

Waiting On God Series: 4

The Place of Waiting

In many places through the Bible, it talks about 'knowing God'

- this is not talking about knowing about Him – there are many that know about God but do not know Him.
- It is not knowledge gained through much learning – we can have all the theory but still not know God – the Pharisees were a bit like this, they knew the Scriptures inside out and back to front, yet they didn't know God.
- Neither is knowing God following a set of rituals or traditions, however godly these may appear – this is just religion

When the Bible talks of knowing God – it is talking about a personal living relationship with God Himself.

We saw last time that Paul's great desire was to come to that place where he knew God in this way:

“Yes, furthermore, I count everything as loss compared to the possession of the priceless privilege (the overwhelming preciousness, the surpassing worth, and supreme advantage) of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord *and* of progressively becoming more deeply *and* intimately acquainted with Him [*of perceiving and recognizing and understanding Him more fully and clearly*]. For His sake I have lost everything and consider it all to be mere rubbish (refuse, dregs), in order that I may win (gain) Christ (the Anointed One), ⁽⁹⁾ And that I may [*actually*] be found *and* known as in Him, not having any [*self-achieved*] righteousness that can be called my own, based on my obedience to the Law's demands (ritualistic uprightness and supposed right standing with God thus acquired), but possessing that [*genuine righteousness*] which comes through faith in Christ (the Anointed One), the [*truly*] right standing with God, which comes from God by [*saving*] faith. ⁽¹⁰⁾ [*For my determined purpose is*] that I may know Him [*that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His Person more strongly and more clearly*], and that I may in that same way come to know the power outflowing from His resurrection [*which it exerts over believers*], and that I may so share His sufferings as to be continually transformed [*in spirit into His likeness even*] to His death, [*in the hope*]” **Philippians 3.8-10** (Amplified)

Paul made two statements about knowing God:

- he said that he counted everything else as loss, so that he could know God – he describes this as a priceless privilege
- also, he made it his determined purpose to know, or become 'more deeply and intimately acquainted with' God

listen again to how the Amplified translation describes this knowing God:

“*perceiving and recognizing and understanding Him more fully and clearly*” (vs8)

“*perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His Person more strongly and more clearly*” (vs10)

perceiving, recognizing and understanding – this is seeing Him more fully and clearly.

Job makes this statement after spending time in the presence of God

“*I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You.*” **Job 42.5**

The Bible tells us of many that saw God – Moses, Job, Isaiah, Ezekiel and John to name just a few

But how can this be?

The Bible also tells in Exodus 33.20 “*But He [God] said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live."*” - this was after Moses asked to see God’s glory.

How can God say “*no man can see Me and live*” and yet the Scriptures tell us of these ones who saw God and not just lived, but had their lives dramatically changed, like Isaiah.

“*In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.... (5) So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts."*” Isaiah 6.1-5

These statements at first glance seem to contradict each other but they do not.

The first (Exodus 33) is talking about seeing with our **physical eyes** – no man can look at Him with their physical eyes and live. There are probably only three in the Bible that saw God with their physical eyes: 1.) **Adam** and 2.) **his wife** – this was before the Fall of Man, before sin, and therefore they were not prevented. 3.) **Moses** – probably the only man to see God with physical eyes after the Fall – but he could only look at the Lord’s back and not at His face, and then he had to hidden in the crevice of the rock and covered by the hand of God as the Lord passed by (Exodus 33.22-23).

The subsequent statements are talking about seeing God with spiritual eyes. These men were ‘*in the Spirit*’ (Revelation 1.10) and they saw God, they were not the same after their ‘vision’. They had such a deep and profound sense, or understanding, of God that it changed who they were.

We use the terminology a lot of *seeking God* or *seeking His face* – we are talking about seeking Him in the Spirit. This is what Paul was getting at in the book of Philippians when he talked of knowing God. Getting to know God like this comes out of waiting on Him.

Last week we were looking at the psalmists prayer, he was longing after God like a deer panting for water (Psalm 42.1). Let us loom at similar words from another psalm.

Psalm 63.1-8

“*O God, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You In a dry and thirsty land Where there is no water. (2) So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory. (3) Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You. (4) Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. (5) My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips. (6) When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches. (7) Because You have been my help, Therefore in the*”

shadow of Your wings I will rejoice. ⁽⁸⁾ My soul follows close behind You; Your right hand upholds me.”

David, like Paul, knew that he could afford to lose his material possessions, his status and position – he can count all these things as loss. However he couldn't afford to live without that personal intimate relationship with God, no matter how bad it got. He only got into trouble when his relationship with God faltered.

We too need to learn this – our priority is maintaining that intimate relationship with God.

In his search for God, David mentions:

- looking for God in the sanctuary (vs2)
- seeking God on his bed (vs6)

In other Scriptures we read:

- people sought God in a cave
- in the House of God
- in the gospels we often read that Jesus withdrew to the mountain to pray
- Jesus taught us to go into our closets to seek God

So where should we seek God and wait on Him? Is there a right or wrong place?

To answer this question we are going to see what Jesus had to say on the subject:

Matthew 6.5-6

“And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. ⁽⁶⁾ But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who *is* in the secret *place*; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”

In these two verses we see that:

- Our seeking or waiting on God is not meant to be done in public where men can see and praise or thank us for our piety – that's pride (we want the recognition) and hypocrisy where we want to make a public show (the literal meaning of the word hypocrite is '*an actor*').
- We are to go into the secret place where only God can see us. Where we are alone with Him. Here there are no external distractions.
- This is often why we do not really have a breakthrough in waiting on God in a church setting – often we are conscious of what others are doing around us (distraction) or how others will perceive what we are doing (fear).

John 4.20-24

“Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, and you *Jews* say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.” ⁽²¹⁾ Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. ⁽²²⁾ You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. ⁽²³⁾ But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. ⁽²⁴⁾ God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

In these verses we see that:

- it is not necessarily the place that is important where we get alone with God – there is not some physical place that is right or wrong. But that we are alone with God – whether that's a private room, a mountain, the beach or on our bed
- it is the attitude of our heart that is important - 'in Spirit'
- our motive must be pure - 'in truth'.

We are going to develop this theme more next time as we look at some Scriptural and practical ways that will enable us to wait on God.