

02/02/2015
Jesus' Great Kingdom

"For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Col.1:13-14).

During the time before Jesus, and after Him, cities and empires were for the most part ruled by kings or emperors. Regular people, like farmers and craftsmen, mostly depended upon the wisdom and benevolence of the king. People would flourish when the king was a good and wise man and was balanced in his enforcement of just ways. In reality, it was a good and efficient system of government with an ideal king. The problems lied in that there were no earthly kings that lived up to the ideal. The metaphor used in today's verse talks about an ideal kingdom... The kingdom of heaven, meaning the church, has an ideal king and an ideal government. As is true with metaphors, the church is not like a kingdom in all respects, just like it is not exactly like a body, or a building, or a family.. We need to understand, however, the ideal of a kingdom being applied to the church illustrates important aspects of what Christ wants His people to be. Jesus is indeed like a king, in the glory and honor that is due to Him, and in the obedience to His commands. The task we face as the church, His subjects, is to read His Word and decide what he wants Christians to be and do. As much as we like America's system of government in which we get to vote our leader in and out of office, in the church there is no voting. Jesus did everything He was called upon to do to become the King of the church, and we're to lean totally upon Him. I'm reminded of a famous old hymn..."What a fellowship, what a joy divine, leaning on the everlasting arms; What a blessedness, what a peace is mine, Leaning on the everlasting arms... Leaning, leaning, Safe and secure from all alarms; Leaning, leaning, Leaning on the everlasting arms..." Its a really good metaphor....

Have a great start to your week... Begin it with a RAK or two... Love mark Phil.4:11

02/03/2015
God's Household

"Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth" (1 Tim.3:14-15).

In the last metaphor of this series about the church, the apostle Paul compares it to God's household...It is not quite the same as comparing it to a family or a building. I see that comparing the church to a household shows that it is a group of people that are united not only by their values, but to a common commitment to a way of life. When its members assemble for worship on Sunday morning, or go to work on Monday, its conduct is to be guided by that

commitment that each one has made as a member of God's household. Behavior within God's household is not limited to a Bible class or worship on the Lord's Day

How a member of God's household acts comprises the way one treats his fellow workers on the job, and a willingness to give an honest day's work for a day's pay. It makes up the way one treats their husband or wife with consideration and respect. It includes the way we treat our neighbors and a willingness to help them when they are in need. We will scrupulously live according to God's Word, when we keep ours. It is easy to see why this metaphor about His church is used... The way we compose ourselves each day is the reflection of being a part of God's household...

Have a great day... ASAP... Always Say A Prayer.... Love mark Phil.4:11

02/04/2015

Where Are The Refreshments

"Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints" (Philemon 7).

One of the special things about going to show or sporting event is the time we take to have some refreshments... At a ballgame it may be a hot dog, bag of peanuts, ice cream or cotton candy (a personal favorite). Its not that we really need these things for sustenance, but its just the joy they bring in the form of a refreshment. The apostle Paul had written a letter to a man in Colossae named Philemon. Apparently, during Paul's ministry in Ephesus, Philemon had heard the gospel and was saved. If we read the short letter we will find that he opened his home for others believers and actually established a church there. While Paul was in prison, he heard about Philemon's love and faith, and was encouraged that someone that he had helped lead to Christ was sharing his faith with others. Nothing could have pleased him more than to know of Philemon's love for Jesus and all the saints... The thing that actually caught my attention in today's passage is the part about the refreshments... "because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints..." How great it would be for us to have more refreshing people like this in our lives... I'll take it one step farther... How great would it be if we were the ones doing the refreshing? Take a moment today to encourage someone, speak kindly to them, compliment them and thank them for what they do. The world could use a few more refreshment stands...

Have a wonderful day... Let His light shine through you... Love mark Phil.4:11

02/05/2015

Getting Your Mind Right

"We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Cor.10:5).

In the movie Cool Hand Luke, (1967) Luke (Paul Newman) is on a southern chain gang. He is rebellious, and the captain (Strother Martin) makes it his mission to get him straightened out. Here's a famous quote from the movie; "You run one time, you got yourself a set of chains. You run twice you got yourself two sets. You ain't gonna need no third set, 'cause you gonna get your mind right. I mean RIGHT." The battles we fight in life all begin in our minds and it is easy to develop negative thoughts that often come to our conscious selves... The apostle Paul gives us his version of getting our minds right in today's verse, when he writes that we take captive every thought. He even tells us why.... To make it obedient to God.... Whether this entails defending our faith or guiding our actions, Paul says that we've got to get our minds right. Notice that the words don't say part of our thoughts and some of the time. We must learn to take captive every thought! Satan, the world and our flesh try their hardest to bring evil thoughts into our minds. The battle is set... Who wins? The winner is the one who takes every thought captive in obedience to Christ. I'll have some thoughts tomorrow about how to achieve this...

Have a great day... Make your little part of the world better.... Love mark Phil.4:11

02/06/2015
Every Thought

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is --- his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Rom.12:2).

The apostle Paul, in 1 Cor.10:5, told us that we are to take every thought captive to make it obedient to Christ... It is obvious that our actions are dictated by what goes on in our minds, so the big problem seems to revolve around how to take our thoughts captive. We must learn to capture the negative thoughts that would lead us astray, and this can only take place when we have a renewed mind. Today's verse is one that you have probably read many times, but perhaps not from this context... A renewed mind comes from a heart that has been captivated by the love and grace of Jesus Christ. It is only then that we can take every thought captive and obey Christ... Taking a few thoughts captive is difficult in itself, but we are called to take every thought captive. So... How do we even begin to do this? It is only when our minds are renewed that we are able to think Godly thoughts. Paul gives us one more suggestion about getting our minds right... "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable --- if anything is excellent or praiseworthy --- think about such things." (Phil.4:8). Paul says that we should fill our minds with good stuff... He finishes in the next verse by telling us to put these into practice. The combination of virtues

listed here is sure to produce a wholesome thought pattern, which in turn will result in a life of moral and spiritual excellence...

Have a wonderful day... Go about doing good... Love mark Phil.4:11

02/07/2015

Some Fun Bible Questions

I hope you enjoy these few questions from the Bible that should test your memory. Have fun...

- ____ 1. Paul asked Timothy to bring him 2 things while he was in prison. They were? (a) milk and cookies, (b) coat and hat, (c) cloak and scrolls (books), (d) pen and paper.
- ____ 2. King Og's bed was made of what kind of metal. (a) gold, (b) iron, (c) brass, (d) steel, (e) silver.
- ____ 3. What woman in the Bible faked a rape because she got mad? (a) Rahab, (b) Potiphar's wife, (c) Vashti, (d) Rubeous.
- ____ 4. What other name was "Tabitha" known by? (a) Phoebe, (b) Lydia, (c) Sapphira, (d) Dorcas.
- ____ 5. In Song of Solomon, and a Beatles song, what does it say cannot be bought for any price? (a) honesty, (b) pearls, (c) love, (d) gold.
- ____ 6. The Bible says that a male child is to be circumcised at what age? (a) 7 days, (b) 8 days, (c) 9 days, (d) 8 weeks.
- ____ 7. When Peter escaped from prison, who was the servant girl that answered the door? (a) Phoebe, (b) Tabitha, (c) Damaris, (d) Rhoda.
- ____ 8. In the story of the rich man and Lazarus, how many brothers did the rich man have? (a) 2, (b) 3, (c) 4, (d) 5, (e) 6.
- ____ 9. How old was Isaac when he married Rebekah? (a) 30, (b) 40, (c) 50, (d) it doesn't say.
- ____ 10. When the kings of the East march westward, what river would dry up? (a) Jordan, (b) Albanna, (c) Euphrates, (d) Pharpar.

Have a wonderful weekend and a glorifying and uplifting day of worship on His Day.... Love mark Phil.4:11

02/09/2015
In The Right Place

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding" (Prov.9:10).

When something bad happened to someone you know, have you ever heard them say, "I was just at the wrong place at the wrong time?" May be you've used the excuse yourself... Some problems in life actually do come from beginning at the wrong place. It is why our beginning point is so important. I believe that the very first verse in the Bible is designed to get us started at the right place. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen.1:1). The truth contained in this verse is the fundamental one upon which the rest of God's revelation to mankind rests... The Bible's first verse tells the world that GOD IS REAL! A basic question that man has asked forever is why there is something rather than nothing. If God did not create the world, life is not explainable, and an explanation is essential... A lot of modern science would have us assume that a "what" is responsible for the universe, but I find them coming off as materialistic. I don't look at "what" as a reasonable alternative, and the fact that I am a person points to a personal creator. "For in Him we live and move and have our being..... Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone --- an image made by man's design and skill" (Acts 17:29-29). I can turn to the gospel of John and read the first four verses to confirm my faith. They would be good verses for us to read and meditate upon today... To build a successful life, we must start at the very beginning. We must build upon the foundation of God and His Son and believe that God made it all. It puts us in the right place at the right time....

Have a great start to your week... Begin it with a RAK or two... Love mark Phil.4:11

02/10/2015
The Plainest Of All Truths

"She said to the king, 'The report I heard in my own country about your achievements and your wisdom is true. But I did not believe these things until I came and saw with my own eyes. Indeed, not even half was told me; in wisdom and wealth you have far exceeded the report I heard'" (1 Kings 10:6-7).

In science, experiments are done to take theories and turn them into either fact or fiction. There is a big difference between knowing something theoretically and knowing it experimentally... I used today's verses to show this as the Queen of Sheba made a visit to Solomon. She had heard of Solomon's great wisdom, achievements and wealth, but seeing with her own eyes made it more than just hearsay.... We have a challenge in life to live the way God wants us to live. Why? Because God is real! To me, God's existence is one of the most obvious facts in the universe... I don't think the fact can be disputed or doubted because it is not clear. "Since what may be known to God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible power and divine nature --- have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse" (Rom.1:19-20). The apostle Paul writes here that God manifested Himself in His creation. It may be ironic that the basic problem of life comes down to really believing the thing that is the plainest of all truths... GOD IS REAL... The universe and we ourselves are His handiwork. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" Is it clear? Crystal!

Have a great day... Do good and give God the credit... Love mark Phil.4:11

02/11/2015
Keeping God Real

"Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; He provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy" (Acts14:17).

We have all heard the term, "keep it real..." I take it to mean that in order for things to have relevance in our lives, they need to stay fresh and new and without pretence. We keep it real with people we love by not only telling them that we love them, but by showing it through our actions. I would suggest two things that would help us to keep God real. When we were an agrarian society, we were put into closer proximity with God through the earth itself. Today's verse speaks to just that. One way to keep God real is to spend more time with God's world... Taking time to contemplate God's wonderful creation and spending more time with things made by God rather than things made by man. The technological society in which we live sometimes puts God's creation on the back burner, so it takes some effort on our part to keep in touch with the world that God has made. Secondly, we need to spend more time with God's Word... The reality of God confronts us on the pages of scripture, and a study of His Word is about coming to know God Himself... "Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the Lord is God in heaven above and on earth below. There is no other. Keep His decrees and commands...." (Deut.4:39-40). We must learn --- and then consider what we learn --- about God. We must practice meditation, reflection, and serious thought about God every day to keep Him real to us....

Have a wonderful day... Make your little part of the world better... Love mark Phil.4:11

02/12/2015
The Ultimate Kingdom

"In the same time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will endure forever" (Dan.2:44)

In today's passage, Daniel has interpreted a dream for the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar. The dream was about a large statue made of layers of gold, silver, bronze and iron. These different metals of which the statue were made represented the physical kingdoms that would exist from Babylon to Rome... The last kingdom, (Rome) of which the feet were made, would be mixed with clay. The clay would make the last kingdom fragile. Daniel recognizes that an eternal kingdom would supercede all of the earthly kingdoms... Its authority, built on the sinful empires of the world, would extend over the whole earth... "But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth" (V 35). That's a very powerful kingdom. That kingdom is the church, founded by Jesus Christ. Jesus and the apostles embraced a concept that the world has never truly accepted, especially as we look at the turmoil in the Middle East today... The concept, even among Christians today, is unfortunately in short supply. This is the concept: The way of power and the way of peace work hand in hand. Victory and weakness are not mutually exclusive. The New Testament defines the stone that God carved from the mountain as the kingdom that began at the crucifixion... It is the church, built by Jesus Christ... Here's what the leader of the kingdom said to world-weary people everywhere and for all time: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest... for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls.... (Matt.11:28-29). He welcomes us to the ultimate kingdom....

Have a great day... Make a difference... Love mark Phil.4:11

02/13/2015
The Kingdom Epitomized

"Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this" (Isa.9:7).

Tip O'Neill, the former Speaker of the House, is attributed with this saying: "All politics is local..." He might as well have been saying that all politics is personal... All mortal leaders rule by an

appearance of a personal following. Back in the days of Isaiah and forward, the leaders ultimately failed because of personal faults and/or rival powers. Even if the kings would reign for a complete lifetime, the kingdoms over which they ruled would one day crumble. If we say that politics is personal, it is the recognition that rulers come and go.... Kingdoms rise and fall...

There is no distinction any greater between earthly nations and the rule of God than understanding that the kingdom of God draws life from its king! He is eternal in the heavens and does not fail. His kingdom abides forever... "For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders... (V 6) The government of Christ's church rests on a Savior crucified in weakness and He is the Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace. Christians do not pledge themselves to some abstract system of rulership. The apostle Paul wrote this to Timothy: "because I know whom I have believed..." (2 Tim. 1:12) Paul knew that Jesus was reigning from God's right hand. "And the disciples were first call Christians at Antioch" (Acts 11:26). Christian is the universal designation for those who claim to be members of His kingdom and pledge their allegiance to Him... The church is His kingdom epitomized.... Enjoy your membership...

Have a great day... T G I F... Today God Is First.... Love mark Phil.4:11

02/14/2015

Some Biblical Questions

Here are a few questions to strain your brain today. Have fun....

- ____ 1. What happened to the "manna" when left out in the sun? (a) it rotted, (b) it dried out, (c) it melted.
- ____ 2. Who are the two women who fought over eating the mandrakes? (a) Rebekah and Rachel, (b) Leah and Rachel, (c) Sarah and Hagar.
- ____ 3. In the book of Acts, Peter had a vision that repeated ____ times. (a) 2, (b) 3, (c) 5. (d) 6.
- ____ 4. In Revelation, what spice did the merchants of the earth sell to Babylon? (a) cumin, (b) mint, (c) anise, (d) cinnamon.
- ____ 5. In what city was Paul stoned with rocks? (a) Lystra, (b) Berea, (c) Athens, (d) Philippi.
- ____ 6. What man was ready to kill his son because he ate honey? (a) David, (b) Eli, (c) Saul, (d) Jethro.
- ____ 7. Manoah had a famous son. Who was he? (a) Abner, (b) Samson, (c) Hezekiah, (d) Clydeous.

____ 8. What man provided for the needs of Mephibosheth? (a) David, (b) Saul, (c) Ziba, (d) Samuel.

____ 9. About how many people died when Abimelech set fire to the Tower of Shechem? (a) none, (b) 10, (c) 100, (d) 1,000

____ 10. What book of the bible mentions a mother eagle "stirring up her nest"? (a) Deut. (b) Josh, (c) Judges, (d) Prov.

Have a great weekend and a glorifying and uplifting day of worship on His Day.... Love mark Phil.4:11

02/16/2015

Room For Improvement

"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matt.6:34).

TV bombards us with ways to improve ourselves, whether its about better nutrition, hair, complexion or finances. Jesus was all about improvement, and taught us to live in these "now" compartments, not attempting to take on all of life's problems at once. Today's verse tells us to do each day's duty as it comes. More than likely, most of us could improve in this area. We probably need to learn that each day's troubles are manageable if we focus on what needs to be done as each day passes... There is something else to give some thought to, and it is this: Each and every day, God gives us opportunities to improve our lives. Not only does each day come with a problem or two, but each day comes with fresh hope. As each day begins, we start with a clean slate to work with. How we choose to use that slate, or how we choose to look at today, as we should, we ought to see many opportunities to make significant progress... I have heard that assumption is the mother of all "mess-ups..." We can't assume that there will be many more chances in the days that are ahead of us, and many of our opportunities may be lost to postponement or procrastination. Even if there are more chances, we must take advantage of each day's possibilities for growth, and not waste these gifts from God. Time is such a precious and valuable commodity, and we shouldn't waste it . Jesus said this: "As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work" (Jn.9:4). Jesus knew, as we must, that each day's opportunities must be taken advantage of... More on this tomorrow...

Have a great start to your week... Begin it with a RAK or two... Love mark Phil.4:11

02/17/2015
Carpe Diem

"But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb.3:13).

As we go through this week, let's "carpe diem..." Carpe diem has been generally translated in this way: "Seize The Day" We all need to be more mindful of what we can do each day... The things that happen to us that produce the greatest spiritual growth are those things that happen on what we would call ordinary days. Growth is not usually predicated on the great choices we make on momentous occasions. What makes us grow are the ordinary day-to-day decisions to do the good things that we know are the right ones. With that in mind, let's seize the day... Let's seize each day as if it is the special one, because after all, it is... Let's resolve to do the little things that can advance us ahead in our relationship with God and others. There is not a day that goes by that doesn't present us with fresh new things we can do that will help us grow. I believe it is important for us to make the determination to not only look for these things, but to act on them... You might now ask about what things we should be looking for... Let me suggest a few... Let's look for the chance to increase in knowledge. Each day may give us a chance to correct some of our mistakes. How about the chances we are afforded to increase some of our skills. Maybe there's a broken relationship we can start to mend. Finally, each day might give us a chance to form better habits. We can make today a special one if we seize it and squeeze each opportunity from it...

Have a great day... Do good and give God the credit... Love mark Phil.4:11

02/18/2015
H = S X G

"One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed. People curse the man who hoards grain, but blessing crowns him who is willing to sell" (Prov.11:24-27).

Let's think this morning about the little equation that comprises my title... $H = S \times G$
Happiness = the Service we Give to others. Contrary to the prevailing rule accepted by the world, that happiness comes from the stuff we get, it is the giving of ourselves that really makes life a joy... To put it in even more stark terms, there is no real lasting happiness for the person who is self-centered and thinks only about what he can get from others... Jesus taught us a wonderful rule that is recorded in the Book of Acts. "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (20:35). I don't think I would be exaggerating if I said that most of the unhappiness and

dissatisfaction in the world comes from non-giving attitudes... It comes from the minds of those, who for some reason or another, have allowed their basic focus to shift from the Lord's teaching about giving. That focus has moved from the service of filling one another's needs to whether or not theirs are being filled in the manner which they desire... In a world where this focus on self has come full circle, it is no wonder that there are so many folks that lead unhappy lives. This prevalence of unhappiness, and even anxiety in this "me-first" society shouldn't come as a surprise to anyone... Lets look for the next few days at something that the world may view as contradictory... The giver gets more of the good things in life than the taker.... Lets all learn that true happiness comes from helping others... H really does equal S X G...

Have a wonderful day... Let His light shine through you... Love mark Phil.4:11

02/19/2015
Blessings Of The Host

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interest of others" (Phil.2:3-4).

When Jesus taught that it is more blessed to give than to receive, He really meant it... . It did not just mean that recipient was blessed, or even that giving is more pleasing to God. He also was trying to tell us that the giver himself is more blessed, and along with this, more fortunate and joyous. Though the world may deem this to be contradictory, the giver actually gets more of the good things in life than the taker... I think that it is an inherent part of God's nature to give, so it pleases Him greatly when that becomes ingrained in our persona. In our attempt to be more God-like people, since we were created in His image, it behooves us to extend our attitudes in an outward fashion. We can get the full measure of happiness and enjoyment in being outwardly oriented, by being givers rather than takers. When folks try to gain happiness by being selfish rather than selfless, failure always ensues. As we get better at meditating on God's Word, I think we will learn the blessedness that accompanies giving a part of ourselves to others. I don't know about you but I would like to have my life characterized by the doing of productive things for others rather than by the consuming of that which others do for me... A few more positive traits tomorrow...

Have a great day.... Go about doing good... Love mark Phil.4:11

02/20/2015
Richer/Poorer

"How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how He went around doing good....." (Acts 10:38)

The greatest example of one who was a giver and not a taker was Jesus. As our example, we can see Jesus as someone who was more concerned about others than Himself... All during His recorded lifetime, He went about doing good. In His crucifixion, he showed the ultimate act of giving, as He laid down His own life for the sinners of the world... He never complained when He was tired and hungry... In the sixth chapter of the Book of Mark, Jesus and His disciples were so busy ministering to others that they couldn't even find the time to eat. When they went to a solitary place to rest, the people kept coming, "so He began teaching them many things..." (V 34). Jesus asks us to get out of our comfort zones and serve others. In 2 Cor.12:14-15, the apostle Paul said he was willing to spend and expend himself for others. We ought to be glad when called upon to use ourselves up for others, because in doing so, we actually become stronger. In Matt.25:31-46, Jesus tells us that when we do things for others, we are doing them for Him. He said: "whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me" (V 40). Lastly, to be a true giver, we cannot be stingy on any level. We have to be willing to give of our time, of our money, and of our effort. "One man gives freely, yet gains even more....A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will be refreshed... (Prov.11:24-25). If we really want to find true happiness, it lies in our desire to give....

Have a great day... T G I F... Today God Is First.... Love mark Phil.4:11

02/21/2015

Some Excellent Knowledge

"I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord...."
(Phil.3:8).

We spend our entire lives gathering knowledge. Some of that knowledge may allow us to be a whiz when we watch Jeopardy, and there is nothing wrong with a curious and inquiring mind. Do you think the apostle Paul had this kind of knowledge in mind when he wrote today's verse? I am sure that Paul was a very smart fellow, but the knowledge that he is referencing here is about Jesus. He wants to know Jesus as well as he possibly can, and it appears that he wants us to follow suit... Let's take a look at the excellence of the knowledge of Jesus Christ to see just what makes it so desirable of a commodity for Paul and us to gain... I would think first of all, that this knowledge has to be personal to each one of us. We might have initially learned about Jesus from someone else, but we must come to truly know Him for ourselves. Notice that Paul uses the "first person pronoun" in today's verse, as he does in verse ten (10). "I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection...." Along with being personal, the knowledge of Jesus must be loving, tender and affectionate. In 1958, Phil Spector wrote a song and recorded it with his group, The Teddy Bears, entitled "To Know Him Is To Love Him" The song is about how a

girl feels for a boy, but its words are strangely applicable... "To know, know, know him is to love, love, love him Just to see him smile, makes my life worthwhile. To know, know, know him is to love, love ,love him, And I do..." Jesus put it in these words: "Love the Lord you God with all you heart with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment" (Matt.22:37). Our knowledge of Jesus Christ must be both personal and loving... More about the knowledge tomorrow....

Have a great start to your week.... Begin it with a RAK or two... Love mark Phil.4:11

02/24/2015
More Knowledge

"I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes me will never be thirsty" (Jn.6:35).

How satisfying is it when you are asked a trivia question by someone, and you know the answer? There is an innate quality within us that almost bursts open when we can call on some knowledge that we have retained. For me, the satisfaction of having a student grasp something I had been trying to teach, made teaching all worthwhile. Jesus wants us to know that when come to a knowledge of Him, that our satisfaction is great. So great that he compares it to food for someone that is hungry and liquid to one who is thirsty. Before the apostle Paul (Saul) came to a knowledge of Jesus Christ, he was a very prominent man in the Jewish faith. But his true satisfaction came when he was willing to forego the advantage he had in Judaism, and replace it with the knowledge of Jesus... Along with a satisfying knowledge, there is an intellectual one also. Jesus doesn't expect us to empty our minds of everything except Him, but He wants us to actually use our minds as well. Therefore, we should desire to know all that the Word reveals about Him. That includes both His human and divine nature along with how he serves as our priest and king, Savior and shepherd... We must look at His works both past and present and see how they dovetail into our present and future as we look at where He is today... The knowledge of Jesus Christ calls on us to be intelligent in our choices and brings us great satisfaction.... More tomorrow...

Have a wonderful day... Do good and give God the credit.... Love mark Phil.4:11

02/25/2015
Knowing Even More

"So that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col.2:2-3).

Have you ever read a book that captured you so completely that you couldn't put it down? You got so into it that you did not want it to end. This is what I call excitement, because the more you know, the more you want to know! When we start learning about Jesus, as we see in today's verses, we find that in Him "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge..." I would challenge you today to read from today's verses (2-3), all the way down to verse ten (10) and meditate upon them. We will come to see in Him "all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form..." (V 9). We'll also find out that in Him "we are given the fullness in Christ, who is head over every power and authority..." (v 10). To me, what is so great about this excitement is that it grows, and as we become more mature in Him, it only whets our appetite for more... The last aspect of this mini-series about knowledge is this: It is the key to joy... It is the key to joy no matter what our circumstances may be. "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" (Phil.4:4) There is a peace that fills our hearts when we find the joy of the knowledge of Jesus Christ... When Jesus told His disciples that He was leaving soon, they were saddened, as we would have been too...He concluded with these words... "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (Jn.16:33). As we grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ we should find an excitement that is punctuated by joy....

Have a great day... Make your little part of the world better.... Love mark Phil.4:11

02/26/2015
Growing In Knowledge

"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...." (2 Pet.3:18).

I want to finish this series on the knowledge of Jesus Christ on this high note. It is totally up to each of us to actually grow into a great knowledge of Jesus. Every Bible Study, Bible Class, or Life Group we attend will help us greatly. There is nothing like an exchange of ideas about Jesus with a group that is hungry to know more about Him to increase our knowledge. We may use a book or study guide to direct us in a certain path, but we must always remember that these are written by men. But for the real scoop when it comes to knowing more about Jesus, there is no substitute for going back to the actual source itself... The Bible! We can grow by reading about the man and His life in the four gospels. We can learn and grow by reading those prophecies about Him in the Old Testament... Isaiah 9:6-7 or Micah 5:2 come to mind. When we delve into the Book of Acts we find the only true history of the church and its beginnings that we are to emulate. The book is quick to point out that the church is founded upon Jesus, His life, death, and resurrection... When we dig into the epistles, we find that they reveal much about

what Jesus' present work as our Eternal King and High Priest are all about. I guess what I am saying is that if we wish to learn more about Jesus and grow in that knowledge, we need to commit ourselves to a study of His Word. I think we ever know enough, that we don't need to be reminded of this often...

Have a great day.... Let His light shine through you... Love mark Phil.4:11

02/27/2015
God Gets The Honor

"In the same way, let your lights shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Matt.5:16).

When we were kids and our parents sent us out of the house, they had an expectation of how we would act. Of course, part of it was that we would behave ourselves and be safe, but there was something else. When we acted well, it brought honor to the whole family. My mom was proud that I became a school teacher, and bragged about it to her friends and felt honored. It is a pretty amazing thing to think about, but it is true that our daily actions as Christians have an effect on God's purposes and His work in the world... Whether it is the things we do, our decisions, or even the things we think about, we either bring honor to God or dishonor. In exercising the free will that God has given to us, these great consequences hang in the balance. "Don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God?" (Jas.4:4) Our intent in life should be to do the things that impact our relationship with God in a positive way. The very height of our ambition ought to be all about bringing honor to God in both the big and small things that we do... We are the containers that He has chosen to work within and we should desire to be the ones worthy of His use. When we exhibit the "fruit of the spirit," (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control) (Gal.5:22) we show God's goodness to all those around us. As we do the right things, God gets the honor... By the way, mom had it right...

Have a great day... T G I F... Today God Is First.... Love mark Phil.4:11

02/28/2015
Some Fun Questions

I hope you enjoy straining your brain a bit to answer these Bible questions. Have fun...

- _____ 1. When he was to be presented as the king of Israel, where was Saul hiding? (a) in the barn, (b) in the baggage, (c) in a cave, (d) he wasn't hiding.

_____ 2. What was the name of Aaron's wife? (a) Elisheba, (b) Miriam, (c) Zipporah, (d) it didn't say.

_____ 3. Jesus was a high priest after the order of.... (a) David, (b) Judah, (c) Levi, (d) Melchizedek.

_____ 4. Paul and Silas were praying in prison at about what time? (a) 10, (b) 11, (c) midnight, (d) it didn't say.

_____ 5. In the Book of Titus, who were called liars, evil brutes, and lazy gluttons? (a) Gentiles, (b) Samaritans, (c) Cretans, (d) Galatians.

_____ 6. In the Book of Luke, who took away the key to knowledge? (a) Scribes, (b) Lawyers, (c) Priests, (d) all of these.

_____ 7. In what book do we first find the mention of a holy kiss? (a) Acts, (b) Romans, (c) 1st Corinthians, (d) 1st Timothy.

_____ 8. Who sneezed 7 times in the Bible? (a) the Shunammite's son, (b) Aaron's son, (c) Moses' son, (d) Sidney's son.

_____ 9. In what book of the Bible is Spain mentioned? (a) Galatians, (b) Ephesians, (c) Romans, (d) it isn't.

_____ 10. God said, If anyone kills Cain, he will suffer vengeance _____ times over. (a) 3, (b) 7, (c) 10, (d) many.

Have a great start to your weekend and a glorifying and uplifting day of worship on His Day....
Love mark Phil.4:11