If you are a true believer, and your life does not bring glory to God, your heart will not be satisfied, for only God can satisfy your heart. The only life which truly matters is a life lived for the glory of God. That depends upon truly knowing God in Christ.

God created us and saved us from eternal torment to glorify Himself, displaying us as vessels of mercy. That which counts is to live so as to glorify God. The only way to live for God's glory is to truly know God more and more, and to make Him known to others. This is the reason God has saved us, as we read in 1Peter 2:9

"But you [are] a chosen generation, a

royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;" (1Pe 2:9 NKJV)

We have been saved from eternal darkness, and brought into the light, so that we might proclaim the praises of Him who saved us.

The purpose of salvation is that we might proclaim God's praises.

To proclaim God's praises, we must make Him known to others. And so, we must truly know God ourselves, not just know facts about God, but know God, as God!

True Salvation is Knowing God

In fact, true salvation is truly knowing God. In Jeremiah 31, when God describes the new covenant, He declares that all those who are a part of that covenant will know God. Listen as I read Jeremiah 31:33,34.

"33 "But this [is] the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 "No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." (Jer 31:33-34 NKJV)

True salvation is being forgiven on one's sins and entering into a personal relationship with God through Christ, a relationship in which one truly knows God.

That is how Jesus describes salvation, which He calls eternal life, in his high priestly prayer in John 17. He says that eternal life is knowing God. Listen as I read John 17:1-3

"I Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, 2 "as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. 3 "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." (Joh 17:1-3 NKJV)

True salvation, eternal life, is truly knowing God, and Jesus Christ, God incarnate. It means knowing that God is God.

Truly Knowing God

What does it mean to truly know that God is God?

Knowing God as God is far more than knowing a lot of information about God.

In our modern world, we are overwhelmed with information. We have more information available at the touch of a button than has ever been dreamed possible. So, we know many things, or should I say, we have access to much knowledge.

We can know countless facts about many people. We can know many facts about God. But that is not the same as truly knowing God.

When I started doing sermons 30 years ago, I needed a big desk, to lay out all of the books I needed. If I wanted to do some word studies on the Greek, or look up other passages in a concordance, I had to turn from page to page in various huge books.

Now, in a fraction of the time it took me 30 years ago, I can look up things on my computer. I can find numerous facts about God in seconds. I can consult multiple commentaries.

But, does this automatically mean that I truly know God more? No, it doesn't.

So what does it mean, to truly know God, to know

Him as God, and know Him so that we can glorify Him, and make Him know to others?

These are not academic questions for biblical scholars. These are questions which regard each one of us, because the answers to these questions will determine whether our lives are wasted or whether they count for eternity and whether our hearts will be truly satisfied.

It is only by truly knowing God, and living for his glory that our lives will have true meaning, and we can have peace in the storms of life.

Turn with me to Psalm 46:10. This passage helps us to understand how we can know God more. As I read Psalm 46.10, notice that this verse begins with a commandment, and then a declaration of what God's overall purpose is.

"Be still, and know that I [am] God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!" (Ps 46:10) NKJV

This verse starts with the commandment to be still and know that God is God. Only if we learn to truly be still can we know that God is God. Only in this way can we be a part of God being glorified in the earth. Let's consider some of what it means to be still and know that God is God.

Be Still and Know that I am God

God's purpose is to be glorified. In order to live for the glory of God, we must truly know that God is God. In order to truly know that God is God, we must learn to be still. That is the only way we can truly know God.

But wait a minute. If we are saved, don't we already know God? Isn't that a part of salvation. Stop and think with me: What does it mean to truly know a person?

We can know much **about** a person, but not really know that person. You can know a person for years, but there is still so much more to know.

My wife Sherrie and I have been married for 37 years, and we have a strong and close marriage, and I know her well, yet there is so much more to get to know about her.

If this is true for a relationship with another human being, how much more it is true that we have so much to grow in truly knowing God personally, as He truly is.

To truly know God, **we must learn to be still**. The sense of being still here is not so much being literally silent, but rather learning to still our hearts and minds so that we can focus and listen to God, so as to learn to take our head knowledge about God and learn to know Him in that way for ourselves.

To do this, we must learn to be still. Let's think carefully about what it means to truly be still, because in reality your life depends upon how much you truly know God as God. We need to stop and be still and truly see and know God as God.

From What Do we Need to Be Still

In Psalm 46:10 God commands us to be still, so that we can know that God is God. **From what** do we need to be still? What fills our minds now, what keeps us from being still so that we can know God more and more?

How can we be still, so as to know that God is truly God, for us?

First of all, keep in mind that this was written about 3,000 years ago, when there was no television, no printed books or magazines, no telephones, no Internet, no mp3 players. Life was so much simpler. Yet, they needed the commandment to be still and know God as God. How much more do we need to learn to be still.

First, we learn to be still in our thoughts. Normally, especially today in the day of smart phones and Internet and radio and TV, we are constantly filling our thoughts with countless pieces of information every day. The only way to truly know that God is God is to be still, and that means making the hard choices to stop filling our minds with the many things which are not truly important, so that we can make room in our minds to be able to focus on God.

To be still we must **choose** to not be so consumed with that which seems so urgent, but in reality, matters little or nothing in the light of eternity. What matters is truly knowing God more.

Only by being still can we make room in our hearts and minds to take the time with God to truly know that He is God.

Being still is far more than turning off our phones and the Internet for 30 minutes to read the Bible, and then turning them back on again.

Truly being still means choosing to not fill our minds throughout the day with the many things which in reality have little or no eternal value, so as to be able to meditate deeply throughout the day on the truths which we read in the morning which do have eternal value.

Just as a husband and wife should jealously guard their intimate couple time together, so we must jealously fight to keep out countless unimportant thoughts which seek to crowd in, so that we can have rich, intimate fellowship with God and grow in truly knowing that He is God.

And so, being still is not something that you can do in one block of time each day, it must be a lifestyle, and for many of us, a lifestyle which is radically different than what we are used to.

Being still so that we can truly know God as God means learning to recognize how each situation relates to spiritual truths, and then truly letting the truths of God sink into the depth of our hearts and minds. This is so different than the multitasking we do each day. It means quieting our hearts and focus, to think about God in the light of biblical truth, and in relation to every situation we face throughout the day. It means allowing the truths of God to permeate our hearts and mind. We must dwell on them, and be impacted by them.

Certainly, for many of us, learning to live like this will require radical changes. But this is God's command to us, because God wants to give us more of Himself, and we'll only know God more as we learn to be still.

Dear friends, think of who God is: God is mighty, God is majestic, God is glorious, God is thrice holy, God is righteous, God is merciful and full of lovingkindness and so much more. To know God more as He truly is, we must stop, be still from all that normally fills our minds, and focus on God and his attributes and his works.

The Cost of Knowing God

This takes time, this takes commitment, this takes a conscious decision to focus on God, instead of upon the countless things with which we so easily fill our minds every day. We must choose a lifestyle of refusing the mental busyness which the world offers, to learn to walk in intimate fellowship with God.

We must realize that our hearts and minds are limited. If we fill our minds with that which in reality is worth very little, there won't be room for that which is of infinite value. And so to truly learn to be still, every one of us must make hard choices. Those choices will vary from person to person. For some, it might mean breaking the habit of a constant attachment to the Internet, like checking your mail or Facebook or the news repeatedly throughout the day.

For others, being still so as to truly know God as God might mean drastically reducing time spent thinking about a hobby, or watching or playing some sport. How sad when a person has more to say about yesterday's game than about what he's seen of God in the past days. How we need to be still and know that God is God.

For many, being still means being less of a perfectionist. Yes, we need to do everything unto the Lord. But often, our perfectionism is not because we are doing it for the Lord, but because we are stimulated by our pride. Perfectionism puts our focus upon what we are doing, and not the Lord.

In today's economy, for some being still might be thinking less about ones' job or career. Certainly we must work, but if work becomes our focus, we are forgetting the truth of Psalm 127

*“Unless the LORD builds the house,
They labor in vain who build it; Un-
less the LORD guards the city, The
watchman stays awake in vain. [It is]
vain for you to rise up early, To sit up
late, To eat the bread of sorrows;
[For] so He gives His beloved sleep.”
(Psalm 127:1-2 NKJV)*

So yes, we need to earn a living, and provide for our families. But if that takes first place in our

hearts, then we need change our priorities. Be still, and seek first the kingdom of heaven, and his righteousness, and God will provide.

I could go on with many other examples, and it is going to vary from person to person, but I trust that you get the point. Each one of us must prayerfully evaluate his or her own life, and recognize what are those things which hinder us from being still.

Truly being still means being like Mary, the sister of Martha. Mary sat at the feet of Jesus, focused on Him and what He had to say. Only as we imitate Mary can we truly grow in knowing God as God.

Knowing God as God

But let's stop to consider: what does it really mean to know that God is God? Of course God is God. We all know that, don't we? In what sense do we need to know that God is God?

We say that we know God, and yes, thanks be to God, to some degree we do know Him if we are truly saved.

But truly knowing God is more than doctrinal knowledge about God. Maybe you know the Bible pretty well. However, being able to list attributes of God is NOT the same thing as experientially knowing God in his holiness, and in his righteousness, knowing his majesty and his glory and his power and his mercy and his love and in his many other qualities in our lives. Truly knowing God as God transforms our lives.

Let me share a few examples of truly knowing God as God.

The Righteousness of God in the Cross

Let's consider the righteousness of God. Truly knowing God as the righteous God means seeing his righteousness manifested in the cross in Christ. In other words, it is seeing God's as righteousness in judging our sins in the cross of Christ.

Of course every believer knows that Jesus Christ died on the cross, and rose again. However, do you truly reflect in-depth, day by day, on that sacrifice which paid your condemnation?

How many believers truly see, not just intellectu-

ally, but in the depths of their heart, each day, the death of Christ as their righteousness, as the only way that God's wrath against **their** sin could be appeased and they could be saved from the eternal torment which God's righteousness demanded?

Truly knowing God as God means seeing the cross of Christ as the means for us to be righteous, so that we can be accepted by the righteous God.

The Holiness of God

Think with me for a few moments of the holiness of God. Certainly we all know, in some sense, that God is holy. However, how much do we truly understand and meditate on the holiness of God. Do we truly have a sense of the holiness of God? If we truly know God as the holy God that He is, then we will see all of our sins as abominable. Let me read the first verses of Isaiah 6. Listen to how Isaiah saw his own sinfulness, when he knew God as the holy God that He is.

"1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His [robe] filled the temple. 2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy [is] the LORD of hosts; The whole earth [is] full of His glory!" 4 And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 ¶ So I said: "Woe [is] me, for I am undone! Because I [am] a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts."'" (Isa 6:1-5 NKJV)

To truly know God as the holy God that He is, is to know and hate one's own sin as terrible.

The Sovereignty and Power of God

Think with me for a moment of the sovereignty and

power of God. Certainly, we know doctrinally that God is sovereign and all powerful. We believe this. However, do we truly know Him personally as the God who is sovereign in every detail of our lives day by day, in events large and small? Do we truly know Him and rest in Him as the God who is fully in control? If we truly know God in this way, then we'll have peace in the most difficult circumstances. We will be meek, and we will humbly accept all that the providence of God brings us, knowing that our God is in control.

That means that every time I get upset, every time I am worried, every time I despair, it is clear that I do not yet know God as the fully sovereign and all-powerful God. How I desire to be still, so as to know Him more and more as the sovereign and all-powerful God that He truly is. I pray that you will desire this, too.

The Mercy of God

Think for a moment of the wonderful, precious mercy of God. We all know doctrinally that God is merciful, but do you know the mercy of God in your life? Do you count the mercy of God as a most precious gift, which gives you great peace? Do you rejoice to think about the fact that because of God's mercy towards you, instead of punishing you as you deserve, He treats you with great lovingkindness? If we truly understand something of our own sinfulness, and of the holiness of God, then the mercy of God becomes a precious gift which brings great comfort to our souls. Be still, and know God as the merciful God that He truly is.

There are so many more attributes of God we could talk about, to help us to understand what it means to truly know God as God. The point is that we need to learn to be still, so that we can focus on God, and learn to truly see these attributes for ourselves, as God works in our lives. Only then can we truly rest in God, only then can we truly glorify God.

Results of Knowing God as God

Oh dear brothers and sisters, we need to stop, and reflect, and recognize what must change so that we can truly be still, so as to be able to more fully know God as God.

In fact, in reality nearly all of our struggles and our sins are due to the fact that we know God so little.

If we obey the commandment in this verse, and take the often drastic steps necessary to be able to truly be still, so that we can know God more as God, it will produce a strong faith in us, for truly **knowing** God allows us to truly **trust** God.

To truly know God as God brings peace in the deepest storms of life, and those storms do come.

Truly knowing God leads to a life of sanctification, with victory over indwelling sins which have afflicted us for years. Truly knowing God as God allows us to recognize the deceitfulness of sin, and the vanity of so much which the world offers, which in reality is a waste of the precious gift of time. Knowing God as God allows us to see more and more of the beauty of Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior.

Knowing God as God causes us to walk humbly before Him, with great joy, as we long for and hasten that wonderful day when we will stand before Him, without spot or blemish, in his love forever.

There are many other wonderful fruits of truly knowing God as God. But I want to mention one more.

Truly knowing God as God produces in us a **profound desire** to proclaim the virtues of God to others. This is because it is impossible to know the glory of God and not desire that his glory be known to others, both the people around us, and people throughout the world.

In fact, let me read Psalm 46:10 again.

“Be still, and know that I [am] God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!” (Ps 46:10 NKJV)

Truly knowing God as God will cause us to desire that God be exalted among the nations. That includes our nation, and the nations of the world. Truly knowing God causes us to live so as to make Him truly known to others.

Therefore

In a sense, as believers perhaps nothing is more im-

portant that learning to be still, so that we can truly grow in knowing God as God.

It takes commitment and sacrifice to be still. I urge you to take time to evaluate whether the things which fill so much of your lives are truly worthy of that time. In Colossians 3:17 God commands us:

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” (Col 3:16 NKJV)

Allowing the Word of Christ to dwell richly in us requires so much more than simply reading the Word each day. It means reflecting and meditating on that which we've read, so that we can truly see God in every aspect of our day.

Truly knowing God as God means seeing all of life in the light of spending all of eternity with God. Only by seeing our lives this way can we have victory over our sins, and know the joy of our salvation, and have the peace which passes understanding.

So we must be still, we must stop our worrying and our fretting, we must stop filling our minds with so much which is of so little value.

In this day and age, truly being still often means not living in a way which is normal today. But, I don't want what is normal in the Christian life. I want more, so much more of God. And I pray that you want more, too. If you do want more, then do whatever it takes to be still, so that you can know God as God.

And only in this way can we be instruments useful to the Master, to proclaim his glory to others, so that He will be exalted in all the world.

Just a word here for the many of us who have lives full of service to God. Certainly it is extremely important to serve God. There is much to do for the kingdom of God. Indeed Christ saved us that we be zealous for good works.

However, the heart of the Christian life is not what we do for God, but what God has done for us and continues to do for us in Christ Jesus. Only as we

truly see this daily can we know God as God. Only in this way can we produce fruit for God's glory.

So let me close by urging each one of you: **do whatever it takes to be still**. Don't use others as your yardstick. Examine your own heart, and learn to still your heart and thoughts, to focus on God in Christ, so that you can truly know God as He is, not just doctrinally, but know Him for yourself, know Him in every situation, know Him in his glory, and in his power, and in his holiness, and in his mercy, and in his love, and in each of this other wonderful attributes. And knowing God is knowing God through Jesus Christ.

It is in truly knowing God as God that your heart will be satisfied, and God will be glorified in you.

Let us pray.

- 1) Thank YOU for who You are, and that you allow us to know You.
- 2) May we seek you, and know you more and more.
- 3) Show us the deceitfulness of so much which clamors for our attention.
- 4) Show us more of Christ as we seek Him.