

FIVE FORKS BRETHREN IN CHRIST CHURCH

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SERMON: *Knowing Jesus*
SERIES: *Knowing, Loving & Following Jesus*
SCRIPTURES: *Philippians 3:7-11*
SPEAKER: *Shaun Kipe*
DATE: *1 - 6 - 2018*

**Credit to Ralph Martin (Commentary on Philippians)*

Well good morning and Happy New Years. It is so great to worship with you this morning.

I know many of you are making New Year's resolutions. Often resolutions have to do with health and fitness. A lot people into devices that help you track your fitness. Heart rate monitors, tracking your steps, calorie intake. Like Apple watches, fitbits. But I've also noticed there are a lot of people who are finding ways to cheat their devices. You know, like if you're wearing a watch and you just move your arm really fast, you can cheat your device into thinking you're actually working out, when really you're not. Someone sent me this video on Facebook a few weeks ago...

VIDEO:

<https://www.facebook.com/greensandproteins/videos/2186079461630145/UzpfSTEWnjgyODYyNjc6MTAyMTQ5MzgONTIONjkzMTE/>

I'm pretty sure that doesn't count.

But I was thinking that one of the reasons we like New Years, is because we have a chance at a fresh start to the New Year. Whether it's with our diet or physical fitness or in our relationships or certain habits and routines in our lives. It's a chance to think about "who am I becoming? What do I want as part of my life?" But for these

things to actually have effect we can't cheat the system. To actually become healthy, you can't cheat the system.

And I was thinking the same is true for us as a church. The beginning of the year is good time to think about

WHO WE ARE? What does it mean to be Five Forks church in 2019? How are we impacting our community? And we can't cheat the system. There are no short cuts to becoming the church we want to be.

Staff has had conversations about this. Church board has had conversations about this.

Many of you came out yesterday to hear Alan Robinson, the BIC National director, talk about how our denomination is working through some of this as well. Thinking about our past, where we've come from and then looking forward to who are we becoming.

And there is a word you are probably starting to hear more and more. As BIC, one of the major influences on our core identity has been **Anabaptism**. You'll hear more about this word in the year ahead.

But I just want to say this right from the start and this is really important to understand...the reason that the Anabaptist tradition has resonated with the staff and with our church board is because of the significant **emphasis** on **Jesus**. Christocentric. It's not that we are in love with Anabaptism. It's that this part of our heritage, emphasizes Christ-centered faith. And we think that's awesome!

As opposed to emphasis on say **LOVE** or **MISSIONS** or **THE BIBLE**. It's not that those things are not important to us. You'll come to see very quickly that they are. It's just that we see all of these other important concepts through the lens of Jesus.

We love the BIBLE, because it points us to Jesus. We LOVE God and Others, (as the two greatest commandments) because Jesus first loved us. It flows from him. We do missions, not because we're trying to convert people to our religious system. But because we want share the Good News about walking through life with Jesus, with others. Jesus is at the center.

And so, this morning we are beginning with this series called "Knowing, Loving and Following Jesus". This Anabaptist emphasis that puts Jesus at the center of life. Becoming the church, this little group of people in southern Franklin county, knowing, loving, following the Master of life. **(Series Title Slide)** No cheats.

We want this phrase to be at the core of who we are as a church, so much so that it motivates what we do as a church.

Why a food pantry and closet...for us it starts with...knowing, loving & following Jesus.

Why sign up to be a greeter or serve in our nursery?

Why serve in youth or children's ministry?

Why help with our work projects ministry?

The red card in the seat in front of you.

Why do you get up to come and worship on Sunday morning, when many of your neighbors are sleeping in?

...Because we are just a church that wants to know, love and follow Jesus.

So this morning, we want to take a few minutes and just talk about the first part of the phrase: **Knowing Jesus.**

What does knowing Jesus mean for Five Forks Church?

And so to get us started, I just want to read you one of my favorite passages on knowing Jesus in all of the Bible. This is found in the book of Philippians.

A little bit of background on Paul. Right before the passage that we are about to read about knowing Jesus...Paul, takes a few minutes to list all of his most important accomplishments. He even challenges anyone to try measuring up to him. If anyone else thinks they are important, I have way more reason.

I come from the Tribe of Benjamin...I have a good, strong **family name**. (Kardashian, Bieber)...I'm a Pharisee. Religious **leader**. Means, he was probably **educated** in the best Jewish schools (PHD), he had lots of **authority**, probably doing pretty well for himself **financially**. He says, I was circumcised on the eighth day...probably not an argument many of us use today about how important we are. But in that day, it meant, he followed the Jewish laws. He even sums himself up by calling himself **blameless**. Ali – I am the greatest! I have mastered life.

And then right after that...he follows it with...

Philippians 3:7-11 - ⁷ But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss ...because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him... ¹⁰ I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection...

We spend most of our lives learning to know all kinds of stuff.

Pre-school starts around age three, you are in school until at least 18. 180 days every year. 8 hours a day just “knowing”: reading, writing, math, science.

In this world, you can learn how to ride a bike, drive a car or send a rocket into space. And in our world today, that information is right at your finger tips. Ever heard of youtube. You can learn anything on youtube. Just this Christmas our boys got a Nintendo Switch gaming system. Open this thing up, no instructions. Did you notice, nothing comes with instructions anymore, cause it's all on youtube. I like to think I'm an educated, intelligent person. And I'm sitting there no idea how to use thing. So you know what I do. Youtube. Little six year old boy on youtube telling me how to use this game system. All kinds of knowledge on youtube!

Most of our relationships are built around knowing other people. There is knowing to be a teacher, knowing to be a doctor, knowing to be an athlete and knowing to be a parent. Those are all great accomplishments...

But Paul says there is one kind of knowing that should be at the center of all knowing, and that is "knowing Jesus." So three things I want to say about knowing Jesus.

1. Know-ing Jesus is a process.

You'll notice the phrase that Paul's uses here ends in -ING. "knowing Christ Jesus my Lord." And I love this because -ing implies, something that is in process, not completed. I haven't mastered it yet, I'm still learning. In fact, when Paul writes these words to the church in Philippi he has been in the process of knowing Jesus for about 30 years already. And he's still in process.

When I was younger we used to sing this song... "He's still working on me...to make me what I ought to be." Whether you are 5 years old or 95 years, or somewhere in between...whether you started your journey to know Jesus last week, or last decade or several decades ago, what you will find at Five Forks is a group of people all in the process of knowing Jesus and we are all at different places on that journey.

Wherever you are in the process, it's ok. You are not expected to know everything or to have learned everything about Jesus or your faith. We are a community of learners.

Perhaps more than anything else, just to be really practical about what this means is that we expect you to ask lots of questions. **QA@ffbic.org**

As you listen to messages, sit in Sunday school, as you interact with co-workers, as you watch the news, as you do life...and you filter life through the lens of Jesus...it should cause you to ask questions. No question is off limits.

What do I do with the gruesome war stories in the Old Testament?...I'm in process. Why are there all of these laws in the OT that we no longer follow today?...I'm in process.

What does Jesus have to say about my failures or my worth as a person ...I'm in process.

What does Jesus have to say about my language...I'm in process.

Second, knowing Jesus involves both head knowledge and heart knowledge... There are different ways of talking about knowing Jesus, and we just think both are so important.

2. Head knowledge

There is **head knowledge**. I kind of think of head knowledge as classroom knowledge. It's fact or information.

Let me give you an example of head knowledge, I'll just use my wife Jenny (cause she's not here). Head knowledge about Jenny would be things like...

Jenny is a Spanish teacher at the Waynesboro High school.

Jenny is a mom of three kids.

Jenny's favorite coffee is Dunkin's chocolate glazed donut coffee

Jenny has brown hair.

Jenny has brown eyes.

Jenny is 34 years old.

Jenny weighs...hahahaha...I'm just kidding.

It's head knowledge. Head knowledge is just so important. We live life based on the knowledge that we have about life and the world around us.

Probably nobody in this room knows less about cars than I do. When I go to a mechanic the number one thing I am looking for is someone with head knowledge about cars. So that when I say, "My car makes this sound." The mechanic says, "Oh yeah, that is your BLANK making that noise."

When I go to the doctor, I want a doctor with head knowledge. If I walk into the doctors office and the plaque on her wall says, "**Graduated average in her class.**" "**World's okayest doctor.**" I'm not sticking around. I want a doctor who has book smarts.

Have you been to Hershey Park? They have these newer rides their called the Triple Towers (**PIC OF TRIPLE TOWERS**). You strap yourself in this seat, it takes you 189 feet into the air. Tallest ride in the park and holds you suspended in the air for several seconds. Just at the moment when your beginning to wonder, if the ride is stuck. It drops you...feels like your seat just dropped out from under. Scream your brains out. You want to know, what I want to know about that ride...I want to know that engineer who designed that thing, every inch, was the smartest guy in the world.

When you go to an accountant, hire a coach, when you're looking for a plumber...you want someone with head knowledge.

Knowing Jesus is an intellectual and academic pursuit. We are going to ask you to use your brain here at Five Forks, in order to know Jesus. Just way too many people, following Jesus, but not engaging their brains in the process.

...many people now believe you do not need to think deeply and carefully to follow Christ. C. S. Lewis has a very penetrating comment to make about this matter: If you are thinking of becoming a Christian, I warn you, you are embarking on something which is going to take the whole of you, brains and all... (Dallas Willard, quoting Lewis's *Mere Christianity*)

The Barna Research Group has done research on followers of Jesus and head knowledge. You ready for this...60 percent of us cannot name one of the Ten Commandments. One out of three people who follow Jesus cannot name the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John)...the very books of your Bible that tell about Jesus life. Seventy-five percent believe the saying, "God helps those who help themselves" is in the Bible. (It's not. It was Ben Franklin, not the Bible.) Twelve percent believe Joan of Arc was Noah's wife. I'm not even making that up. "Mrs. Ark." Twelve percent of the people. (Ortberg – Barna Group)

Now imagine someone saying they are giving their life Jesus, they're building the life around Him. They have committed their life to him, they want to be transformed by him but they don't know anything about him. That would be crazy.

When Jesus lived on this earth he was referred to using the title Rabbi. It's a word that simply means teacher. Jesus came as a teacher of information about how to live life.

Class is now in session. Head knowledge about our faith is vital.

On those days when I struggle with self-confidence. Head knowledge reminds me that I am created in the image of Creator. I am not simply a glob of particles that is the result of blind chance. I am fashioned, beautiful, worthy. That God so loved the world he gave his life for me.

Head knowledge about Jesus lets me know that when I admire a sunset or look out over the expanse of the ocean it...that this is the heavens declaring the glory of God. Head knowledge reminds me that when I screw up, mess up, fall short, Jesus forgives 70x7, he forgives to the point of a cross.

Head knowledge reminds me that when I see injustice, when children are left without homes, when young ladies are sold into sex trafficking, when rich exploit the poor. It's not the end. Jesus promises there is more to this life. There is King who will set things right. Sometimes, I just hang on to that head knowledge.

There is no head knowledge like head knowledge about Jesus.

There are all different kinds of ways you can do this:

- Become a student of Jesus. Take the first couple months of the year and read through the 4 Gospels. The stories about Jesus' life. In three weeks will be diving into an entire series on the Sermon on the Mount. Do you know who wrote the Sermon on the Mount? Jesus. Do you know where it is in your Bible? All the sermons you've heard in your life, do you know the one Jesus preached. Matthew 5-7 start reading it, learning it, know what Jesus said about life.
- Join a Sunday school class or a small group. Get together with other people so you can study together.
- And I'll just say this, you'll probably hear me say this a lot, but it relates so much to the importance of head knowledge. You need to become a "reader" or podcast listener. We live in an age where there is so much good information

available to you, you need to find ways to gain head knowledge about your faith. There is also a lot of bad information out there. If you're unsure, ask!

But it is also important to remember that Jesus is not a concept or a system. He is a person. And so, knowing Jesus isn't just about head knowledge. It is not sufficient to simply be able to quote facts and information about Jesus.

Knowing Jesus must include

3. Heart Knowledge

Heart knowledge is the personal knowledge you know about someone by being with them, talking to them, doing life with them. One of the emphasis of knowing Jesus in the Anabaptist tradition is that we believe knowledge is gained through personal **experience**.

In fact the Greek word Paul uses here in Philippians, when he talks about knowing Jesus, is the Greek word **ginosko**. This word implies an experiential, personal kind of knowledge.

I could list all of the facts in the world about Jenny. But you will never know Jenny the way I do, because I experience life with her. It's not just that Jenny's favorite coffee is Dunkin's chocolate glazed donut...I can tell you how she makes her coffee, how much cream, no sugar, what cup she'll put it in, what time of day she'll drink it. I can tell all of the reasons why she drinks her coffee this way. I can tell you what happens in the Kipe household when Jenny doesn't get her coffee. That's heart-knowledge gained through experience.

Some of you in here have teenagers just learning how to drive and you know there is a difference between reading the drivers manual (head-knowledge) and sitting behind the wheel (heart-knowledge). That manual is so important. Gives you all kinds of

head knowledge about your car. You can even sit in that car with your teen and go over all of the controls. But your teen will never fully know how to drive, until they sit behind that wheel and start heading down the road. You learn some things by experience.

Imagine you're going in for major surgery and as they lay you back in the chair, you hear the doctor say, "I'm really excited about this, after 8 years of medical school, finally this will be my first attempt on a real person."

There's a really awesome story in the Gospel of John. There is a man who is born blind. And in the ancient world, there was a stigma attached to physical ailments, that somehow people suffer physically because they made God mad. Big theological discussions about this. And in this story when people see this blind man they even ask, **"who sinned this man or his parents that he was born blind?"** Jesus heals the man.

And religious leaders get all upset, because Jesus heals him on the Sabbath and that's forbidden. And they so they begin asking this poor blind man. **Who healed you? Was it today on the Sabbath? Doesn't he know the laws? He must be a sinner.**

And if you can kind of picture, a bunch educated, religious, elites, you know with tons of head knowledge about God and how to follow all of the religious rules. They try trapping this poor blind man in these deep theological conversations. And this poor blind man, who isn't familiar with all of the religious rules or theological debates. The poor guy can't even read. What kind of theology of Jesus does he have? And his response is just priceless.

²⁵ He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know.

"I know I can't get into deep theological debates with you."

One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!”

That is experiential knowledge! I have experienced him, his love and compassion. For years, I couldn't see...all I know is...now I can.” I'll stand up for him. I'll give my life to him.

Personal experience, heart-knowledge is so powerful. It is life-transforming. You cannot argue with this man's theology of Jesus.

Knowing for the sake of living.

1 John 2 - ³ We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands...This is how we know we are in him: ⁶ Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.

Sometimes Christians get the wrong idea about the purpose of knowing Jesus. So often it turns into: “knowing Jesus so I can get to heaven someday.” But John says, it's so much more than that, it knowing Jesus in such a way that I begin to live like Jesus. It's knowledge that is to be put into practice.

It's more than sitting in a sermon on Sunday morning or memorizing John 3:16. It is your personal story of meeting and walking through life with Jesus.

Head knowledge says **“Do unto others as you would have them do to you.”** Wow what a phrase. Did you know Jesus that Master of life says that. It's head knowledge. Heart knowledge is when you start doing for others what you would have them do for you.

There is this great story, classic story, of Jesus, washing the feet of his disciples. Do unto others...Jesus does this. He takes head knowledge turns into heart-knowledge. Practice it, experience it.

The other day, we're having leftovers for dinner. There is only scoop of mashed potatoes left. It's Landon's favorite. But Keagan breaks down in tears he wants the mashed potatoes. No Joke, Landon says, "Keagan can have." Do unto others...

Head knowledge says, "**Forgive 70 x 7**". You remember Jesus' hanging on a cross, soldiers and deserters and all kinds of church people gather around to mock and do you know what he says, "Father forgive them." Head knowledge to heart knowledge.

There is someone in your life, who has hurt you. Can you take this head knowledge and turn into heart knowledge?

Head knowledge says, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God." Heart knowledge is when you put filters on your computers/televisions or mobile devices to keep your eyes pure...you begin to experience the blessing of keeping your eyes pure.

Head knowledge is a story about Jesus asking a young boy to give up 5 loaves and 2 fishes, so that Jesus can use this meager offering to feed thousands. Heart knowledge is realizing you are now that young boy, whom God wants to use as his vessel of abundant sharing. You can be part of serving this broke world. Many opportunities to do that here at Five Forks. Why? It's knowing Jesus with our hearts.

Head knowledge is a story about a lost son, running from home and broken by the world, who returns home to find his father waiting with open arms. Wow, what a story. So many people in our world broken and hurting. Maybe it's you. Broken.

Heart knowledge is discovering that lost son is you.

We just want to be a church at Five Forks in process of knowing Jesus. We believe that means, it will involve times of intellectual learning and sharing of information. Study. And it will also involve experiential learning, putting into practice as we learn.