

College class intro:

Three Things to Know

Reading Rev.13.1-10

- It's probable that by the time you find yourself with us that you have gained some knowledge
- In fact there is a well known phrase that we find is often applicable to some who come to us at your age.
 - I hope it's not true of any here..
- But, for fear of you falling into such a category, and being accused of being a cliché, I will tell you what that phrase is.
- It's called being '**Gospel hardened**'.
 - That is, shutting oneself off from the message of the Bible because the individual thinks they've heard it all before.
 - Therefore, such young people remain unmoved - like a cold, dead, stone.
- But, it is true, as I've said, that such young people may have gained *some* knowledge.
 - The question is, is it true, justified belief.
- So today I'll just point out three main things you should know by now.
- One you may **already know**,
- One you may **only think you know**,

And

- One you **desperately need to know**.
1. The first thing you **may know** is - THE WORLD LETS YOU DOWN
 2. The second thing you **may think you know** is - THE MESSAGE OF THE BIBLE
 3. The third thing you **need to know** - THE LOVE OF GOD

- We're talking about KNOWLEDGE.

But, What do we really know?

- You might say,
"Well, I know who I am,
I know who my friends are,
I know what I did yesterday,
I know the sun will come up tomorrow,
I know what I can see, taste and touch."

- Oh ok, well done.

But do you really Know those things?

- That Sun you 'know' is coming up tomorrow...how do you really know that?

- You can't prove it with science, any more than any experiment you did today will behave in the same way tomorrow.
 - You may say, "But it always has done before",
 - yes, but that's no guarantee it will do so tomorrow, unless you can prove the uniformity of nature.
 - And no real scientist will say today that this can be proved with science
 - natural laws are only assumed as a convention, without God.
- Those senses of yours, that you perceive everything with,.....how do you know they're reliable?
 - Your sight, taste, touch etc.
 - How do you know what they think they're perceiving is actually the case?
 - Are you just assuming it is?
 - Is the colour red, really red, or just in your head?
 - Come to think about it, what about your memory and thoughts?
 - How do you know those are reliable?

"Oh that's easy,

I could do a memory test today and then tomorrow I'd know I can trust my memory!"

- Oh yeah, nice one.
- But...if you can't trust your memory, how would you know you did a memory test the day before?

"Well, other people can tell me".

- Umm, but how do you know they're reliable -
- maybe they're not people at all!
- I mean, they look like you, if you pinch them they look like they feel pain like you, but you can't experience what they do, so how do you really know?
- Maybe they're just robots, or holograms?

This problem actually has a name - it's called Solipsism

- Do you really even know who you are?
 - Are you just a bunch of atoms trying to further your genes?
 - What makes a person a person then?
- So there is a real problem with knowledge
 - what the philosophers call - an epistemological problem.

"So, Sir, are you saying we should all be sceptics?"

- No.
- I started by saying you should know things.
 - The question is how?
 - If we can't ultimately trust our senses and thoughts, how can we know?
- Well you can't, if you start there, just with yourself - why trust yourself?
- But what if the Person that made everything, doesn't just do nothing, but reveals objective Truth to us in a way that is undeniable.
 - Then a person can know.
 - They could largely trust their senses, and thoughts, because they would know the Person who gave them is trustworthy.
 - They could trust what He says about the created realm out there.

- The testimony of billions of people is that God does reveal Himself like that to people who truly seek Him.
 - They can recognise His voice in His Word.
 - But, it also says that He actively conceals Himself from the proud and hard hearted (just like Christ refused to speak to Herod) -
 - Such people should not expect to know much.
- But He *does* reveal His *existence* to all, and His *moral law* through their conscience.
- And by now you should all know that first thing I mentioned -
 - It's the type of knowledge you don't really want to be true, but you find it out by bitter experience
 - Like Eve did when eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge in the garden.
- **V** That THE WORLD WILL LET YOU DOWN, and that, therefore, you can't trust it
 - By the 'World' I mean as a closed system lived as if God doesn't matter.
- If you try to live as if this world is all there is, and reject the spiritual, the world will let you down, and damage you.
 - In the last 60 yrs society and culture has gotten more secular, and the young have become much more unhappy and dissatisfied with life's meaninglessness.
 - A&E's all across the country are full of young people, not with problems of the body, but problems of the mind and soul.
 - They've found the World won't deliver on its promises;
 - What does it offer you without God?
 - Go see if you want (I don't recommend it),
 - Or instead, listen to those of us who've got the scares to prove it.
 - Better still, listen to the Word of God.
 - Even if it delivers all it promises, what will that give you in the end? **"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"**
Matt. 16.26 every word of that has solemn weight.
Especially the next bit "or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"
- I don't blame the young for being upset with what the material world offers.
 - You're brought up, and (if you're not told otherwise by people who know and care),
 - you're only told to behave,
 - go to school, do homework, prepare, learn, prepare,.
 - You think this must all be leading somewhere...
 - then you realise these adults haven't got a clue what's going on either!
 - What exactly am I preparing for?
 - I'm just meant to find a job,
 - do some work,
 - get some money,
 - have some fun,
 - get some stuff,
 - have a relationship,
 - have a family maybe,
 - get a house, a car,
 - have some holidays,
 - get older, get sick, get sicker,

get dead.

Full stop.

- Except it isn't a full stop, it's a semicolon; and there's something else,
 - even though we might try not to think about that -
 - there's a reckoning, a judgement for how we've lived, and who we've been.
- It's a curious thing, no matter how low you go, there's always a right and a wrong and you always end up choosing -
 - turn one way, just so you can look yourself in the mirror,
 - but go the other, and you're still walking around, but you're dead and you don't even realise it.
- The world allures and seduces the young like a great Prostitute,
 - like a City initially full of fun and vice,
 - she invites you to drink of her pleasures.
 - The young foolish men pour into it, but all her roads lead to hell in the end.
- Old London was full of the plague, then it burned to the ground.
- This worldly Babylon will be the same;
- It's a plague city and it will fall.
- Rev. 18.4-10 says of the city Babylon as a figure of the World,

“And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, **Come out of her, my people**, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her”

- You must turn your back on the World like Abraham left Ur of Babylon, and Israel left Egypt,
- But the lure of the World is never so strong as at your age
- Do you feel it pulling you?
 - Think of the things you love the most, are they good?
- Keep coming to College Class and we'll show you how to escape her.
 - Because you can be sure that if you're not a Christian you're already well and truly in her grip,
 - and she doesn't want to let you go.
 - You may have started to love her warm embrace and the sparkle of her jewels,
 - but it won't last, soon it will get dark and cold.
- **V** Well, that's enough of that, let's consider the second thing you may only think you know:
THE MESSAGE OF THE BIBLE
- For example:
From the beginning do you know why the Bible makes such a big deal out of the 'rest' on the Sabbath?
 - What are all those ceremonies and sacrifices, that build up through the Bible, all about?
 - Those 5 offerings and 7 feasts?
 - Why did Christ's resurrection happen on the feast of Firstfruits?

- There are chapters and chapters about the temple.
- What are all those curious old testament stories about? - Cain, Abraham, Melchizedek, Moses, Samson, Joseph, David, Solomon - Priests and Prophets and Kings?
- Reoccurring themes,
 - the same things over and over, even though it was written over 1600yrs by completely different people?

“Oh I know Sir, Christ was dying for people’s sins like a sacrifice”

- Oh...you know...
 - What does that mean though?
- Was He dying for everyone?
- Then why isn't everyone saved?
- Was He dying for the concept of sin, or for actual sins?
- Was His death just an example?
- Was He paying a debt to Satan?
- Did Satan even want Him to go through with it,
 - or did he want Him to come down from the cross and save Himself?
- What is the nature of what is called the 'Atonement'
- Do you know all these things?
 - You will, if you keep coming to College Class.
- V Lastly, knowing THE LOVE OF GOD.
- You may think you know about Christ, but knowing *about* someone isn't knowing someone.
- Do you even know about God?
 - Is the Trinity one Person three gods, or three modes of existing; or is it three persons?
 - Is Christ both God and man, therefore two people; or was He just God in a body - one nature; or did He have two natures in one person?
- You see, sometimes we think we know, but that might not be quite the case.
 - What is righteousness and holiness, is there a difference?
 - Why was the sin offering and trespass offering different?
 - What's the difference between grace and mercy?
 - Why are relationships so important to us?
 - Even the most wretched man wants to be loved - to have a relationship with someone.
- The Bible reveals the relationship between a man and woman is so important because it pictures a far deeper, more important relationship.
 - Those narratives about the Patriarchs and their wives are supposed to picture Christ as the husband, and His Church as the bride.
 - She is the good Woman ('Wisdom' in the writing of Solomon), as opposed to the worldly woman - Babylon.

- The love of Christ is the most vital thing to know:
 - Think of the most caring, lovely person you have ever met - times it by a million and you're only starting to know what God's love is like.
 - Love is a verb, a doing word, and Christ is love in action.
 - That love took Him to the cross.
 - The suffering of Christ is something you cannot ever really know fully but only in part.
 - That's why half of it happened in complete darkness.
 - What was happening?
 - Was it happening for you?
- Back to that Sabbath idea?
 - God works a work of Creation/Life in the beginning and then rests on that first Sabbath - it pictures something.
 - Christ works a perfect life, dies a sacrificial death, then cries, "It is finished" and 'rests' in the grave.
 - He worked salvation because we can't do it ourselves by our own effort.
 - The whole Bible points to the same fact in different ways- and it's the opposite of all other religions.
 - They can't help you.
 - Philosophy can't help you.
 - Christ worked salvation because the World cannot do it for us either,
 - it will let you down.
 - You are made for something so much more than it offers.
 - Even if it gives you some earthly gain, you'll lose your soul.
- God asks in the Bible "what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"
 - Nothing you have.
 - But Christ gave His life for the souls of all who would to trust Him - before or after.
 - His death and resurrection is the focal point of all history.
 - That is what can be given if you ask
- That's why Sabbath 'rest' is such an important symbolic concept throughout the Bible - just read Hebrews chapter 4.
- It teaches knowledge to those who are willing to learn.
- Are you willing to learn?
- Are you teachable?
- Are you willing to Know? Do you want to Know?
 - You don't need to be a sceptic,
 - It is possible to Know,
 - even God Himself.
- Keep coming, and, with His help, we'll point the way by His Word.