



Trusting the Transparent Guide

“True North” Series - #5

The presidential debates are history.

Millions of Americans watched – Most of us have our decisions made already – but we’re curious. One of these guys is going to be leading our country for the next 4 years. Who is John Kerry? Who is George Bush really? What kind of men are these guys?

We listen to the answers BUT we also watch the body language, the way they stand, expressions, how they write their notes, etc.

To put it into a sentence: “We want to know these men.”

Reality is: You can have all the statistics in the world about a person but you will only know as much about a person as they will let you know!

Want to share some good news with you today...

God is Knowable

In fact, God has chosen to let us know Him. He has revealed Himself to us. God Almighty is a transparent being...by his own choice. You might say He has opened Himself up and invited us in. How do we know that? That is a very good question!

Theologians answer that question of revelation with two answers:

- Through General Revelation

“For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.” – Romans 1:20

You and I can learn about God by studying creation. We learn about God’s eternal power and his divine nature. We see God’s creativity (different kinds of birds and fish and animals), his love of color (trees and sunsets), his care for detail (study the human body), his sense of humor... (don’t think so – go to the zoo sometime – Baboons with rainbow rearends, Hyenas that laugh), his power (wind and lightning), his immensity (the universe), his majesty (over it all), his love and compassion (allowing us to reproduce – children), and on and on.

But general revelation is limited. The personal element is missing. That’s

why we are thankful that God has also revealed himself in another way...

- Through Special Revelation

“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being...” – Hebrews 12:3

In two special ways God has allowed mankind to know Him – through his writings and through his Son.

- The Bible is God’s Word to us. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17) It is as diverse as his creation – poetry, history, stories, prophetic, apocalyptic are all types of writing that it contains – but it’s given to help us know Him and how to follow and obey and love Him.
- God’s Son (Hebrews 1:3 – mention error on reference in notes!) is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being...exact! Do you want to know what God is like? Look at Jesus! That’s what this verse is saying. (Never met her Mom? Look at her – that’s what her Mom was like!)

God is knowable! That is an awesome discovery. In fact, once you make that discovery and let it marinate in your mind for a while – it can change your life!

But it even gets better!

God Invites You To Know Him

“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with me.” –

Revelation 3:20

Just think about this for a minute...God is saying, “I’m knocking at your heart. I’d like to come in. I’d like for us to talk, really talk, the kind of conversation that people have over dinner.” Are you interested?

What if your doorbell rang and you answered the door and there stood John and Patricia...Kerry. No camera crews, no secret service agents, just the Kerrys. If they said, “Hi, we’re the Kerrys. We’d like to come in, if we

could, and here your concerns for the country and share some of our ideas.” Even if you weren’t planning on voting in that direction, wouldn’t you let them in? What an opportunity!

God is doing the same thing to you every day of your life! He wants to share your life with you! He invites you to know Him!

In fact, (no slide of this...)

*This is what the Lord says:
Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom
Or the strong man boast of his strength
Or the rich man boast of his riches,
But let him who boasts boast about this:
That he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord.... (Jeremiah 9:23, 24)*

God invites us to have a relationship with Him! A relationship that we can be proud of! When everybody’s bragging about their Ph.D.’s or their BMW’s or their PR’s God says that you can say, “I know God.” Even if you have the PhD, the BMW or the PR – there is nothing intrinsically wrong in having those things – the point God makes is that knowing Him trumps them all!

I have a confession to make this morning.... I am a Packer fan. Sorry, not a Green Bay Packer fan (Heavens No!) A J.I. Packer fan...!!

*Now when the New Testament tells us that Jesus Christ is risen, one of the things it means is that the victim of Calvary is ... loose and at large, so that anyone anywhere can enjoy the same kind of relationship with him as the disciples had... (J. I. Packer in *Knowing God*)*

This relationship...what is it going to be like?

Spiritual, not “Flesh and Blood”

You are going to connect with God on the level of your spirit, not like you do with other people. (John 4:24) Jesus went back to heaven so that He could be with everybody at once rather than being limited by a body!

Scriptural, not Original

Your primary connection to hear from God is going to be His Word. Don't expect or count on visions or voices! Sometimes God chooses to use some extra-types like that but it's not the norm. Don't expect it. Let His Word be your source of communication.

What are you going to learn about God? You'll never exhaust what there is to know as long as you live! That's good!

God's Essence

Spirituality, Self-existence, Immensity, Eternity

God's Attributes

Holiness, Truth, Love, Righteousness, Justice

But what if He finds out who I am? What if He learns about some of my things that I'm not real proud of? More good news... He knows them already and He is still interested in having a relationship with you!

You Are Known By God

"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me – just as the Father knows me and I know the Father – and I lay down my life for the sheep." – John 10:14, 15

When you open the door of your heart to God one of the first things He will do is help you with your "stuff." When you're around God you are going to want to be clean and He is interested in helping you with anything – big, small, whatever! (Isaiah 1:18)

Through faith in Christ's work on the cross you can take off the old clothes of guilt and shame and put on a whole new set of forgiveness and grace!

Knowing God and being known by Him. What does it produce in us? Let's close with these...

Humility (People who know God are humble)

Worship (They also worship; they can't help it!)

Courage (Let's add one more to your notes... when you know that you are walking through this life with God then nothing you have to face is more than you can handle.)

There are a lot of things in this life to learn:

How to use your cell phone

How to understand your kids

How to organize your life

And you have to work on all of those...

But there is one ultimate goal above them all – to know God.

On January 7, 1855 a British pastor, C.H. Spurgeon, (incredibly only 20 at the time) opened his message with these words. I'd like to close with them...

"It has been said by someone that the proper study of mankind is man. I will not oppose the idea, but I believe it is equally true that the proper study of God's elect is God; the proper study of a Christian is the Godhead. The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy, which can ever engage the attention of a child of God, is the name, the nature, the person, the work, the doings, and the existence of the great God whom he calls his Father."

This message was originally presented on Sunday, October 17, 2004 by Pastor Mark Coughlin at Immanuel Church of Forest Lake, Minnesota.

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