

**ADDING TO OUR FAITH:
KNOWLEDGE
2 PETER 1.5**

INTRODUCTION:

1. Growing in the faith is not only a necessity, but should be a passion for every member of this congregation.
2. Like Ezra, Christians ought to commit themselves to knowing, applying, and teaching spiritual knowledge. (Ezra 7.10)
3. Only with knowledge is growth possible. Consider:

I. A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE CAN BE DANGEROUS

- A. Christians must be cautious to avoid that *“which is falsely called knowledge”* (1 Tim. 6.20). [gnosis; KJV – “science”]
 1. False knowledge is described as *“idle babblings and contradictions”* [ibid; Acts 17.17; Ps. 19.1,2)
 2. Therefore we must “guard” (1 Tim. 6.20), and “contend” (Jude 3), for the knowledge of the Bible.
- B. Because everyone accumulates knowledge differently, there is potential of an arrogant attitude. (1 Cor. 8.1)
 1. No one can say that he has all the knowledge he needs, for there is always something new to learn. (1 Cor. 8.2)
 2. Meekness and patience is necessary. (1 Cor. 8.7-13)
- C. The only true source for spiritual knowledge is the Bible. (2 Tim. 3.14-17; Eph. 1.17,18; 5:17; 2 Pet. 1.3)

II. INCREASING OUR ACCUMULATED KNOWLEDGE

- A. Why is it necessary to increase in knowledge?
 1. **HOSEA 4.6:** *“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because they have rejected knowledge...”*
 2. Without knowledge of the truth one is vulnerable to being deceived. (Rom. 16.18; 2 Cor. 11.13-16)
 3. Yet some prefer to be deceived. (Isa. 30.10,11)
 4. Sincerity without knowledge is worthless. (Rom. 10.1-3)
- B. How do we add knowledge to our faith?
 1. Personal and collective study. (Ezek. 33.30-32; 2 Tim. 2.15)
 2. Maintain a proper attitude toward knowledge. (2 Pet. 2.2)
 3. Develop proper study skills. (Acts 17.11)
- C. Thus in understanding, we must be mature. (1 Cor. 14.20)

CONCLUSION: There is hope only in knowing God. (2 Thes. 1.8).

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MEETING TIMES:

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS :	9:00AM
SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP:	9:50AM
SUNDAY EVENING WORSHIP:	6:00PM
WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE CLASS	7:30PM

*Worshipping
God “in Spirit
and truth”
(John 4.23)*

APRIL 26TH, 2009

THE CURSE OF THE TREE

Writing to the churches which met in the region of Galatia, Paul wrote, *“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’)”* (Gal. 3.13).

The curse of the law referred to the penalty of death that resulted from breaking the laws of God. Under the law of Moses, punishment was either by stoning, by hanging (whether on a tree or from the gallows), by sword, or by burning. Therefore anyone facing death because of their violation of the law of Moses is said to be bearing the curse of death (Deut. 21.22,23)

Breaking the laws of God puts man under the curse of death also called the *“law of sin and death”* (Rom. 8.2; Ezek. 18.20). However, through the love and mercy of God, Jesus left His eternal home in heaven and took our place in death suffering crucifixion. Although He *“knew no sin”*, He took on the penalty of death becoming *“sin for us”* (2 Cor. 5.21). Indeed, Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, the penalty of death for sin. For hanging on the tree being crucified He became cursed for us (Gal. 3.13).

How blessed we are to have to most severe of all penalties removed because of the Savior’s choice to do what He was not required to do, but gave His life for our life. May we echo the sentiment expressed by David: **PSALM 26.7:** *“That I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving, And tell of all Your wondrous works.”*

CLP

SALVATION: BEFORE AND AFTER

EPHESIANS 2.13

INTRODUCTION:

1. Salvation is perhaps the most controversial subject in all the world, and the most vital to understand correctly.
2. The great dichotomy to which the Gentile Christians were called upon to consider was their condition before and after Christ.
3. To both sinners and saints it is critical to know where we came from and where we are going.

I. THE HUMAN CONDITION BEFORE SALVATION

A. EPHESIANS 2.3: “...and were by nature, children of wrath”

1. Is sin the natural state in which one is born? (Ps. 51.5)
2. Nature: [Gk: Phusis] Refers to that which is “inherent” or “normal characteristics” [Nelson] (Gal. 2.15)
 - a) Not born sinners, but the development of sinful practices. (Eph. 2.1-3; 1 John 3.4,7,8; 2 Pet. 2.14)
 - b) While Christ was born in the flesh, He was never considered a Child of wrath. (Heb. 2.14; 2 Cor. 5.21)
3. Through man’s sinful practices he has made himself subject to the judgment of God. (Col. 3.6)

B. EPHESIANS 2.12: “...having no hope and without God..”

1. Everyone needs hope, but outside of Christ our future only consisted of a “fearful expectation” (Heb. 10.27).
2. Without God we were “aliens”, “strangers and foreigners” (Eph. 2.12,19; Col. 1.21)

II. THE HUMAN CONDITION AFTER SALVATION

- A. While we were enemies of God, through grace and mercy we have been saved. (Eph. 2.4-10)
 1. Raised up to life through baptism. (Eph. 2.5,6,13)
 2. Received by faith and obedience. (Eph. 2.8; Rom. 6.17)
 3. Reconciled by blood. (Eph. 2.13-18; Col. 1.21,22)
- B. Through the gospel we have received what we needed.
 1. Salvation gave us something to do. (Eph. 2.10)
 2. Salvation gave us someone to love. (1 John 4.19)
 3. Salvation gave us something to believe in. (Heb. 11.4)
 4. Salvation gave us something to hope for. (Heb. 6.19)

CONCLUSION: The human condition is the only one that matters.

STEP IT UP

A parable is told of a farmer who owned an old mule. The mule fell into the farmer's well. The farmer heard the mule 'braying' - or whatever mules do when they fall into wells. After carefully assessing the situation, the farmer sympathized with the old mule, but decided that neither the mule nor the well was worth the trouble of saving.

Instead, he called his neighbors together and told them what had happened and enlisted them to help haul dirt to bury the old mule in the well and put him out of his misery.

Initially, the old mule was hysterical! But as the farmer and his neighbors continued shoveling and the first bit of dirt hit his back, a thought struck him. It suddenly dawned on the mule that every time a shovel load of dirt landed on his back, he should shake it off and step up!

This he did, blow after blow. "Shake it off and step up...shake it off and step up...shake it off and step up!" He repeated to encourage himself. No matter how painful the blows, or distressing the situation seemed the old mule fought "panic" and just kept right on shaking it off and stepping up!

As you may have guessed, it wasn't long before the old mule, battered and exhausted, stepped triumphantly over the wall of that well! What seemed like it would bury him, actually blessed him, all because of the manner in which he handled his adversity.

That's life! If we face our problems and respond to them positively, and refuse to give in to panic, bitterness, or self-pity, the adversities that come along to bury us usually have, within them, the potential to benefit and bless us.

We've all had dirt shoveled on us, but the way we respond makes all the difference in the world. Life is no party, but it's livable. (See Jas. 1: 2-4.)