

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

Date: 17 December 2023
Services: *Across the Diocese*
Series: On that day
Title: We will know you
Passage: 1 Corinthians 13:8-13

- As I begin – there’s a POSTSCRIPT to last week’s message...
- We noted last week that for centuries, it was understood that you could not see God and live...
- And we recalled with great anticipation, that in the **new** heavens and the new earth – we shall see Jesus face to face – having been perfectly remade in his image.
- What I didn’t point out, is that of course Jesus’ **first** appearing – was an **anticipation** of that great day...
- In fact you’ll recall the words of John 1:14 - *The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. **We have seen his glory**, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*
- They looked on Jesus’ face... and saw his **glory!** //
- And yet – even **then** – there was still an awareness of one’s failings... so Peter says to Jesus once he comprehends who Jesus is – we read in Luke 5:8... that *he fell at Jesus’ knees and said, ‘Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!’*
- So yes – in the 1st century – since he was first in Mary’s arms – people saw Jesus.... as a promise and anticipation of that great day – when we shall see his face and know no guilt or shame or fear... only love and grace and compassion // for by Jesus’ death and resurrection, we shall have been made spotless and without blemish! ///
- Now – enough of last week’s message.... //
- **This week** – well – let’s recall the lyrics of the song again
- On that day, we will see You
Shining brighter than the sun
On that day, we will know You
As we lift our voice as one
'Til that day, we will praise You
For Your never-ending grace
And we will keep on singing on that glorious day. ////
- **So the line we’re picking up today is “On that day, we will KNOW you”**
- It arises – as do all these phrases – directly from God’s word – and this phrase from 1 Corinthians 13:11-12 - *When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. ¹² For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. **Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.***
- We know God in **part** now.... we know all we **need** to know to live with and for him in his **world**...
- But **on that day.... We will know fully!**
- So here’s where we are heading today! Very simply:

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- 1. What we don't know**
- 2. What we do know**
- 3. What we will know**

1. What we don't know

- There's a lot of questions we have **for** God – and **about** God isn't there...?
- why God is there is so much **evil** and **misery** in the world...?
- Why don't you put a stop to the **warring** and **fighting** in the middle East... and between Russia and Ukraine?
- Can't we do something – you do something - about the **domestic violence** situation?
- Why are people **struggling** so much – in our own nation – to make ends meet – but in far worse situations around the world... with people groups being oppressed, and children dying of malnutrition... and lack of clean water and decent sanitation...
- Why Lord?
- Why do you let the world go on as it **does**? //
- And perhaps more personally – and more painfully.... Why Lord – am I on my **own**; why did my child **die**; why is my family a **mess**; why don't I ever experience **happiness**; why the **abuse**... the **humiliation** I have gone **through**?
- Why don't my kids want anything to **do** with you....?
- And so on...
- **Many questions...**
- All **valid**... // **Understandable!**
- You know don't you what the **Bible** asks such questions... and that we are **welcome** to come to God with our **questions**....
- Psalm 73 – the Psalmist asks why the rich seem to have it so good...
*For I envied the arrogant
when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
4 They have no struggles;
their bodies are healthy and strong.^[a]
5 They are free from common human burdens;
they are not plagued by human ills.*
- Or Psalm 13:1 – a personal cry: *How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart?*
- Questions for which there are **no immediate answers**...
- Things we **cannot** know.
- And this is completely understandable... for **now**, we only know in **part**!
- Deuteronomy 29:29 says - *The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.*
- The secret things belong to the Lord... there will be stuff we **don't** know and can **never** know...

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- Job says after God had questioned him – (Job 42:3) - *Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know.*
- You may remember two weeks ago in these Advent sermons, when I quoted Jesus' words to the disciples in Acts 1:7 - *It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.*
- Yes – there are things now we **don't know** – we **can't** know – that are not **ours to know...** //
- For now we know in **part...** says 1 Corinthians 13. ////
- So what do we do with our questions? How are meant to deal with those very significant – sometimes very tragic circumstances??
- Well – we move from what we **don't** know to what we **do...**
- So let's turn **secondly** to....

2. What we do know

- Back to Deuteronomy 29:29 - *The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.*
- Amidst all we **don't** know and **cannot** know – there have been things **revealed** to us and to our children **forever...**
- To what **end?** – *that we may follow all the words of the law...* In other words – that we might live in **accord** with God's **will!!**
- That is – we have enough to **go on** to live **faithful godly lives** to the **glory of God!**
- And you might say – well – what are you talking about Mark... what **do** we know – what **is** it that has been revealed to **us?** ////
- God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son... so that whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life...
- There's plenty to go on just there
- Amidst all our questions...
- It is unquestionable that God **loves** us, God is **for** us... and that he has graciously **given** of his only Son....
- It is unquestionable that when we believe in Jesus – that means – shift our trust from ourselves to him – we will not **perish** but have **eternal life...**
- But I could go on with so many things revealed to us – in the whole Bible...
- Precious promises like when we run to God as our **shepherd**, there is **nothing** we **lack**
- And that when we walk through the **valley** of the shadow of **death** we will not be alone but God himself will be **with** us...
- Promises such that we can never escape God's presence and that he's known us since we were being put together in our mother's **womb....**
- And that the maker of **all heaven and earth** has promised to be our **helper**
- And that when we **run to God**, he is our **refuge** and **strength** and **very present help** such we need not fear even the most **challenging** and **difficult circumstances...**
- Or that the **fear** of the Lord is the **beginning** of **wisdom** and to shun **evil, understanding!**
- Promises such that he has given us his **Holy Spirit** who leads us to the **truth** about **Jesus** and **gifts us**

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and **empowers** us for **ministry**

- Or that when we keep in **step** with the spirit – all the fruit of the Spirit will be increasingly **seen** in us...
- Or that when we **confess** our sins, he is faithful and just to **forgiveness** us our sins and **cleanse** us from all **unrighteousness**...
- Or that we have been charged with being **ambassadors** for Christ with our primary message being “Be **reconciled to God**”
- Or that if God is **for** us – as seen in the gift of his Son – who can be **against** us...
- Or that God will use **all** things for our **good**... that great good of making us more like the Lord Jesus...
- And that nothing can **separate** us from the love of God which is in **Christ Jesus our Lord**.... //
- Yes, the **secret** things might belong to the Lord – but the things revealed to us – they are **many** and **precious** – and they **belong to us** and to our children **forever**... that we may live as his **children** in his **world**... ///
- However....!! /// now we know in **part**.... **Then** we shall know **fully**, even as we are fully **known**...
- So we turn finally... to

3. What we will know

- You know that phrase... you don't **know** what you don't know??
- I'm not sure we can know what it **is** we will know then... fully know... that we don't or can't know **now**...!! //
- Perhaps we will know the answers to some of those questions which I raised at the beginning...
- ... but perhaps 'on that day', **those** questions will no longer **matter** to us... be **relevant** or **significant**...
- I suspect that what we will know is not **information**...
- Not answers to **questions**...
- Not matters of **theology**
- Or questions of the **Bible**
- Not issues around the **world**....
- No – I suspect that this is a **relationship** term...
- We will know **GOD** – **fully**....
- We will know his love and compassion and might and majesty and mercy and grace.... More **fully**...
- We will **trust** him more **deeply**...
- We will **grasp** him more **completely**....
- And the reference – the **comparison** is – to the way God knows us...
- *then I shall know **fully**, even as I am fully known*
- God knows us **thoroughly now** – remember Psalm 139 –

*You have searched me, LORD,
and you know me.*

² You know when I sit and when I rise;

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you perceive my thoughts from afar.

³*You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.*

⁴*Before a word is on my tongue
you, LORD, know it completely.*

- **That** is how thoroughly God **knows us**...
- And God says in his word here.... Just as God knows US fully, so shall we know **him fully**...
- **Relationship**
- **Intimacy**
- **Closeness**... ///
- Can you **imagine**? ///

- Let me close
1. **What we don't know** – we don't and can't know many things... things Job describes as 'too wonderful for us to know'.

We are finite creatures – God is infinite... it is not for us to know the times and seasons he has set by his own authority... There are secret things – which belong to him.
 2. **What we do know** – we know plenty – which God in mercy has revealed to us.

In fact we know enough – he has revealed sufficient of himself and his plans – ... to **trust** him for those things we **cannot know**.

So we might well question Israel and Palestine and Russia and Ukraine – and my own personal sadness and tragedies... BUT – in the end – God has revealed sufficient of his love and grace and mercy and kindness for us to respond to those things by saying – O Lord – I just don't get it – but I trust you! – I trust your love... your plans – your purposes – which are higher than mine – and I trust in the end that you are the Good Shepherd who has laid down his life for sheep – and therefore I can trust you for all I don't understand – and know that peace which the world **cannot give** // which **passes all understanding!**
 3. **What we will know** - on that day... we know God fully – even as he fully knows us... we will know him **personally** and **intimately**... and **wonderfully**... ///

Yes, **ON THAT DAY** – when we rise – when we see him... we will also – **KNOW him!!**
