

Sonoraville Baptist Church
Sunday, June 6, 2010 – 11:00 AM
Rev. Steve Skates, Pastor

I Know - 1 John 2:3-6

Introduction: We live in the information age. In 1961, in an IMB advertisement supplement of the New York Times, the term “*information explosion*” first appeared. This term originally referred to the rapid increase of published information and the affect this abundance of data would have. Well, since that era, we have seen this information explosion literally multiply several thousand times over with the advent of the personal computer, cable and satellite TV, the cell phone, iphones, text messaging blogging, and so forth. Never before in history has the exponential growth of information been so rapid. Indeed we are all traveling on the information highway and at, what Captain Kirk would call, “*warp speed!*”

But what affect has all this over-abundance of information had on society? Well, it seems that even though our ability to gather information has increased, our knowledge has not. In fact, we seem know more about less than ever before. Not too long ago, it was possible for a highly educated person to know almost everything about a field of knowledge. Now, people must specialize in smaller and smaller areas within their field.

For example, it used to be that your family doctor could doctor you from head to toe. But now, according to what is wrong with you, you’ll be sent to a specialist. This demonstrates the fact that because of the increase of information, no one doctor can master everything that has been discovered about medicine. The work has been divided into more manageable areas of work. It works this way in other areas of life as well.

Certainly, in our society there can be no know-it-alls. ALL is a big word. So the question many people are asking is: Can I really truly know anything for certain? You see, knowledge can change because of research and new discoveries. Some of the things that were accepted as “*facts*” in the past are seen as “*fiction*” today. In the past, we believed certain things were true based on the evidence we had. Now, new evidence is being discovered and the old “*truth*” is being replaced with a new “*truth.*”

For example, in 1930, Clyde W Tombaugh discovered the planet Pluto. And most of us were taught that Pluto was one of the 9 planets that made up our solar system.

But in the 1970’s astronomers discovered other celestial bodies beyond Pluto which fueled a hot debate among the astronomical community about whether Pluto was really a planet. Finally, in 2006, a convention of the International Astronomical Union came out and defined what constituted a planet, and unfortunately, Pluto did not meet the criteria, so it was relegated to the status of “*dwarf planet.*” So now, the text books are being changed to reflect this new “*truth*” that there are only 8 planets.

No wonder many in our society believe that truth is relative. Because certain things we used to believe were true have been shown to be questionable or even false, many people are claiming that nothing can be known for sure.

This philosophy has spilled over into the spiritual realm as well. On the surface, that reasoning seems logical. People are asking, if one cannot truly know the physical world, how can one know the spiritual? How can we know for sure about eternity, and eternal life? How can we even know God exists? And how can we be sure about salvation? These are questions people ask. But none of them can be answered by applying the scientific method of assimilating the facts, documenting them, and corroborating them with other facts. In fact, the scientific method is only a limited approach to knowledge. It is good to evaluate the things to which it should apply, but there are areas of knowledge including eternity, the spiritual world, faith, and God, to which the scientific method can never apply.

Fortunately, there is another authority that gives us real answers to these questions. It is the Bible. The Bible tells us there is a way to know for certain about the questions of eternity. Concerning whether we know God and whether we are truly following Him, the Bible tells us that we can know that we know.

How do you know that you know Jesus as your Savior and Lord? What is the standard or test by which you evaluate your Christian life? Our text gives us the answers. In fact, several essentials are found in our text that will help us know whether we have a real walk with Christ. Let’s look at this passage and discover how to know that we know Him.

3 *We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands.*

4 The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him.
5 But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him:
6 Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did. **1 John 2:3-6 (NIV)**. The first we see is that:

1. There is Something We Must Know (Read 3a).

One thing everyone who is seeking God needs to know is they can be saved and know it. This is what our text teaches us. We need to know that we know Christ.

Unfortunately, there are professing Christians who don't believe they can know they are saved for sure. But in **1 John 5:13 (NIV)** John refutes that when he says, "*I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.*"

The truth of this Scripture, and the truth of our text, is that we can know! Peter says that this knowledge is something we can be sure of: "*Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure.*" **2 Peter 1:10 (NIV)**. Paul certainly knew that he was saved. He wrote in **2 Timothy 1:12 (NIV)** "...*I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.*" And in **Galatians 2:20 (NIV)** he wrote, "*I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*" Paul had no doubt about his salvation. It was something he knew, and so can we.

I once read a sermon written by a black preacher on this very subject. The title of his sermon was "How to know who is and who ain't." I like that. You see, when it comes to salvation, either you are or you ain't. And you need to know which you are. Thank God we can know. But according to our text, not only is there something we must know:

2. There is Something We Must Do

Vs. 3 says, "*we know that we have come to know him if we obey his commandments.*" The real litmus test for knowing for sure about our salvation is our obedience to Christ. Obedience is absolutely essential for the Christian life. By obedience we can know for sure that we know Him.

Many people evaluate their Christian life based on their experiences with God. Now, don't misunderstand me here. I believe that experiencing God is good. Henry Blackaby became a popular name in Christianity when he wrote the discipleship study called "Experiencing God." Many of you have probably taken that course. So, experiencing God is a good thing to do on a daily basis. We need more of those special encounters with God when we experience His goodness and grace. But our experiences with God alone are not valid proofs of having a true relationship with God.

There are two problems with using experiences alone as a test. The first problem is that experiences are very subjective and are open to interpretation. For example, several years ago a group of people got caught up in a cult called the Branch-Dividians. They truly believed in their cause because of their experience with their leader – a charismatic leader named Vernon Howell, but who went by the name of David Koresh. Koresh taught that he was the final prophet and that by virtue of this position; everyone should forsake all their other relationships and rely on him. This group of people interpreted their involvement with Koresh as being true to the cause of Christ because of their experience, but it ultimately led to their death during a 1993 U.S. government raid on their ranch just outside of Waco Texas.

The second problem with using experience as a test of having a true relationship with God is this: Even non-Christians can experience the goodness of God because God is good. God may send His blessings on a person but that is not an indicator of a relationship with God. The Bible says that God sends His rain on both the just and the unjust, and rain in this context is a good thing. People living in the dry places welcome the rain for their crops and for their land. So, if we evaluate our Christian life based upon our experience, we may come to some wrong conclusions.

Obedience to God, on the other hand, tells us where our heart really is. If our desire is to please God, then we will obey Him. Now, we are not talking about perfection. Nobody is perfect. All of us sin and fall short of all that God expects. So, we are not talking about perfection here, but a life of obedience. Obedience reveals a changed heart — a life surrendered to Christ. Obedience reveals that we have true faith. Faith is always validated by works. In other words, the works that we do reveal that the faith we say we have is real and genuine. We can know that we know Him if we obey Him. **1 John 2:4-5 (NIV)** "*The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word,*

God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him."

Finally, we see from our text that there is not only something we must know, and something we must do, but also:

3. There is Someone We Must Follow

1 John 2:5b-6 (NIV) says, *"This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did."* Walking as Jesus did is another way of saying, *"following Him."* Jesus is the One we must follow. He is the standard by which we evaluate our Christian lives.

So, how did Jesus walk? In John's Gospel, we see that Jesus lived His life in total dependence upon the Father. Jesus said in **John 4:34 (NIV)**, *"My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work."* And in **John 5:17 (NIV)** Jesus said, *"...My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working."* In **John 5:19 (NIV)** Jesus said, *"...the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does."* In **John 6:38 (NIV)**: *"For I have come down from heaven not to do my will, but the will of Him who sent Me."* And finally, in **John 8:28 (NIV)**: *"I do nothing on My own, but speak just what the Father has taught Me."*

Jesus lived His life in total dependence upon the leadership of the Father – watching Him, listening for His voice, living in communion with Him. And so should we. Our life should be lived by spending time with God in prayer, study of His word, and seeking His face. This is how Jesus walked. If we would follow in His steps, then we must walk in the same way. It is in this way that we will know that we know Him.

Conclusion: Do you know that you know Jesus? You will if you've invited Him into your life. You'll know Him because He's come in and forgiven you and cleaned you up by His blood, and set you free from the penalty of sin. You'll know Him because you are living in a close, personal relationship with Him as your friend, your guide, your Savior and your Lord. You'll know Him because you've been reading and studying about Him in His Word. You've heard His commands and you've been obedient to Him. And you've been actively exercising your faith in Him and following His example.

But if you don't know Him today, this would be a good time for you to come to Him. Jesus wants to know you and He wants you to know Him as your Savior. He wants to have a relationship with you – one that will last for all eternity.

But He will never force Himself on you. He won't come in where He's not invited. You have to ask Him while His Spirit is leading you and convicting you to come to Him. Come to Him now and experience His love, His joy, His peace. Come to Him and know Him as your Savior.