

Do You Know Jesus Christ?

Philippians 3:8 & 10 *"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;"*

I recently read a story concerning a housewife who said to her husband, "This morning somebody knocked at our door, and when I opened it a stranger asked me rather abruptly, **"Do you know Jesus Christ?"** I didn't know how to answer him and frustrated I finally closed the door in his face without so much as saying a word. "Why didn't you tell him," her husband suggested, "that you are a teacher of the ladies Bible study class in our church and the president of the Women's Missionary Society?" His wife replied, **"That's not what he asked me!"** Would it not be well to ask ourselves, "For all I do and belong to, do I truly know Jesus Christ?"

How many church members today cannot honestly say in their hearts that they really know Jesus Christ? Jesus made this most interesting statement in John 15:5 **"...without me you can do nothing."** We like to quote that verse when it suits us, but the trouble is that without Christ we can do a lot. We can come to church, be baptized, sing hymns, pray, take up offerings, teach Sunday school, preach sermons and a thousand other things and never personally know Jesus Christ.

It is amazing how good one can really be and what good company one can keep and still go to Hell. Just ask Judas Iscariot. Hell has a lot of preachers and deacons in it and even has one very notable apostle. That ought to frighten us all. The verse in John 15 is

dealing with fruit, and Jesus is saying that without Him we can do nothing of spiritual significance or anything that will bear fruit for the Kingdom of God. The converse then is also true. When Christ is in a thing the task will always bear fruit. Jesus Christ is not a failure; but where is the fruit in our local New Testament, fundamental, temperamental and sentimental, churches? Many of our churches are just old Adam dressed up in his Sunday clothes. Fruit is sparse at best and non-existent at worst.

Yet Jesus said if we do things His way there will always be fruit. Our churches are dying. Our young people are leaving the church at an alarming rate. In twenty years many churches will be out of business and all that will be left is a brick building, a high steeple that no longer points the way to heaven, and an empty parking lot. The old heads will die and then their stubborn opposition to church growth will reap what it has sown. There is much opposition today in many churches to do anything new. But the problem has never been between the old and the new, but between the false and the true. It is far better to be separated by truth than to be united in error. I am not suggesting we try anything new. I am telling you that we had better try something old, something tried, and something true, and that is a renewed emphasis on the eternal Word of God. Church today is often not God centered or even Bible centered, but program centered or event centered.

Does it have to be this way? NO! It doesn't. What can we do? We must cast off pride and forsake every known sin and plead with God to save the souls of men and revive His church. How stupid to shun church growth and even Bible studies for the sake of pride. Pride that says things like, "our church doesn't grow because we take such a strong stand on the Word of God." How stupid! That's exactly what will make it grow.

Churches don't grow because God is not in them. God and God's Word is not stagnant. God is always on the move, and we had better find out which direction He is going and get in line with Him, and then work night and day for the furtherance of His kingdom.

Jesus' words, **"Occupy till I come,"** doesn't need much commentary. We are to be busy for him. The world around us is not a playground but a battleground for the souls of men. Brothers and sisters, I leave you with two questions: Do you know Jesus Christ, and are you in the fight?