

## **“See & Know” (John 14:5-21)(9.27.20)**

John 14:5–21 (NIV84)

<sup>5</sup> Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

<sup>6</sup> Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup> If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

<sup>8</sup> Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”

<sup>9</sup> Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? <sup>10</sup> Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. <sup>11</sup> Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. <sup>12</sup> I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. <sup>13</sup> And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. <sup>14</sup> You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

<sup>15</sup> “If you love me, you will obey what I command. <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever— <sup>17</sup> the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. <sup>18</sup> I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. <sup>19</sup> Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. <sup>20</sup> On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. <sup>21</sup> Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.”

### **The word of God for the people of God.**

Title: **“See & Know”**

LET US PRAY.

INTRODUCTION:

Have you heard the saying? “Seeing is believing.” Yes, I think that we all have heard that and maybe even said it at one time or another. It certainly seems to be true on the surface. And your personal experience probably testifies that it has been true on occasions. Is it universally true? We shall see. ☺ Remember back in high school algebra or geometry classes when we had to do proofs for theorems. Now, imagine a huge blackboard filled with a mathematical proof. There are equations after equations, algebra, calculus, and trigonometry. You may recognize bits and pieces here and there, but you can make no comprehensive sense of it. You can see it plainly enough, but you do not understand its truth. You do not know what is being revealed. Though you can see it, you do not know what is being proved. Let us say that our brother Doug is the one presenting the mathematical proof. We know him personally and know that he is a truthful and reliable person. He has integrity and he wouldn’t betray our trust in him. Also, we know he is highly educated and actually teaches math at Stockton University. So, we know that he is qualified to teach us math.

Still, after Doug covers the board with these equations and then sits down, what do we know? We see a tiny portion that we recognize. The proof was presented by a credible person, with whom we have a relationship and trust. We can see it all for ourselves and yet we cannot know it to be true. We may have faith that it is true, and yet, our knowledge is insufficient by itself.

Now, we could commit to learning this subject we call math, whichever particular discipline of math it may be. We would go to classes. Doug would break each element down into its basic building blocks so that step by step we build up from our basic foundation of trust. We would do the homework, the reading, and the practice exercises. We would join a study group and we would help each other with our personal hurdles. Eventually, we could come to a knowledge that the proof was true.

Too many people see spiritual truth but do not know, do not comprehend. This is bigger than the math proof on the giant blackboard. The knowledge of God is written throughout the Bible. The knowledge of God is written across the face of all creation. The knowledge of God will be written on every human heart. God our Father has been revealed through God the Son. God the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, who comes from the Father and the Son will testify about Jesus.

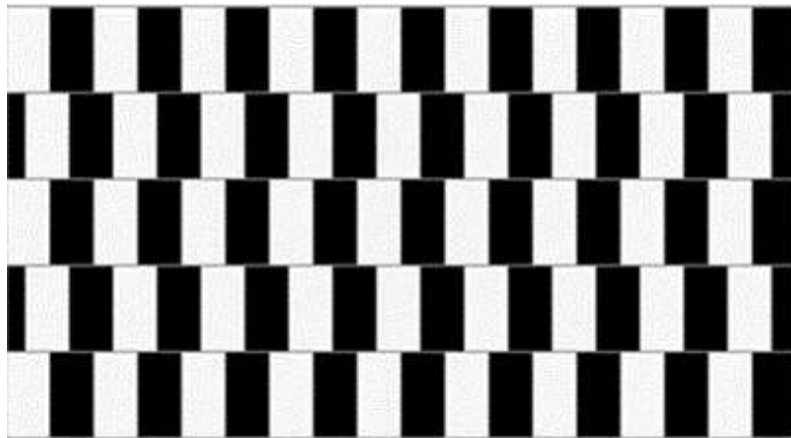
Some of you were blessed to be raised on a good faith foundation. Your families were disciples and they raised you right and took you to church. Others have a poor foundation or no foundation at all. Do we have teachers we can trust? If we are believers, the Holy Spirit is the best possible tutor of all. Maybe we recognize only bits and pieces of the Christian faith. Do not be the person that thinks, when I can understand God, then I will believe in Him. It doesn't work that way.

BODY:

In today's scripture, Jesus is preparing His disciples for his departure – his crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. It is too much for them to take in. Thomas humbly says, no Lord, we don't know where you are going. Philip is like, Lord, "Give us something to hang our hat on. Show us a Polaroid of the Father. We need to see something concrete. After all, if we see, we will know."

We tend to trust our eyes. They are our primary sensory organ for gathering information and knowledge, for learning. And yet, our eyes are quite limited. We actually see with our brains. Based on previous experience, what we see is processed through a set of filters in our brain. When there are incomplete pictures or those with some type of gap, our brain does a form of "auto-correction." Just like when our computer or smartphone autocorrects for us, sometimes there are errors. They can be funny. They can be serious.

Let us try a little visual exercise. Please take out the Prayer Insert for your bulletin and look at the back. You will see an image and the question, "Are the horizontal lines sloping or straight?"



I will give you a moment to see and know the answer. (Pause) Even if you answered correctly that they straight, it is not hard to see that it is a little confusing. Our eyes are tricked by seemingly contradictory information.

Jesus asks, "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Obviously, the

disciples have certainly seen Jesus up close and personal. They have heard his teaching; but, at this point they have yet to come to a true and complete knowledge of who is this Jesus.

How can this be? The disciples, like all the Jewish people, had a preconceived idea of what the Messiah would do when he came. It affected how they saw Jesus. They knew their holy scriptures, but more in bits and pieces than the full tapestry of truth. Their rabbis instructed them, but they too had various schools of thought that influenced how they saw the Truth. Then there were teachings and laws layered on top of the Holy Scriptures. Jesus was outside their experience and they had not received the Holy Spirit.

This chapter of John is a strong proclamation of the Trinity. We live in the Pentecost age, the pouring out of God's Spirit on all believers. We have the completed New Testament. We have 2,000 years of scholarship available to us. And yet, we have a hard time understanding the Trinity and explaining it to others.

Jesus tells them that they have seen the Father already because they have seen the Son. Then he explains how intricately interwoven the Father and the Son share their identity. He repeats that truth. Even Jesus' words are shared with the Father. The Father works through the words of the Son. Jesus says, "Believe in me; or at least, believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves." The disciples had seen those miracles up close and personal.

Then Jesus calls them to faith in Him for their kingdom work. In exercising their apostolic power, they will see Jesus; they will see the Father. The servant is not greater than the Master; but, it is God the Holy Spirit doing the greater work through them. We see that in the Book of Acts. The good news of Jesus is made known and the Church foundation is established.

God says, "Trust me. Then I will reveal myself to you." We want to be in control. We, the creatures, say to the Creator, "Show yourself. Then I will trust you." In fact, our Heavenly Father has revealed himself in the Lord Jesus.

Bishop Augustine preached: "As for the Lord's body, which could be seen with these eyes, it was not only the ones who revered him who saw him but also the Jews who crucified him. So if Jesus wanted to be seen in another way, it means he was requiring other eyes. And that is why Jesus tells Philip he needs eyes of faith. Jesus compels him to exercise his faith, so that he may be enabled to rightly see.

As Paul declares, 2 Corinthians 5:7 (NIV84) "We live by faith, not by sight."

This special vision is not possible without the Holy Spirit. The sight of faith also grows and becomes effective as it gains more experience. Maybe our brains will need retraining. There are different gaps to be filled in than those in the material world. That was the major challenge for the disciples. They had yet to develop that faith sight.

J. C. Flowsky wrote: "They knew, but they did not know that they knew. Jesus, however, will convince them of what they already know even though they themselves imagine that they are ignorant about it." The disciples had not connected the dots. They had not put the mosaic of the Messiah together. The same can happen to us. Even with all of our advantages, we still look through a glass darkly.

**We Believe in Order to Know.** Again Augustine: What does Jesus promise believers? "And you shall know the truth." Why is that? Hadn't they come to such knowledge when the Lord was speaking? If they had not, how did they believe? They believed, not because they knew but so that they might come to know. For we believe in order that we may know. We do not know in order that we may believe. For what we shall yet know, "neither eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered the heart of man [humankind]."

For what is faith, but believing what you do not see? Truth is seeing what you have believed. It is the truth, but as yet it is only believed, not seen. If you abide in what is believed, you shall attain to what is seen."

The word "know" is so common that we assume we know what know means. There are actually four levels of knowing. I will use a car metaphor. Of course, if we push the limits of any metaphor too far, we end up at a dead end. So ride with me a little bit.

The first level is to know facts. Cars are real. They are made up of many parts. There are tires, a steering wheel, an engine, a gas tank, lights, and all the other parts. We know that a car is used for transportation.

The second level of knowing is to have an understanding of the facts. We know how all the parts fit together and interact. We understand how the combustion engine converts gas and oxygen into mechanical power. Through the transmission and drive train, that power is transferred to the wheels. Nowadays, there are all kinds of bells and whistles, computers and technology. It makes sense to us.

The third level of knowing is relationship. We learn to drive the car. We learn about its peculiarities. We put gas in it. We clean and care for it. We do maintenance or pay someone else to do the maintenance. We may invite others to ride with us in our car.

The fourth level of knowing is intimacy. We have given our car a name. When we wax it, we are rubbing in a little love. There is a passion that we eagerly want to share, "Man, you should see my '64' Chevy II Nova. What a beauty!" It has been said that the best race car drivers are "one" with the car. They feel the road and know how their car will respond before they ever reach that high banked curve. There is a joy in the driving.

Our spirit craves that kind of knowing with our God. We need to know Jesus. There is no other way to know the Father unless we know the Son. And, God the Holy Spirit instructs us in the ways of Jesus. Our Creator has planted that seed of desire within our spirit AND He draws us towards him with cords of love.

The famous evangelist D.L. Moody explains: "A great difficulty with us is that the Spirit of God is not sufficiently alone with us. If we want to get the secrets of Heaven we have to be alone with God an hour or two a day. If we are continually in the buzz of the world, and don't give God a chance to tell them to us, we can't expect to learn them.

Why, it is when I am alone with my wife that I talk about my secrets, and so when the children of God are alone with Him it is then that He will tell them the secrets of Heaven. May the Spirit of the living God show us the deep things of the Scriptures. My friends, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not a matter of investigation, but a matter of revelation, and when the Spirit shows Himself to us in His beauty and loveliness, this world will look very small."

So, spending time with God is necessary to see and to know the Lord. We need time to nurture our eyes of faith and train them to see what the Holy Spirit is revealing. We commonly call this devotion time and or prayer time.

Jesus tells us here in today's scripture that He is with the Father and is empowering our prayers. When we pray in Jesus' name, in His will, in His character, in His authority, those prayers WILL be answered. The purpose is to glorify the Father. Jesus says to ask Him, to pray to Jesus. So, Jesus is saying to see Him, to see the Father, to know Him, to know the Father, ask for this revelation in your prayers. This is immediately followed by Jesus saying, "If you love me, you will obey what I command." This is not a random thought that Jesus is blurting out. It is expressly relevant to this context. First, notice Jesus says command, not suggest. He develops this connection between loving Jesus and obedience more fully in the next chapter of John when he calls on us to abide or live in his word. And, how do we know Jesus' commands and words? By studying our Bibles.

If we are in that loving relationship with Jesus, we are compelled to know as much as possible about Him. We want to live and walk with the Way, the Truth, and the Life. And in the knowledge of His teachings, and in the practice of obedience to those teachings, we will have a deeper and fuller knowledge and relationship. We will develop 20/20 faith vision.

Jesus goes on to say that believers will not be left alone. Another Counselor, the Spirit of Truth, has been sent to live within every Jesus follower and only Jesus followers. The Holy Spirit lives with and within believers. Try to wrap your thoughts around that – the God of the universe in an inseparable relationship with you.

Do not miss that faith in Jesus comes first. Charles Spurgeon made this observation: "Recollect also that you cannot see Christ till the Spirit of God opens your eyes. You are blind; spiritually, you are dead, and only the Spirit of God can make you live, and give you sight. Oh, that the prayer might ascend from every unsaved soul here, "Blessed Spirit, breathe into me the breath of life, that my dead soul may be quickened, and that my darkened mind may be enlightened, that I may truly see thee." May the Lord first give you that prayer, and then may he graciously answer it in your happy experience this very hour!"

Jesus continues to explain our connection with our Creator. Not only is the Holy Spirit living within us, but so is Jesus and our heavenly Father. Again, Jesus ties our obedience to our love, to our relationship,

to our intimacy. "On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you." Their love for us is guaranteed by Jesus.

Then Jesus will show himself to you. In that loving relationship; in our obedience to our Savior; then he will show himself to you. You will see and know Him.

#### CONCLUSION:

The Voice paraphrase makes this commentary:

"God becomes flesh and lives among humanity, not just to have a transaction with people and ultimately die, but to continue to be with them and send His Spirit to be present with believers. So God calls His Spirit-indwelled people to something greater, something more significant: they are here **as redeeming forces** on this earth; their time here is about reclaiming the things He has created. Believing God has created the entire cosmos and that it is restored in Jesus, the believer's work here through the Spirit is to say, "This belongs to God," and to help point out the beauty of creation to everyone. And most of all, to live in themselves by the power of the Holy Spirit who plants the teaching of the Lord in their hearts."

Are you submitting to the Holy Spirit so that Jesus is being manifested in you? Does your prayer life, your time in God's word, your kingdom work, your worship time, and your faith walk, testify to your knowledge of Jesus?

Have you seen Jesus? Do you know Jesus? Lord, make it so, we pray.

Amen and amen. Let us pray.