

Empire Church of the Brethren
Sunday Service Sermons

19 April 2026

What does it mean to Know God?

Text: "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." *Ps. 46:10*

Psalm 46 refers to some great catastrophe.

It tells us also that God has delivered his people.

The Psalm is filled with thunder and lightning, a tumultuous scene.

Though the earth tremble beneath us God is sure and faithful and can be trusted, always.

That is the message of this Psalm.

God is in control, of everything.

Verse ten states: "Give in, he cries, admit that I am God, high over the nations, high above the earth."

Against the background of catastrophe and divine deliverance, the psalmist is telling us what it means to know God.

In the very eye of the social hurricane, in the very citadel of history, God reigns; and man may know this sovereign God.

What does it mean to know God?

Three words summarize this text: Surrender, experience, and sovereignty.

There is, then, a three fold answer to that question.

To know God means surrendering to him completely.

There is a surrender that saves us; and it is this that God, through the psalmist, is urging us to do: "Be still," "give in," "surrender," "know that I am God,"

When powerful enemies came against Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, he met the crises through the surrender of prayer.

"O our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you."

And see God, "Our eyes are upon you."

Jehoshaphat evaluated his armies: "We have no power to face this vast army."

He judged his own leadership, "We do not know what to do."

And he appraised his God, "Our eyes are upon you."

He is saying, "We throw ourselves on your mercy, for we have no other hope."

That is surrender.

Jehoshaphat could have continued groping blindly; he could have surrendered to the situation. Instead, he surrendered to God in a complete commitment.

Our extremity is God's opportunity.

Our weakness is the opportunity for God's strength.

We come to know God when we surrender completely to his will.

This the first step toward a knowledge of God; and the second step stems from the first.

To know God means experiencing him personally. "Surrender, and know that I am God."

The psalmist's expression means "to know God intimately."

It means to know by experience, to make the pragmatic test.

God is available to his people.

He is invincible against his enemies.

Everyone is challenged to experience God personally.

No vicarious experience will do.

It is a great thing to be the heir of a great tradition, but it is a tragic thing to suppose that we can substitute tradition for personal experience.

Jacob, returning from his twenty-year sojourn in Padan-aram, met God on the banks of the Jabbok River.

In his prayer he said, "O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, O Lord, who said to me, 'Go back to your country and your relatives'".

"Who said to me" is the key phrase in Jacob's prayer.

The God who had been the God of his grandfather, Abraham, and of his father, Isaac, was now his God also.

He had come to know him for himself, to know him by personal experience..

Are we founding our hope on a Christ who has spoken to us and to whom we speak daily, face-to-face and heart-to-heart?

Is our religion firsthand, personal experience?

At the end of his ordeal, after talking with God face-to-face, Job said, "My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes."

To know God means recognizing his sovereignty.

Our text also says, "I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

In any true sense, we do not know God until we recognize his sovereignty, his rule over all the earth.

This was the faith of Israel in the Old Testament.

The Old Testament expresses the sovereignty of God in many ways: He rides upon the clouds. He scatters the hoarfrost like ashes. He calls out the stars by number.

The most crucial area of His sovereignty is not in nature but in the movement of historical events.

He overrules Pharaoh, uses the Assyrian as the rod of His anger, and anoints Cyrus, king of Persia, to do His will.

This was the faith of Jesus.

He was nurtured in Israel's faith in God's majestic sovereignty, but to that he added the quality of God's seeking love, which is able to triumph over every conceivable experience of humankind.

This was the faith of our fathers.

An astonishing aspect of the Bible is how seldom any word such as chance or luck or fortune occurs.

The Bible is concerned with the kingdom of God, and in that kingdom there is neither accident nor luck.

Our fathers believed this.

The ultimate control was always God's.

This must be our faith today.

It must be if we are to know God as he is.

Do we believe that Jesus is King of Kings and Lord of Lords?

Do we believe that all authority and power, all dominion and rule are in his hands?

As Christians do we glory in the fact that we are children of the King?

We can know God; and all who know him are secure.

This world belongs to God and not to any of its leaders or inhabitants.

God cannot be defeated.

Neither evil nor the designs of evil people can ultimately triumph.

God is revealed in His Son Jesus The Christ.

Jesus, The Christ, is the author of our salvation.

That He is the leader of the group of people called Christian, He is the founder of a school of thought called Christianity, and a pioneer who blazed a trail for others to follow, Followers of The Way.

We are made a little lower than the angels and commissioned to be stewards of the earth.

We were created with a unique dignity and a special dominion.

But we have not lived up to his expectation.

In Jesus we see what mankind was intended to be.

Jesus was created a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor that he should die for every person on earth.

Though the human race is not what God intended we can see what God intends in a person through Jesus Christ.

In Christ the complete person, human beings can be restored to the place of Glory, honor, and responsibility for which God created the human race.

The goal of Jesus was to bring the human race into God's family.

Jesus came to help us to reflect God's character.

He came to bring many into God's glory.

Meaning God's character and the completion of God's perfection of mankind.

The purpose of Jesus in bringing people into God's family is to reflect God's character now and forever.

Jesus came to set believers aside for a holy purpose.

He came to sanctify each person who would be His.

Set apart for God's use to further His Kingdom on earth.

Jesus came to equip us to help God with this mission.

Jesus came to help move his people from where they are to where they need to be.

Christ helps people develop.

Jesus not only redeems but he also helps us to grow and develop into people God can use to further His Kingdom on earth.

Jesus give us an excellent example of what a human being can be.

He expressed his desire that people come into God's family to reflect God's character.

He helps us become what God wants us to be.

Let's follow our wonderful, Loving leader into a life of service to God.