

For the Worship of God
Acts 5:12-16, 20; 1 Pet 2:9
(Expanded Sermon Notes)



One of the most basic human needs is that of connection to another human being. When babies are just born we know the importance of connection to their mother. And as they grow in the first several months of life, we know that infants need to be held. Otherwise, all sorts of bad and painful psychological conditions can develop. Continuing into early childhood, the young child sees themselves as part of, or as an extension of, their parents. They delight in being with, playing alongside, and making their parents smile. The connection to the parent isn't just a preference it is a biological need. By the time we progress into middle school, we start asking the basic questions of identity. Who am I? What do I like? How will I express myself? These are important questions, but they are not answered merely in the vacuum of self-thought. Instead, they are answered in community. Middle school is often a time of shifting friendships and some of the first real joys and sorrows of human interaction. In high school, our identity is well on its way of being solidified, and our relationships can feel pretty stable. Yet, with new freedom comes even more time to be with other people. This pattern continues in college and is echoed throughout adulthood. Finally, when we hit the third third of our lives, our desire and need for interaction doesn't wane; it seems to increase. As our memory and physical ability fade, we need more than someone to just be with us. The simple truth is that we are wired for relationships, and one of our desires is to be known by other people. Yes, I know that some people are introverted and others extroverted. That doesn't nullify this truth. It just means we all need that relational connection in different ways and intensities. The interesting thing is that our desire to be known isn't a desire for others to just know facts about us. It is the desire to be seen, heard, and understood. It requires the valuing of time, presence, and personhood. We know what it means to have someone know things about me and to be known.

Yet, when it comes to God, we so quickly confuse the two, don't we? We talk in religious circles as if knowing facts and theological truths about God is the same thing as knowing him and being known by him. Yet, they are two very different things. Just think about the words of James, "Even the demons believe and shudder." (Ja. 2:19) God wants to be known by all people; that is why he sent his Son, Jesus. It is why he created humanity in the first place. It is why we long for the coming age when we will be **with** him. Why would we settle for anything less than an abundant life relationship with the living God? After all, that is what he offers and desires.

1. God makes himself known. (5:12-16)

a. How God has made himself known:

- i. Known before sin to Adam & Eve. (Gen. 1&2)
 1. God exists in relationship to himself through the Trinity. (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)
 2. **Out of an overflow of love and this sense of relationship within himself, he created man to know him in relationship and experience his goodness.**
 - a. He created a good world, not just one that was livable or tolerable.
- ii. Known to individuals (Noah & Job).
 1. Gen 6:8 **"But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord."**
 2. Job 1:1 **"There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job, and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil."**
- iii. Known through Abraham's family. → You will be a blessing.
 1. Gen. 12:2-3 **"And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."**
- iv. Known through the Exodus. → Cloud & Fire
 1. Exod. 13:21-22 **"And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. ²² The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people."**
- v. Known through the Judges.
 1. Jud. 2:18 **"Whenever the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge, and he saved them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge. For the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who afflicted and oppressed them."**
- vi. Known through the Kings & Prophets.
 1. 1 Sam. 8:21-22 – **"And when Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of the LORD. And the LORD said to Samuel, "Obey their voice and make them a king."**
 2. Isa 1:1 – **"The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah."**
 - a. Isaiah operates as a representative of God to the people.
- vii. Fully known through Jesus. → John 1:14
 1. **"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth."**
- viii. Continues to make Himself known through the church.
 1. This is something we have seen over and over again in the book of Acts.
 2. This is what we see happening in 5:12-16
 - a. **V.13 & 14 – "None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem. ¹⁴ And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women,"**

b. What was the purpose of the healings and miracles that we have seen in the book of Acts?

- i. The apostolic ministry is in the midst of the Jewish people, not just in the far corners of their own congregations. On the one hand, fear keeps “the rest” from joining the apostles, even though their ministry is viewed with respect (v. 13; on “the rest,” see below).
- ii. **Yet for others, the activity leads them to become believers (v. 14).** The tension of expression between these two verses suggests the presence of a combination of sources.¹
 - 1. **We have watched God make himself known in the story line of Acts in ways that are indisputable.**
 - a. Peter has preached in other languages (Acts 2), healed the sick (Acts 4 & 5), and even Ananias and Sapphira’s death are indisputable evidence of the presence of God.
 - 2. This is not new for God to work in mighty ways.
 - a. Consider Elijah and the prophets of Baal. (1 Kings 18:20-40)
 - i. **²⁷ And at noon Elijah mocked them, saying, “Cry aloud, for he is a god. Either he is musing, or he is relieving himself, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened.”**
 - 1. What a statement!!! LOL!
 - ii. **³⁸ Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. ³⁹ And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, “The LORD, he is God; the LORD, he is God.”**
 - 1. God will make himself known.
- iii. **Knowing God is the chief end of man.**
 - 1. **Knowing God in the biblical sense is not merely factual knowledge about God.**
 - a. It is instead living in an abiding union with God.
 - 2. The very first question of the Westminster Catechism is, **“What is the chief end of man?”** I.e., What is the most central purpose of man’s life?
 - 3. Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.
 - a. Ps. 86:9; Isa. 60:21; Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor. 6:20; 10:31; Rev. 4:11
 - b. Ps. 16:5-11; 144:15; Isa. 12:2; Luke 2:10; Phil. 4:4; Rev. 21:3-4
 - 4. **Another way to answer this is, “The main and most glorious purpose of any person’s life is the whole-hearted worship of God.”**

2. When we know God, we will worship Him. (1 Pet. 2:9)

- a. If the statement, **“The main and most glorious purpose of any person’s life is the whole-hearted worship of God.”** is true, then we are to be concerned for those who are not in a restored relationship with God.
 - i. **Why? Because they are unable to worship, know, and enjoy him.**
- b. **Missions exists because there are places where the worship of God doesn’t.**

¹ Darrell L. Bock, [Acts](#), Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 229. Acts 5:12-6,20; 1 Pet. 2:9 – *For the Worship of God* (Aug. 16th, 2026) Speaker: Kyle Bartholic

- i. This is called the doxological view of missions.
 - 1. Doxology literally means to praise God.
- ii. 1 Pet 2:9 – **“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”**
 - 1. The church is to gather together and proclaim the excellencies of God. → I.e., Worship him.
 - 2. The church gathers together to be reminded of the goodness of God.
 - 3. The church gathers together to be spurred on towards love and good deeds. (Heb. 10:24-25)
- iii. **In fact, God’s purpose in redeeming us is not simply our own enjoyment but that we might glorify him**, as Peter indicates by the word ‘that’ in the phrase *that you may declare* (cf. Isa. 43:7, 25; 48:9–11; Rev. 4:11).
 - 1. Seeking our own eternal well being—right though that is—could never provide a truly satisfying goal for life.
 - 2. The answer to our search for ultimate meaning lies in ‘declaring the excellencies’ of God, for he alone is infinitely worthy of glory. Redemption is ultimately not man-centered but God-centered.²
- c. **The need for missions: Man is broken.**
 - i. **“Christian missions makes sense only in the light of an existing abnormality or emergency in the conviction that an answer to a remedy for such a malady is available... The emergency is the fact of sin in the world which has over powered and infected the human race and which threatens the very existence of mankind there would be no need for Christian missions if sin were not a serious reality... Sin made salvation necessary in sin makes Christian missions necessary.”** – George Peters³
- d. **The purpose of worship.** → The theologian Robert E. Weber helps us to understand the tie between worship and mission.⁴
 - i. **“This passage (Eph. 1:18-23) is clear. Worship is not about me and my experience; it is about God and God's mission to save humanity and to rescue the world through Jesus Christ death, resurrection, and coming again. Worship is both remembrance and anticipation.** It has to do with the praise of God for God's mission to the world in the past, in the present, and in the future.”
 - 1. “God's mission is proclaimed and enacted in the worship of God's earthly community, the church, which embodies God's mission.”
 - ii. **“All of worship, the gathering of God's people - the preached word, the thanksgiving at bread and wine, the sending forth - all of it is God's mission.”**
- e. **Why do we value missions and not just local outreach?**
 - i. **Again, if there are places where the worship of God doesn’t exist, we are to be concerned for them.**
 - 1. We believe that God is good, and man is to know and experience his goodness in this life and fully in the next.
 - a. We also believe that if you do not come to know God in this life in a salvific way, you will not experience eternal life with God in the next. (Rom. 6:23)

² Wayne A. Grudem, [1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 17, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 118–119.

³ George Peters, *Biblical Theology of Missions*, p. 15.

⁴ Robert E Weber, *Ancient Future Evangelism*, (Baker Books, 2003), 161.

- ii. **Because Jesus commanded us to be concerned for the very ends of the earth.**
 - 1. **Matt. 28:18-20** - The great commission makes it clear.
 - 2. **Acts 1:8** – It is part of Jesus’ final instruction to the Apostles, and God uses non-Apostles like Philip to carry it out. (Acts 8)
- iii. **Because it has been the historical posture of the church.** ⁵
 - 1. One of the ways we can test if we are going off-track theologically is by looking back at how the church has historically understood something.
 - 2. **By 200 AD the church has expanded to 3 or 4 million people over the entire Roman Empire.**
 - a. Note: The Edict of Milan doesn’t happen until 313 AD, which made Christianity the official religion of Rome.
 - b. This means that over a 150 year period and during unbridled persecution the church grew from 120 to 3+ million.
 - i. **Gregory & Pantaenus** are two missionaries that are mentioned by name in this period.
 - ii. Gregory is a disciple of Origen of Alexandria (Egypt)
 - 3. **Post Nicene Era**
 - a. Martin of Tours (316-397) – Missionary to Southern France
 - b. St. Patrick (389-461) – Missionary to Ireland
 - 4. **Middle-Ages: (1054-1517)** Missions were a major effort by Franciscan Monks.
 - 5. **Reformation Era** – We see Luther, Calvin, Huss, and more prioritizing a missions mindset.
 - 6. **Modern Era** – William Carey, Adoniram Judson, & Hudson Taylor carry the gospel to the ends of the earth.
- f. **How do we as a church engage in missions:**
 - 1. Equip for local and global outreach.
 - a. Share the gospel in our communities.
 - i. **Prayer, care, & share.**
 - b. Send short-term teams.
 - 2. Support long-term Regional & Global Partners
 - a. Regional & local partners are those serving in the US.
 - b. Global Partners who are serving all over the globe.
- g. **How you can be engaged as a World Christian:** (World Christian – Someone who has God’s heart for the world.)
 - i. Aware and praying for missionaries.
 - ii. Supporting and encouraging missionary partners.
 - iii. Taking opportunities to go on mission trips.
 - iv. Engaging your local context faithfully with the gospel.

3. When we know God, we will talk about Him. (Acts 5:20)

- a. There is a simple truth that comes to the surface in Acts: “Changed people talk about what changed them.”

⁵ Cf. Robin Dale Hadaway, *A Survey of World Missions*, (B&H, 2020), 63-84.

- i. **We work for the common good of our neighbors so that we can share the uncommon news of the gospel.**
 1. The gospel is uncommon news because it is so countercultural. It states that God actually loves us, sees us, cares for us, and is willing to help us. Instead of the common logic of our day, where we need to find our truth or craft ourselves into whatever version that we think will bring lasting wholeness. The gospel says that the God of the universe esteems us so much that he will actually reorder and restore us out of his generous love. This is an uncommon message that we need to share.
 - ii. **Our actions and attitudes provide the foundation for our message.**
 1. It wasn't enough for Peter to simply perform miracles, the words of "this Life" needed to be spoken.
 2. **And this Life had to be spoken as well as lived.** 'Go and speak to all the people *the words* of this Life.' Of course, the words had to be rooted in the reality of the way the apostles were living and the work of healing they were doing.
 - iii. **But wordless symbols, however powerful, remain open to a variety of explanation.**
 1. From the very beginning, the apostolic **faith** has been something that demands to be explained, that needs to be taught.
 2. There is much to say, because people fill their heads with all kinds of half-truths or downright untruths.
 3. Things need to be spelled out carefully step by step: who Jesus was and is, what God did through him, how it all drew to its head the long scriptural story of God's people, what it all meant in terms of the long-awaited '**kingdom of God**'.
⁶Counting Suffering as Joy (5:41)
 4. Might the crowd note the apostles' arrest, which was a public act, and see their release, or at least their presence in the temple now, as a picture of God's deliverance? The resurrection, which the Sadducees deny, would certainly be part of the apostles' message (see vv. 30–31). The preaching would have come at dawn, since the temple is closed at night.⁷
- b. **General revelation vs. Special revelation**
- i. There are lots of god arguments for the existence of God.⁸
 1. **Moral argument:** Because we yearn for morality and ethics, there must be a moral agent.
 2. **Kalām Cosmological argument:** If something exists, it has a cause, and the universe exists, therefore something caused the universe.
 3. **Ontological argument:** It is more likely that there is a maximally great being than not.
 - ii. **The best that these can do is shine a light on the reality of the existence of the divine.**
 1. **We need the gospel to make the nature and name of God clear.**
 - iii. The *temple* was the appropriate place for such proclamation, not only because it was a well-frequented place but above all because it was the **place where God had chosen to make himself known** to the people of Israel.

⁶ Tom Wright, *Acts for Everyone, Part 1: Chapters 1-12* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2008), 88.

⁷ Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 239.

⁸ See William Lane Craig's Reasonable Faith for explanations on these arguments.

1. The phrase *all the words of this Life* is similar to ‘the message of this salvation’ (13:26; in Syriac ‘life’ and ‘salvation’ are rendered by the same word).⁹
 2. Again, they were not just to live in a way that demonstrated their changed hearts, minds, and lives, but they were to proclaim the message of salvation.
 - a. What is the message of salvation? → The resurrection!
- iv. **Do I feel prepared and equipped to share the message of salvation if an opportunity would arise?**
1. **Difference - How does Jesus make your life better?**
 - a. This is actually one of the most powerful things that we can share in our modern moment. We don’t live in a culture that is largely aware of inherent spiritual need (sinfulness). We are aware of the brokenness of the world, but not personal sin. So when we can tangibly and routinely point to how Jesus makes life better, more livable, more beautiful, and more peaceful, we provide a positive argument for the gospel that cannot be refuted or discredited.
 - b. This way of talking about the gospel and the power of Jesus also frees us from the pressure to be evangelists or theologians to explain our faith.
 2. **Need - When did you become aware of your need?**
 - a. Once someone comes to see Jesus as an option for salvation, we need to be able to talk about our need (sin). Specifically, we need to be able to articulate the moment that we became aware of our need and the feelings that came with it.
 3. **Invitation – What do you think about Jesus?**
 - a. Eventually, we need to get to the place of asking the question, “What do you think about Jesus, and are you ready to follow him with your whole life?”
 - b. We must resist the idea that good works or general politeness is enough to present the gospel with clarity or that people will just respond “on their own or in their time.”

⁹ I. Howard Marshall, [*Acts: An Introduction and Commentary*](#), vol. 5, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1980), 125.