



"...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead"

(Philippians 3:10-11).

Introduction

The knowledge of God which procures and is procured from the righteousness of Christ is not an optional piece of knowledge. It is the most mandatory knowledge about which Jeremiah spoke *"Thus says the Lord: 'Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord, exercising loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,' says the Lord"* (Jeremiah 9:23-24). Christ prayed concerning this knowledge, *"And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent"* (John 17:3). St. Paul lost everything for obtaining the excellence of this knowledge *"Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of*

all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ" (Philippians 3:8). About this knowledge St. John said "Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments" (1 John 2:3) and St. Peter wrote "as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue" (2 Peter 1:3). True knowledge of God exceeds the boundaries of this mere information about him to become a genuine true relationship with Him like the one Job experienced and described as "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You" (Job 42:5). According to St. Paul, excellence resides in the knowledge of God.

Knowing God

There are five requirements to achieving the knowledge of God:

- *Know About God*. Knowledge about God would include knowing His nature, person in the form of the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation of Christ, His death, resurrection and ascension and the rest of the information found in both the Old and New Testament. A good example to illustrate this concept is found with any couple considering uniting in marriage, they have to get to know about each other before getting to know one another. Such knowledge about God can be

obtained from various sources, to mention a few: (a) the Holy Bible (b) sayings of the Holy Fathers, and (c) the saints' biography. The Holy Spirit works in every Word in the Holy Bible turning it from mere lettered words into life and truth. St. Paul described God's word as "*For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword*" (Hebrew 4:12).

- *Believe in what you have come to know*. Faith is a multidimensional truth. There is:
 1. The faith system manifest in the creed and the dogma.
 2. Faith as a specific gift of the Holy Spirit given to specific people for specific purposes such as moving mountains and healing the sick.
 3. Faith in the sense of deep, inherent trust in God, His promises that He will not forget us and His power to protect and guard us "*I will never leave you nor forsake you*" (Hebrew 13:5). Faith or trust is a prerequisite in order to build a relationship

of any kind. You know that you know God when you are ready to carry out God's seemingly impossible, unfeasible commands. Examples of heroes of "the incredible faith" and trust are many in both the old and new testament. Abraham showed and proved pragmatically his trust in God when He agreed to offer as a sacrifice his only long-awaited-for promised son. Peter, the Apostle agreed to get out of the boat and walk on the water only by faith. Any mind boggling act is an act of faith.

- *Know God through the sacraments.* Baptism is the sacrament that gives birth to the new man in us. Confirmation is the gift of the Holy Spirit. Holy Communion is union with the Lord Jesus Christ through His body and blood. Confession is the cleansing agent from sin.
- *Build a two-sided relation.* Any relation should be a two-sided one in order for it to succeed. Establish this relation through prayer.
- *Listen to God's Voice.* God does speak to us and so it is important to train our ears to distinguish his voice from that of the world. God speaks through His word, father of confession, or even a friend.

Knowing the Power of His Resurrection

The Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ holds in its folds so much power and wealth described by St Paul in his Epistles to the Ephesians *"that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places"* (Ephesians 1:17-20).

- Power to forgive. We were forgiven by God through His death on the cross and received the power to forgive. He *"who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification"* (Romans 4:25).
- Power over sin. Christ's resurrection granted victory over sin. After the Resurrection, Satan was not stronger than us because our Savior had descended into Hades, bound him up and liberated the captives thus bringing Satan under

his feet. Anybody who still remains in bondage to sin has not yet experienced rebirth. *"Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God"* (1 John 3:9). Anybody who still thinks that Satan is strong has not experienced the power of Christ's resurrection. *"Away with you, Satan!"* (Matthew 4:10), I rebuke you in the name of Jesus, these were the Lord's words and should become our words with which to drive Satan away.

- *Growth in Christian virtue*. With Christ's Resurrection we received the potential to grow in His knowledge till we become in His likeness *"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord"* (2 Corinthians 3:18).
- *Power to witness*. Our role on earth, as Christians, is to preach Christ and witness to others. *"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all*

Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Christ announced it clearly that we are salt to the earth and light to the world (Matthew 5:13). It is for the salt to remain active and for the light to remain shining.

Having fellowship with His sufferings

"Whoever wishes to escape from tribulation, escapes from God" (St. Paul the first hermit). Pain is a blessing and brokenness a prerequisite in Christianity simply because God's power cannot be manifested except in our weakness that we may fully understand that it is not our might nor power. God allows the cross in our lives not just to see us suffer but for the sake of building our inner man. *"That we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead"* (2 Corinthians 1:9). God's power reaches its summit when our weakness reaches its maximum. *"For when I am weak, then I am strong"* (2 Corinthians 12:10).

Becoming confirmed to His death

To be confirmed into something, by definition, means to be fixed in habit and unlikely to change, firmly established by long persistence. That is how our attitude should be with regard to Christ's death. He died on the Cross for us to die to three main enemies: *"The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life"* (1 John 2:16). The love of the

world is enmity to God. St Paul said "*For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter*" (Romans 8:36) by nailing on the cross all that is against having Christ living in me.

Conclusion

The knowledge of God is the most excellent knowledge that one can aspire to obtain. We cannot obtain it through our own righteousness but through the Righteousness of Christ which will cleanse us and furnish us with the power necessary to know Him. Christ suffered, died and rose in order to grant us this intimate relationship with Him. The knowledge of God is precious and worth selling all that we have to obtain it: money, fame, position, and any earthly possession that would stand in the way of obtaining this knowledge. The examples are many of people who lost everything in order to win the knowledge of God and be found in Him. "*...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead*" (Philippians 3:10-11).

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