

## **Know God and Make Him Known**

Discussion Notes – May 3, 2026

1. What's one thing you've been really passionate about lately; something you find yourself thinking about in your free time?

This week's sermon centered on one of the most foundational calls of the Christian life; to know God and to make Him known. Drawing from Philippians 3, we walked through Paul's radical declaration that everything in his life; his reputation, his past, and his accomplishments was worthless compared to the surpassing value of knowing Christ. From that foundation, three practical ways we make Him known were unpacked. First, we make Him known through our love. This is a selfless, sacrificial love modeled after Christ himself. Second, we make Him known through our faith. This is a bold, active faith that takes every thought captive, replaces lies with truth, and uses prayer as a battle plan rather than a last resort. Like David facing Goliath, we are called to speak victory before we see it. Third, we make Him known through our perseverance; pressing forward with action and movement, knowing that today's pain is preparing us for tomorrow's purpose. The storms we face aren't meant to bury us; they're meant to build us.

### **Read Philippians 3:8**

*"Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith."*

Paul wrote these words while imprisoned, reflecting on a life he had once built entirely on religious achievement. He was a Pharisee of Pharisees. He was educated, respected, and by every outward measure, successful. Yet looking back, he calls all of it "rubbish" which is a word in the original Greek (skubalon) that is even stronger than it sounds in English. He is making a deliberate, eyes-wide-open comparison: nothing he had accumulated or accomplished could come close to the value of genuinely knowing Jesus. This verse invites us to honestly examine what we are building our lives around and whether Christ is truly at the center of it all.

2. What does it mean to you that Paul says he "counts everything as loss" for the sake of knowing Jesus?

### **Read 2 Corinthians 10:5**

*"For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ"*

Paul is writing to the church in Corinth in the middle of a very personal conflict. His authority as an apostle is being questioned, and false teachers are gaining influence. But rather than responding with worldly tactics, he points to a different kind of warfare entirely; one that is fought in the mind. The "lofty opinions" he refers to are not just external arguments but internal ones. They are the lies we believe about ourselves, about God, and about what's possible. Taking thoughts captive is an active and intentional image. It means we don't just passively hope our thought life improves but we pursue it, challenge it, and bring it into submission to what God says is true. This verse is a direct challenge to examine what voices we are letting shape us on a daily basis.

3. The sermon challenged us that we make Him known through our love, our faith, and our perseverance. Which of these three areas feels most natural to you right now, and which one feels like the biggest stretch?

**Read Mark 11:22-24**

*“And Jesus answered them, ‘Have faith in God. Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.”*

Jesus speaks these words just after cursing a fig tree that withered overnight. This was an act that left His disciples stunned. When they pointed it out, Jesus used the moment to teach about the nature of faith: it is not passive, and it is not timid. This verse is not a blank check for getting whatever we want, but rather a call to a bold, trusting, expectant posture before God. The belief Jesus describes here is present tense; “believe that you have received it”. It means faith doesn’t wait for the evidence before it acts. This raises an important question of what it looks like in real life to pray with that kind of expectation, especially when the storm is still raging and the answer hasn’t arrived yet.

4. The sermon used the image of buffaloes running into the storm rather than away from it. How do you personally navigate the tension between trusting God in a storm and taking practical action through it? Do you think those two things ever feel like they’re in conflict?

**Read Galatians 6:9**

*“And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”*

Paul writes this near the end of his letter to the Galatians, a church that had been shaken by false teaching and internal division. They were tired, both spiritually and emotionally, and Paul knew it. His encouragement here is drawn from the imagery of farming: a farmer who plants in the spring doesn’t expect a harvest the next morning. There is a season of faithful and unglamorous work that comes before the fruit appears. The phrase “due season” is a reminder that God’s timing is not our timing, but His harvest is guaranteed for those who don’t quit. This verse sends us into the week with a simple but powerful charge - keep doing the next right thing, even when you can’t yet see what God is growing.

5. As you head into this next week, where in your life do you need to stop waiting and start moving, even if it’s just one small step?

**Prayer Points:**

- Pray that God would reveal anything you are holding onto more tightly than Him and give you the courage to lay it down and trust Him fully.
- Pray for bold, active faith in the week ahead. Ask God to help you take every thought captive, speak truth over your circumstances, and pray with expectation rather than hesitation.
- Pray for those in the group who are tired or in the middle of a storm. Ask God to renew their strength, remind them that their labor is not in vain, and help them take the next faithful step even when the harvest isn’t yet visible.

## Deeper Dive — Philippians 3

Philippians 3 is one of the most personally vulnerable chapters Paul ever wrote. He pulls back the curtain on his own past, his own struggles, and his own ongoing pursuit of Christ. As you study these three passages, read them slowly and resist the urge to rush to application. Let the text breathe first.

### Read Philippians 3:1–9

*“Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you. Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh — though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith.”*

Paul opens with a gentle pastoral reminder to “rejoice in the Lord” but quickly shifts into a sharp warning. The “dogs” and “evildoers” he refers to were the Judaizers. They were Jewish-Christian teachers infiltrating Gentile churches and insisting that faith in Christ alone was not enough for salvation. Paul’s response is striking because he wasn’t arguing ignorantly. He was the Judaizers’ dream candidate. He was circumcised on the eighth day from the tribe of Benjamin, a trained Pharisee, and by his own account blameless in keeping the law. He lists these credentials not to boast, but to make a point: he had everything they were selling, and he threw it all away. The Greek word he uses for “rubbish” is *skubalon*. This was a crude term referring to waste or table scraps thrown to dogs. Paul is not being politely humble. He is being forceful: on one side, every human achievement and religious credential imaginable; on the other, a righteousness that comes not from what you do, but from who Christ is and what He has done.

### Read Philippians 3:10–14

*“That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”*

Having declared what he has given up, Paul now turns to what he is pursuing. He doesn’t just want the power of the resurrection. He also wants to share in Christ’s sufferings and become like Him in His death. In the ancient world, to share someone’s suffering was one of the most intimate expressions of relationship. The phrase “I press on” comes from the Greek word *diōkō*, used in athletic and military contexts. It is the image of a runner in full stride, completely absorbed in the pursuit. It is the same word used earlier when Paul described himself as a “persecutor” of the church. The same intensity that once drove him to destroy the church now drives him toward Christ. Paul’s honesty about his own incompleteness is also significant here. He is not describing a plateau you eventually reach, but the ongoing, straining nature of the journey itself.

### Read Philippians 3:17–21

*“Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the*

*Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.”*

Paul closes the chapter with a call to imitation. The invitation to “imitate me” wasn’t prideful. Back then, values were primarily transmitted by watching and following those ahead of you. The “enemies of the cross” he describes with tears, were likely people within the Christian community whose lives had drifted toward comfort and self-indulgence. He grieves over them. The counterpoint is a powerful statement: our citizenship is in heaven. In Philippi, this carried enormous cultural weight. Philippi was a Roman colony whose citizens were very proud of their Roman citizenship. Paul takes that deep cultural value and reorients it entirely- your true citizenship, the one that defines your identity and ultimate allegiance, is not Rome. It is heaven. And from that citizenship flows a living hope: a Savior who will transform even our broken, mortal bodies into something like His own.

### **Deeper Dive Discussion Questions**

1. In Philippians 3:1–9, Paul lists his credentials not to celebrate them but to surrender them. What are the “credentials” (achievements, identity markers, moral track records, or reputations) that you find hardest to let go of?
2. Paul says he wants to know both the power of Christ’s resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings. We tend to want one without the other. What do you think it looks like practically to embrace both and have you ever experienced a season where suffering actually drew you closer to Christ rather than pushing you away?
3. The closing passage reminds us that our citizenship is in heaven, yet we live every day in a world that constantly bids for our ultimate loyalty through comfort, status, culture, and distraction. Where do you feel that tension most in your own life, and what does it look like to practically live as a “citizen of heaven” in your everyday routine?