

The God You can Know

(Sermon Notes) By Warren Zehrung 10/28/2017

There is nothing more important than coming to **know** our True God and having a right **relationship** with Him. There is so much to know about God that it takes a lifetime of deep study to begin to know God.

There is one man who writes to me nearly every week saying, "Don't you get it – all you have to do is believe on the name Jesus and you will be saved." (Acts 16:31) He believes all the rest of the Bible is superfluous and not required. This sort of thing is nothing new as continuously there are naive approaches brought up again – like they had not been laid to rest long ago – which deny the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27).

How can we come to truly know and love God? He's so far away. He's so silent. He's so far away. He's so invisible. He's so elusive. Or, so some would think... But, it is God's intent to dwell with His people closely.

We of all people are most blessed **to know God**. We are most privileged to not only know of the True God, but to have a good relationship with Him.

There was a time when we – like most – did not know God. We are reminded not to forget our godless roots of which we were once a part.

Galatians 4:8-9 Howbeit then, when ye **knew not** God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that **ye have known God**, or rather are **known of God**, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

Paul says that we have come to know God... And then he says it a better way... or rather are **known of God**. There is nothing more precious than to realize that God knows us.

When God knows about our problems... they are no longer our problems. God's Will be done.

Paul says it both ways – **ye have known God** – and are **known of God** – to drive home the obvious point that our mere human minds could never contain even a small portion of the wisdom of God. The great **magnificence** and supreme **majesty** of God could never be contained in our cantaloupe sized craniums. It would be audacious and impudent on our part to even think so.

He is infinitely greater than man; therefore, we should not expect to be able to fully comprehend God. However, there is so much to know of God in the Scriptures that most people never avail themselves of that information.

Jesus revealed the Father to us, and He made Himself **known to us** who – at one time – knew **not** God. Jesus said:

John 10:14 I am the good shepherd, and I **know** My own, and **I am known** by my own sheep.

Jesus knows us for sure – but He adds that **we know** and have a relationship with Him.

As we rapidly approach the coming of Christ, we find more and more that this world is no place for us. We are being pushed to the side by this present evil world. The world **knows** neither **the Father** nor **Jesus Christ**, and subsequently the world does not know us.

1John 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the **world knows** us not, because it **knew Him not**.

This wonderful **knowledge of God** that we have been freely given should never be a cause for our becoming **arrogant** – and thinking ourselves to be somehow better or superior to others. Jesus was never condescending to those people that He taught and healed. We are sternly warned against being puffed up, prideful or arrogant because of the knowledge we've been entrusted with.

God has revealed Himself and the things about Himself to us through many, **many designations , titles, and names** in the Scriptures. How else would we know that He is **Almighty** God?

Jeremiah 10:6 Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O LORD; thou art great, and thy name is great in might.

Jesus tells us that when we know Him - we know the Father as well.

John 14:9 Jesus saith ... he that hath seen me hath seen the Father.

God has revealed Himself through many, **titles and names**.

Jesus is our Redeemer - Isaiah 41:14

Savior - 2 Samuel 22:47; Luke 1:47

Light of the World - John 8:12; John 9:5

Son of the Most High - Luke 1:32

Advocate - 1 John 2:1

Creator God Psalm 146:6

Holy One of Israel - Isaiah 41:14

Mediator - 1 Timothy 2:5

Jesus is the Vine - John 15:1

Everlasting Father - Isaiah 9:6

High Priest - Hebrews 3:1

Truth - John 14:6

Good Shepherd - John 10:11

Word - John 1:1

Anointed Messiah - Psalm 2:2

It is God's many **names** and **titles** that reveal so much about Him to us.

Bread of Life - John 6:35, 48

He is the Way - John 14:6

Passover Lamb - 1 Corinthians 5:7

Bridegroom - Matthew 9:15

Chief Shepherd - 1 Peter 5:4

Comforter - Jeremiah 8:18

King of Kings - 1 Timothy 6:15; Revelation 19:16

Brethren, where would we be without this **self-revelation** that God has given to us?

The Prophets of old employed so many **inspired** words, names and phrases to express the reality of God being shown them as they were writing the Scriptures.

2Peter 1:21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke [and wrote] as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

God gave His words and names to the prophets of old – for us to have and use them – and to come to know God by them. And **human language** will always come far short of describing the ineffable and inexpressible supreme God.

There is a word that we should know when we get to thinking that we know all there is to know about God.

I-n-e-f-f-a-b-l-e: It means too great, too tremendous or extreme, or too intense to be expressed or described in words or human language.

Romans 8:26 ... the Spirit itself makes intercession with groanings which cannot be uttered.

That is the way God truly is - too great to be described in words.

The folks of the Old Testament knew very little about God the Father. Jesus revealed everything that we know about the Father. We are speaking about **the God You can Know**. Jesus prayed:

John 17:25-26 O righteous Father, **the world has not known thee**: but I have known thee, and these [that includes you and me brethren] have known that thou hast sent me. And I have **declared unto them thy name**, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

Jesus says that it was He who made known to us the Father's name. Nowhere in the Scriptures, however did Jesus say, "The Father's name is _____." Jesus did say in:

John 5:43 I am come in **my Father's name**, and ye receive me not:

God's name does **not** apply only to God. His **name** becomes relevant to the saints **as well**, because at our conversion we were baptized into **name** of the Father – becoming Children of God (1John 3:2). God's name does not apply only to God, but to us as well.

Jesus says that he who overcomes will receive the **name** of my God... (Revelation 3:12)

We have received the Father's **name** in our forehead (Revelation 14:1).

About 20 years ago some Worldwide Church of God ministers wanted to take Matthew 28:18-20 verses out of the Bible saying that they were spurious and forged. They had postulated that these verses were added by some counterfeit gospel writer very late when the Catholic Church had introduced the trinity.

I was working with Raymond F. McNair in those days and he showed me where these scriptures were indeed found in some very early texts – indicating their validity. They are not Trinitarian in nature – but explain a great deal that only the Church of God can understand.

Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and spoke unto the [eleven disciples], saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

Matthew 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit:

Matthew 28:20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

As we just saw, we do have the name of the Father now because we were baptized into the Father's name. At baptism is when we first receive God's name.

Ephesians 4:4-6 There is one body, and **one Spirit**, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

And, as we saw, Jesus has the same name (John 5:43). And we are indeed baptized into their **one Spirit**. That is exactly where our spiritual lives originated – at our baptism – becoming Children of God.

These verses **do not teach** that the Holy Ghost is a third and equal person of the Godhead.

Ephesians 3:14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord [*kurios* – supreme in authority] Jesus Christ,

Ephesians 3:15 Of whom the **whole family** in heaven and earth is named.

There is only one God family and that personal name is Y-H-V-H ... usually translated as L-O-R-D (in all capital letters) in English translations of the Old Testament. (nearly 7000 times)

There is a name which has even greater significance and importance than that of any man or angel:

Philippians 2:9-11 Therefore God [the Father – *theos* – the supreme diety] exalted Him [Jesus] to the highest place and gave him a **name** which is above every name; that at the **name** of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

YHVH is composed of the four Hebrew letters Yod, Hey, Vav (or some would use Wah, but there is no "W" sound in Hebrew), and Hey – sometimes called the tetragrammaton meaning "the four letters."

Since ancient Hebrew did not possess any vowel markings (a,e,i,o,u), the actual pronunciation of YHVH can only be speculation.

We use the Bible that God has given us – in our language – and we know that these words of God are entirely sufficient unto our salvation.

This world in which we live is almost totally unaware of the great God who created it. Even "Christian" nations have mostly relegated God to the status of myth or illusion.

The Church of God recognizes that God is revealed in the very first verse of the Bible.

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God [***Elohim***] created the heaven and the earth.

God reveals the first of his many names as "*Elohim*," which means "Strong One," "Mighty One" or "Powerful One." Sadly, God's name is held in derision by the intelligentsia, the courts of law and the educational elite.

Genesis 2:4 These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD [*YHVH*] God [*Elohim*] made the earth and the heavens.

Psalm 8:1 O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy **name** in all the earth! Who has set thy glory above the heavens!

God reveals Himself to us through the Biblical names and titles He has chosen, in order to help us relate to Him. **God's names** represent His attributes, His character, His personality, His reputation, and His nature.

There is no more important goal for a Christian than **to know God** and become like God.

John 17:3 This is life eternal, that they might **know you the only true God**, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

Even now, we are set aside, and protected by the name of God when we hold it in reverence and obedience. Jesus prayed:

John 17:11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through **thine own name** those whom thou hast given me that they may be one, as we are.

Our attaining eternal life is dependent on our **knowing God and becoming like Him** – not just knowing and pronouncing His name in some obscure way.

If having a supposed special understanding or esoteric knowledge – that special name or pronunciation understood by only a small number of people with that unique knowledge, makes one feel superior to others, or specifically excludes others who do not know what you know – that person is practicing a form of false religion.

God's name is not magic or mysterious – containing some secret power.

****It is more important to live Christian lives of service to one another than to pronounce God's Hebrew names in an exact way.**

The question is whether God's spoken name is to be pronounced in a certain fashion, as compared to whether God's good Name, reputation and character are to be respected and honored above all others.

A **name** is a symbol of what a person stands for – what he makes of himself – his legacy. Each of us has only one name – one identity – one reputation – we leave only one legacy behind when we go... For our family's sake we want to have a "good name."

****The way God uses the word 'name' in the Bible carries much more weight of meaning. God's "name" means much more than a first *name*, last *name*, or family *name* would connote or suggest.**

****Indeed God's Name carries the highest dignity with it because it represents **who He is.****

His Name conveys a sense of **highest** standing above others:

It conveys a perfect report, the highest status, honor, prestige, reputation, repute, and respect.

Once we know the **meaning** of God's different names, the language and pronunciation used to express it are **incidental** at most. God will save people who come from all nations and languages.

Revelation 7:9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all **nations**, and kindreds, and people, and tongues [**languages**], stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

It was God who changed the languages.

Genesis 11:1 And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.

God poured out His Spirit on men of many nations and languages. When the message of the Gospel was being proclaimed on the Day of Pentecost, the apostles spoke in the languages of the "Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene."

God knows that the people of the earth speak many various languages. God has not confined the Biblical text to only one language. Indeed, the original text contains not only Hebrew but also Greek, Aramaic and Chaldean.

Acts 2:6-8 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in **his own language**. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in **our own tongue**, wherein we were born?

Jesus was made known to every language group in a way they could readily understand. Pronunciation and Spelling did not matter.

We refer to Him as "Jesus" because, as English-speaking people, we know of Him through English translations of the Greek New Testament.

The command is to "call on the name of the Lord," with the promise that we "shall be saved" (Acts 2:21; Joel 2:32).

Whether we call on Him in English, Korean, Hindi, or Hebrew, the result is the same: the Lord is salvation.

We speak of someone having a **good name** when their reputation is untainted.

It hurts when someone sets out to **ruin** your **good name** and **destroy** your reputation. There are so called "church leaders" who by abuse of their power to disfellowship - cut off my contact with so many of the brethren by trying to **ruin my good name and reputation** and my ability to genuinely and spiritually serve God's people.

A "name dropper" attempts to have doors opened to him based on another's reputation and status. Rather than "make a name" for himself, he attempts to hitch his wagon to another's star. ...The implication being that of attaching yourself to someone successful or famous in order to profit from the association.

God desires a relationship with His people that goes far beyond a perfect pronunciation of His name. God is Spirit (John 4:24).

John 4:24 God is Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

The human voice is incapable of uttering God's name correctly with its spiritual heavenly reverberations. We might come close to uttering His name with a right dialect, but God desires something else of His people - other than pronouncing His name just right.

Micah 6:8 He has shown thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

A concern that I have here has to do with the fact that some well meaning people understand the word "name" all too literally.

In English, 'name' means a word by which a person is known, addressed, designated, called, known or referred to.

Those who wish to limit **ancient names** by phonetics to a single dialect and pronunciation are overlooking God's intent.

Our primary concern is to understand the word of God, and then to live it.

An undue emphasis on a specific pronunciation of a specific name of God alone is a distraction from the true Gospel.

Some people treat the Lord's Prayer as a magic formula, as though 'Hallowed be thy *name*' had a specific power or influence with God.

The Bible teaches just the opposite.

God is far more interested in our hearts when we pray than He is with specific dialects or words (Romans 8:26).

That is because He is more concerned about our communicating with Him and speaking from our hearts than He is with a specific rote personal name we use at any given time.

It is possible to use the correct Old Testament name of God and still blaspheme His Holy name by making Him a part of an inappropriate situation.

God hears the prayers of His people from all over the earth – no matter what language they speak.

1Jonn 5:13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the **name** of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the **name** of the Son of God.

John is not speaking of the pronunciation or articulation of *Yehoshua*, *Yehweh*, *Yeshua* or *Emmanuel*, but what the life and teachings of the Son of God meant.

So, we know that if someone who speaks Spanish cries out "*Dios, socorro!*" (God, help me!), that God will understand him.

Because we are His children, He winks at our ignorance (Acts 17:29-30).

God has not revealed to our generation the proper vowel placement and sounds to even recognize how to pronounce His name in the original Hebrew.

How then can He be offended that the Spanish person used "*Dios*" and did not use His proper name?

We know for a fact that God will understand Him.

God is magnanimous and high-minded enough not to **prefer any one** of His many names over all the others, even if He does have one special name that He prefers – He has not made it clear that He **requires** us to use the specific name. He knows that we are incapable of producing heavenly sounds with human vocal chords. It is so much more important to live Christian lives as Jesus taught us to do.

Taking God's name in vain has nothing to do with how His name is pronounced. Is a deaf or dumb man denied the Kingdom of God because he cannot hear it or pronounce it in a specific way? I think not.

We take God's name in vain when we imply that God approves of a thing which He does not approve of.

We take God's name in vain when we imply that something is His will when it is not God's will.

I have seen too many times when someone substitutes their pet cause in place of the simplicity of Jesus Christ.

It serves no purpose in the fulfillment of God's will. It is not Christianity as God wishes for us to live it. I do not speak Hebrew or Greek – but that is OK, because that is not a requirement for salvation.

My German ancestors would not have said, "God." They would have said, "Gott." My grandfathers and great grandfathers had names like Jacob and Adam. Would Gott have heard their prayers? I suppose so. In fact, the English got the word, "God" from the Germanic, "Gott."

Is 'Dieu' in French, or 'Dios' in Spanish, unacceptable to God – I think not. Jesus called His heavenly Father, "abba," and it was acceptable to the Father! God the Father did not require precision of language from Jesus His Son.

"Jesus" is an Anglicized form of Joshua and Yahshua – so much so that the translators of the King James Version of the Bible got them mixed up.

Hebrews 4:8 For if Jesus / [should be Joshua] had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. Does that mistranslation invalidate the Scripture? I think not.

Where my people come from your nickname was listed in the phone book – because that is how people recognize you. Our nicknames are terms of endearment. Because of our love for one another, I never call my wife, "Sharon." But that is her name, isn't it? Is it insulting? No. Just the opposite.

The angel said that Jesus would be called Emmanuel.

Matthew 1:23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

But, there is no example of Jesus being referred to as "Emmanuel" during His public ministry – is there? Yes, Rabbi, Lord, Master, Teacher etc., Jesus was not offended – was He?

There was a man in Worldwide that insisted that Jesus must be called, "Eternal." Eternal, Eternal, Eternal, Eternal, Eternal, Eternal... – it was so obnoxious that you could not carry on a descent conversation with him.

I find that when someone says "Jesus" to me – He [Jesus] knows that I'm thinking about Him – praising Him – worshiping Him.

But when someone says Yeshua, YHVH, or Jehovah to me – I find that my thoughts are distracted away from the worship of the true God because I have to stop and translate, and figure out why the person does not speak in the language to which I am accustomed. The world to whom we send the Gospel message is also confused.

Besides that Y-e-s-h-u-a is a different alphabet than the inspired Hebrew text. "Messiah" would have been "mâshiach" in the Hebrew – where do you stop? The Hebrew, "mâshiach" means Messiah which in English is "anointed one" – or "Christ" in the Greek. How can one be acceptable, and the other not acceptable.

Jesus said in John 5:39 Search the [Old Testament] scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

In the OT Jesus was sometimes "Angel of the Lord, etc. The Old Testament was in Hebrew – but Jesus did not have any problem in referring to the Septuagint - written in Greek – often quoting from it. He used "*Theos*" in the Greek for "God" – and that was not taking God's name in vain!!!

The very purpose of our having been created is it to be in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27).

Sometimes people in the Church will say, "God looks just like us." There is so much more to the equation than that.

Ask yourself if you possess eternal life? God does. What of the strength, power, compassion, wisdom, mercy and love of God? What about His divinity and holiness? Does any man have the glory of God?

We must conclude that we have a good way to go before we **fully know** and resemble Almighty God.

Jesus is the precise image of His Father, and we are to become perfect – putting on the perfection of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:3).

Of course, in the flesh, we will not complete the task set before us of becoming fully perfect, non-the-less, the perfection of Jesus Christ is our goal to which we must constantly strive to attain.

Ephesians 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the **knowledge of the Son of God**, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

In the Book of Revelation God speaks of His Church as having **held fast His name** and having not denied His name. (Revelation 2:13, 3:8)

Our understanding what the Bible means by God's Name is very important for us. In the Bible, God goes by many divine names, titles and descriptions. God's names reveal who and what He is.

The first thing that Jesus taught His disciples was God's name is the holiest name (Matthew 6:9).

Our Father's names and titles that tell us so much about His awesome power, magnificent character, boundless goodness, supreme authority, and everlasting kingdom. That means that the way we live our lives must represent what God stands for.

We, the people of God – want to know all there is to know about God – as He is revealed in the Scriptures. We study about God, and we live His way.

We will continue this topic on The God You can Know – next time.

End: The God You can Know