

**Chapter 1 : Sermons and Sermon Lectionary Resources**

*Knowing The Ways Of God Adrian Rogers Exodus Turn your Bibles to Ex I want to speak to you on this subject, Knowing the ways of God. Now Moses is facing a great task and because of the task that he's facing, hit prays a special prayer and it is recorded in the Scripture that we are about to read in vs.*

Three Preaching Methods Expository, Textual, Topical I have found it hard at times to communicate the difference between the three kind of preaching styles: Expository, Textual, and Topical. You may have heard these terms dropped from the lips of preachers before. Some are more popular than others depending on denominations and movements. Some are more noticed in the Bible. Some are more useful at times. Some are more vulnerable to personal influence. Some are more clear and direct. But all are certainly acceptable. You just have to know what they are and when to use them. I thought it would be good to pass some of these explanations and points on to you as well. So, the following is by no means an thorough explanation of the three methods. Rather, it is a survey and brief explanation of the three methods. How to Preach Biblically. Before I dive into these explanations, let me first say that these may not accurately reflect all interpretations of these methods. They do, however, lay down a general idea and, I think, a good framework. Also, it assumes that the preacher preaching using any method below is teaching the Scriptures and not his own ideas. That is, proclaim the truth that is in the Bible accurately see 2 Timothy 4 in context because God is judging.

**Expository Preaching** This method is generally used by those who hold the Bible in high regard. Exposting the Bible is essentially explaining the Bible. This preaching method is generally verse by verse and, over a period of time, covers entire books of the Bible. Expository preaching will familiarize you with the meaning of the passage, its context, its language, and more. Here are some practical reasons that make it popular: Because all of Scripture is God-breathed and for our benefit, there is not a page of Scripture that is not helpful to our faith, so we should examine it all. From church history we know that influential preachers such as Justin Martyr preached expository sermons that went through books of the Bible line by line. It allows non-Christians and new Christians to follow along more easily than if the preachers jumps around the Bible. It helps teach the congregation to study the Bible for themselves. It helps people to read and study along with the sermons each week. It makes it easier for people to refer back to what they have learned in Scripture. It forces the authority to reside in the text and not the teacher. It trains people how to interpret the Scripture.

**Textual Preaching** Preaching through a section of the Bible or section of a book of the Bible straight through is the Textual method. It is similar to the Expository method except that entire books are generally not covered. In other words, a preacher may do a month long series covering a section of one particular book of the Bible. This section will have a main theme or thought flowing through it. For example, a preacher may preach on the first two chapters of Luke leading up to Christmas. Here are some reasons that make this method popular: It shows the consistency of Scripture by linking sections of Scripture together as a thematic series. It allows the preacher with a revolving church where people move in and out a lot e. It allows the preacher to work in smaller chunks of four to eight weeks, providing flexibility to deal with issues as they arise. This is especially helpful if a church is adding new services and campuses and needs to remain numble to synchronize new preaching series with changes in the church. It allows the preacher to work around the Christian calendar with mini-series on the incarnation around Christmas, crucifixion in the dark winter months, and resurrection around Easter.

**Topical Preaching** This is probably the most common method in Evangelicalism today. Instead of sticking to a certain book or section in a book of the Bible, it remains true to a topic or subject within the Bible. In other words, the preaching is done with several texts throughout the Bible. This method requires the people jump around quite a bit throughout the preaching in order to keep up. Generally, for the sake of time, preachers tend to not provide contexts for the passages which can be tempting to a preacher to add his own ideas in the passage "or eisegete the text. It has been said that when preaching Topically, it is helpful to have the passages in a handout or on a large presentation screen. Here are some reasons why this method is favorable: The ability to trace a theme through multiple books of the Bible, showing the consistency of Scripture. The ability to preach with multiple perspectives and avoid the common error of reductionism, which

is looking only at what one section of Scripture says on an issue rather than at all that the Bible says on an issue. The ability to address most thoroughly questions and controversies that arise. The ability to select the most appropriate verses from Scripture on a given topic. These three methods can all be used effectively in the pulpit and general preaching platforms. Hopefully this clears up some of the confusion and also helps some of us understand when certain methods are better to put to use at different times. Posted by Jacob Abshire on March 5th, -

**Chapter 2 : Knowing God - Andrew Wommack Ministries**

*children's sermons that have given evidence of a lack of this knowledge, and I suspect that I have preached a few. Yet we are not talking about children's sermons, but about sermons for adults and children that acknowledge a child's way of knowing. We meet two alliterative characters to capture the challenge: Magical Maggie and Literal Larry.*

They are impressed by external miracles. They eagerly seek for healing and for material blessings. Most of their prayers too are related to such earthly matters, in which they want to see God act on their behalf and bless them in the physical realm. This is because they are in a state of spiritual babyhood. Eternal life does not refer to eternal existence. Eternal existence will be experienced by all human beings - even by those who go to hell. But very few enjoy eternal life. The more we know God and the Lord Jesus the more we will have of eternal life. Today, under the new covenant, that privilege is offered to all of us. And when they experience an external miracle like getting a job, or earning more money, or getting a new house, or finding a wife or a husband, or experiencing healing, they are excited and are quick to testify about these matters, because these are the greatest things in life for them. If these are the things that still excite us, then we have not seen the glory of the new covenant. It is only when we understand God and His ways that we will be able, for example, to understand what "worldliness" really is. Many believers think of worldliness as something external, such as wearing lipstick and ornaments and fancy clothes or having expensive electronic gadgets in the home etc. A person may get rid of all the external marks of worldliness and have a good testimony before men, and yet be thoroughly worldly in his way of thinking. But if anyone possesses more than them then such a person IS worldly! And when their own standard of living goes up, their gauge of what is worldly is adjusted upwards accordingly! But no believer is the perfect standard. Jesus alone is our Standard. To recognise worldliness, we must know Jesus Christ. Only in the light of His life can we see what is worldly and what is not. The Pharisees became self-righteous in their pursuit of righteousness because they did not know God. They pursued righteousness without hungering and thirsting after God Himself. We cannot get rid of Phariseeism merely by avoiding the acts of the Pharisees. We can, for example, hear of some of the marks of a Pharisee and perhaps get rid of those marks from our lives. But that would be only snipping off the fruit from a bad tree. The bad fruit will again appear on another branch. A believer can spend his entire life merely snipping off various fruits of Phariseeism from his life and end up as a greater Pharisee at the end than he was at the beginning of his Christian life! When we know God however, we will realise that the only way to be saved from self-righteousness is by chopping the tree down from the roots itself. Consider the matter of the "healing crusades" that are conducted everywhere these days. Millions of rupees are collected for such crusades from gullible believers. It is rare to find a believer who can discern that there is nothing of the spirit of Christ in such commercialised "Christianity". When you know Jesus Christ however, you will compare everyone who claims to be a servant of God with Jesus Himself. The Holy Spirit has emphatically stated that in the last days there will be a flood of deceitful spirits invading the world, who will lead many astray 1 Tim. Jesus often warned His disciples to be careful that they were not deceived. He mentioned deception as the first sign of the end of the age Matt. The only way to escape such deception is by knowing the Lord. Then we will be able to discern between what glorifies God and what does not. Are we to just imitate the standards adopted by other godly brothers? The Bible seems to imply that imitating the actions of others can lead to our being drowned See Heb. We are to imitate the faith of others not their actions See Heb. We are to understand the principles by which a brother arrived at a decision, and not just imitate his actions. Let me illustrate this with an example. I was told of a brother who, knowing that frugality was an essential part of godliness, used to put tooth-paste across only half of his tooth-brush, so that his tooth-paste tube would last twice as long. But you can imitate that practice every day and yet never become godly!! It is the principle of frugality that that brother lived by that we can imitate and not the measure of tooth-paste he used on his tooth-brush!! If your teeth are bad, you may need to use a full length of tooth-paste on your brush, even if you are a godly man!! Our passion should be to know God better and better, because this is eternal life. We are going to spend all eternity getting to know God more and more. This is why eternity will not be boring for anyone whose passion is to know God.

Our earthly life too will then not be boring any more. God is always alert to the needs of people and does all that He can to meet those needs. When we partake of this Divine nature, we too will become like that - always alert to the needs and problems of those around us and doing everything we can in order to meet those needs! This will involve a great deal of sacrifice on our part often. We need therefore to ask ourselves whether we are willing to pay this price for partaking of the Divine nature. Our Adamic nature is the exact opposite of this Divine nature. The life of Adam is thoroughly selfish and makes us alert only to our own needs and to the needs of our own family members. In fact it is so full of selfishness and jealousy that it does not want the needs of others to be met even by another. When man sinned, God placed cherubs in front of the tree of life with a sword that turned in every direction to guard the way to that tree. The tree of life symbolises eternal life - knowing God. Through this sword placed in front of the tree of life, God was symbolically showing Adam that if anyone now wanted to partake of the tree of life, he had to first experience the sword falling on his own selfish life. We read in Genesis 3: There too God was teaching them the same lesson - that the only way for them to be clothed now was through the way of sacrifice and death. Adam and Eve had tried to clothe themselves at first without any "death" - with just fig leaves. But God threw those leaves away and showed them the right way to be clothed. So we see right from the beginning God emphasising sacrifice as the way for man to fellowship with Him and to be clothed with His nature. God told Cain that his fundamental problem was that he "did not intend well" towards his brother Abel Gen. Jude speaks of those who walk in "the way of Cain" Jude They are those who do not intend well towards their brothers. It is good for all of us to have a spiritual check-up in this matter. Can you honestly say that you desire the very best for all the brothers and sisters in your local church and for their families? Can you also say that you desire the very best for other believers whom you know in other denominations? Then widen the circle still further and ask yourself if you desire the very best for all the people whom you know, including your relatives, your enemies and those who have harmed you in any way. If you find a disturbance in your heart instead of a rejoicing when something good happens to another person or to his children, or if you sense a rejoicing in your heart instead of a grief when something evil happens to him or his family, what do such attitudes indicate? Just this that the life of Adam is alive and active in you. If you are honest with yourself, you will soon discover whether you are walking the way of Cain or not. You must be quick when you see that evil Adamic life within you to put it to death, if you want the fire and the anointing of God to rest upon you constantly. He will always intend well towards all. He will never get angry in any matter that concerns himself and he will never quarrel with anyone. We may not realise it, but the attitude we have in our hearts is often reflected on our faces. If you intend well towards all, your face will always beam with the joy of the Lord. Many believers are walking in the way of Cain. Beneath their weak smiles and the "Praise the Lord"s that come from their lips, are found wrong attitudes towards their fellow-believers. When people turn against you and do evil to you, God uses them to give you a scan of your real heart condition. Jesus intended well even towards Judas Iscariot. God desires the very best for all people. The gospel message is that we too can partake of this nature. When Adam and Eve sinned, God did not curse them. He cursed the serpent. But to Adam and Eve, He gave that wonderful promise of the coming of Christ as "the seed of the woman" Gen. This is Divine love - a love that is willing to lay down its life in order to save the one it loves. When we see the depth of the love of God, we see how far short of it we come ourselves. We can never produce this life of God ourselves, even if we strive after it for a million years. It has to be given to us by God. The Holy Spirit has come down to flood our hearts with this love Rom. Only one who is willing to live by this principle of sacrificial love can be used by God to build His church on earth. In 2 Chronicles 3: God sanctified that spot and determined that His house would be built on that very spot years later. And this is where God builds His house the church even today - wherever he finds those who have the spirit and the faith of Abraham. In Eden, Adam and Eve as it were, told God by their action of eating the forbidden fruit that created things that brought them pleasure were more precious to them than the Creator Himself.

*Children's sermons honor children's ways of knowing, but preaching a children's sermon is not the only way to reach the children. It is possible to preach in a manner that appeals to both adults and children without reducing the sermon to a children's sermon.*

Biblical Foundations 10 Psalm A Psalm of David. The reality that God is that personally involved with the lives of His people, His spiritual children Heb. Still, this truth was wonderful to him and gave him great comfort. As our heavenly parent, God is thoroughly acquainted with us as His children. He knows our make up He designed us , our ways, and situations, mentally, emotionally, spiritually and physically. He knows our weaknesses, strengths, thought patterns, motives, and habits. What a wonderful example for us as earthly parents. Of course, parents are anything but omniscient, though I often thought my mother had eyes in the back of her head. Nevertheless, this model of our heavenly Father shows us how parents need to observe and study their children that they might discern their physical, spiritual, and emotional needs. See also Jeremiah 1: For God, who is eternal and knows the future as well as the present, this has been known from all eternity. For the parent, it requires careful study to know their children, each one, as the individuals they are. As our heavenly Father searches us, so parents should search and know their children as best they can. Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way. The goal is to note the hurtful ways in order to help a child walk in the everlasting way of life, an abundant life here on earth with eternal rewards in heaven. May I suggest two points of application here: Second, as part of the training process, children need to recognize, appreciate, and respond to the role of their parents as given by God to be change agents not just diapers! As David yielded to his heavenly parent, so children should be taught to do the same through understanding and respecting the role God has given their parents. No one can know a child like a parentâ€”if the parent is paying attention and walking prayerfully and closely with the Lord. KJV Even a child is known by his actions, by whether his conduct is pure and right. But what do parents look for? What can they expect from their little ones? Scripture sets down a number of truths that guide us, but perhaps the place to begin is our base verse, Proverbs This emphasis is not apparent in the English as it is in the Hebrew text. And certainly, since their children are trusts from God, they need to dedicate these little ones to God and be dedicated themselves to the training process. But what is the standard for the process? The principle here should be obvious. Training should be done according to the measure, the capacity, or ability of something. But what is that? First, we know that God, in His sovereignty, has a plan, a course He wants each child to followâ€”an orbit for him or her. Second, we know that every child has a specific make up as an individual with certain abilities, talents, and tendenciesâ€”a particular bent. While derek does not have this specific meaning, the use of the verb form provides us with an interesting illustration considering the nature of children according to inheritance factors and as God has designed them. To do this, they must prayerfully observe, study, and recognize the individual characteristics or bent of each of their children and train them accordingly. Bible teaching, church, and growing up in a Bible-teaching home are all vital and a necessary part of the process, but each child needs to be dealt with as a unique individual and nothing should be taken for granted. The same environment does not mean that each child will respond in the same way. A blanket approach may not work. Some biblical illustrations of the different ways children will respond to the same environment and teaching within the same home are Cain and Abel, Jacob and Esau, and Absalom and Solomon. If the person using the bow does not recognize the way the bow is bent and tries to bend it differently, he will not only face a difficult task, but he may break the bow. In like manner, parents need to recognize the way their child is bent, both by the way God has designed them and by the way sin has affected them. This would suggest that children are not like a pliable piece of clay that may be molded anyway the parent chooses. This forms a necessary base and guide for what to expect from a child. Modern man says people are basically good, that our problems stem primarily from our environment. If we clean up the environment children will be fine. Isolate and place children in a perfect environment and problems will all but disappear. No one denies that environment will affect the character of a child negatively

or positively. But the Bible teaches us that the core or root problem of sinful behavior in children and the way they ultimately turn out goes beyond the environment. Though created in the image of God and without sin, Adam sinned and the race fell. But then in verse 3 we see that Adam had a son in his own likeness, according to his image. Due to the fall this not only included physical, mental, and emotional hereditary factors, but also a sinful nature or bent toward evil, a nature that Scripture defines as incurably wicked, evil, deceptive, and one that can only be known by God cf. If we are to truly know ourselves and our children, we must know what God reveals about the heart of man from His Word. Who can understand it? It cannot be eradicated, removed, changed or saved. If, as Jeremiah clearly points out in verses , the ways of blessing and cursing are so clear and distinct, why would anyone ever choose the path of sin? The answer is simple. But where does this sinful condition come from? David had just confessed his sin in this Psalm and acknowledged that he could not blame special circumstances or environment. He was a sinner and had been so from birth. David was saying he was born in a state of sin, a sinner with a sinful nature, with tendencies toward evil. So what can a parent expect? Because the child has committed sin? A child is sinful because even within a little innocent child there are natural tendencies toward evil like telling lies to protect himself from the consequences of bad behavior. Why is it that an undisciplined child, one left to himself and his natural bent, brings disgrace to a parent Prov. Because, even though little children are in one sense innocent, there is a sinful principle at work within that moves them toward selfish and sinful behavior. So children have to be taught not to lie or steal. They must be taught to be unselfish, to love and respect others, and to respect authority. The Two Sides of the Coin To train up a child according to his way means parents need to know and believe that every child is born with two tendencies, a bent toward evil rebellious tendencies and a bent toward good that which can be used for the glory of God and the blessing of others. The Bent Toward Evil 1 General tendencies or inherent sinfulness. From our original parent, Adam, all children receive a sinful nature. To train children up accordingly means the parent will not be surprised but aware of the tendencies toward rebellion and self-will at the expense of others. Understanding this should help parents become more patient and less frustrated when their little angel shows rebellious tendencies or keeps on pursuing certain self-centered trends. We can know the little guy is having a battle with their sinful nature just like we are. After all, they are chips off the old block! Knowing and understanding this will aid in promoting patience and understanding, but they should never excuse and overlook bad behavior or attitudes. The child may even want to do what is right, but because of inherent sinfulness, weakness, spiritual ignorance, and inner struggle, he needs the special help, training, and discipline supplied by the parent. Since this sinful principle cannot be eradicated or truly changed and will be with the child for life, the parent must be committed to moving the child from external controls law to internal controls grace so the child learns to live from his or her own convictions of faith and an intimate relationship with God through Christ. Every child has a specific bent or trend toward sinful behavior received from his immediate family through heredity genetically and from environmental factors conditions at home and society. And every child responds differently to his or her environment. Certainly, it is often difficult to know where heredity ends and environment begins, but one thing is sure, the atmosphere in which a child is raised can and does affect the hereditary tendencies. While each child has an inherent sinful bent, each child is also very different in the way this will be manifested. This requires careful observation and knowledge of each child. One child may demonstrate tendencies toward inferiority or a sense of inadequacy, while another child in the same family can be self confident and think he can do anything and better than anyone else. One needs to have their confidence in what God is able to do through them and with them strengthened. Abraham and his descendants provide us with a good illustration of how environment, perhaps combined with temperament types, can either promote or hinder sinful character traits. In order to protect himself, Abraham had a tendency to lie. On more than one occasion he lied about his wife Sarah. She was a very beautiful woman and fearing that the king of the land to which he was journeying would kill him in order to take Sarah, he claimed she was his sister. I am sure he justified this in his mind because she was his half sister cf. Evidently this character trait carried over with his son, for in Genesis 26 we find that Isaac did precisely the same thing to protect himself from Abimelech. Scripture teaches us that God is very much involved with children from the moment of conception He opens and closes the womb through the entire process of the formation of the child in the womb of its

mother to its birth cf. A child, then, should not only be viewed as a visit from the Lord, but as a special trust given as a stewardship from God. In view of John 9: We see this regularly in our society because of alcohol and drug related birth defects. Even then, we must never think God is not sovereignly involved. One teacher who wanted to illustrate the faultiness of human reasoning gave the following situation to a class of students: How would you advise a mother who was pregnant with her fifth child based on the following facts. Her husband had syphilis. Their first child was born blind. Their second child died.

*Paul describes ways of knowing God, and ways of knowing Jesus Christ, and ways of knowing the Holy Spirit, that are thoroughly intermingled and nearly impossible to separate, not only from one another, but from our own experience.*

The articles sought to give a very basic answer to that question from the Old and New Testaments. But simply knowing about God is not adequate for life with God; we must know Him personally. Thus we need to ask, how can I know God? The Call to Know God When we speak of knowing God, it is important to understand that we are not talking about abstract or speculative thought concerning God or mystical experiences but about coming alive to God through Jesus Christ and surrendering ourselves to Him in grateful love Rom. The English word know in this verse is a translation of the Greek word ginosko, which, in this context, means an experiential knowing, not simply an intellectual understanding of facts about God or Jesus or the Bible. This relationship begins when we come alive to God -- that is, when, by grace, we are awakened from the state of spiritual death into which everyone is born, and receive the eternal life Jesus offers to those who trust in Him for salvation. The first part, recognizing and turning from our sins, is repentance; the second part, trusting in Jesus and His atoning death on the cross to forgive our sins, is faith. Coming alive to God requires both. Jesus described this as being born from above or born of the Holy Spirit. Without rebirth by the Holy Spirit, a person cannot see, perceive, understand, or know God or His kingdom. The Call to Go Deeper As vitally important as the new birth is, that is not the focus of this article. Here I will address what is involved in growing to know God more deeply after the new birth. This is a major and pervasive need in the American church today. The metaphor of birth provides a helpful way of understanding fuller implications of what it means to know God and to grow in that relationship. Just as a human being is physically born into the world and moves through a developmental cycle from infant to child to adolescent to adult, so a child of God is born spiritually and is called to move through a similar developmental cycle. These stages are mentioned in the New Testament. What does this mean? Spiritually the newest infant in Christ knows God, but not very well. As this baby grows in grace, he or she will progress toward maturity and, in doing so, will come to know God better and better. We have probably seen this if we have been believers for a while. What a joy it is to encounter an infant in Christ, a new convert, eager and zealous for the things of God. But what a blessing to meet a father or mother in Christ, a mature believer who has faithfully walked with God for decades and whose life is characterized by a degree of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control that is truly Christlike! This kind of mature relationship with God is what every believer is called to pursue. The opening chapters of Genesis paint a beautiful picture of Adam and Eve enjoying a personal relationship with God. The story of God and Abraham does the same. But Moses and David open a window into their hunger to know God more intimately. Their hunger for God is an example given to encourage our desire for God Rom. Knowing God more deeply was not the privilege of only a few luminaries in the Old Testament. God called all of His people to know Him personally and love Him supremely with heartfelt devotion. And through Jeremiah we hear, Thus says the Lord: For in these things I delight, declares the Lord. A notable New Testament example of hunger for God is the apostle Paul. Paul had had a dramatic encounter with Christ thirty years earlier on the road to Damascus, and he had had several other experiences with Him afterward, but he longed to know Him more deeply. His example shows us that no matter how long or how well we have known the Lord, there is always more. As noted above, Paul had known Christ for many years when he said his passion was to know Christ better. Nor is getting to know Christ better an automatic process; it takes real effort. Is effort contrary to grace? Grace is opposed to earning law but not to effort. Effort is a vital part of how grace operates in sanctification. Thus Paul, the apostle of grace, went on to say to the Philippians: Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. Doing this, of course, is utterly dependent upon our being filled with the Holy Spirit daily, for He alone can supply the power we need which Paul emphasizes in Romans 8, Galatians 5, and

Ephesians 5. And the rewards of our Spirit-empowered efforts far transcend the greatest earthly pleasures! But it is not just Paul who urges us onward. In each case, those who seek are the ones who find. How do we press on? God offers everything we need in order to grow into deeper fellowship with Him and His Son, but we must embrace it. He gives the milk, but we must drink it. What is the spiritual milk we should long for? In light of his statements in 1: It is the Holy Spirit, who brings us to new life in Christ in the first place. But that is only the beginning. When Jesus returned to heaven, He handed over to the Holy Spirit His role of teaching, nurturing, strengthening, guiding, and encouraging His followers; the Holy Spirit brings us into union with Christ and is thus called the Spirit of Christ Rom. The Spirit now dwells in us and applies in our lives all the benefits that Christ secured for us on the cross: He assures us of forgiveness and salvation, reveals Christ to us in ever-deeper ways, empowers us for holy living, imparts spiritual gifts for ministry and kingdom mission, and guides and directs us to glorify Christ in everything we do – and much more. Scriptures What then, are the main sources of spiritual milk that the Spirit gives to mature us in grace and help us know God more intimately? The Holy Scriptures are first. Communication is essential for knowing anyone, including God; and it is primarily through the words of Scripture that God speaks to us. These are God-breathed words that the Holy Spirit inspired holy men of old to record over the centuries, words that the Spirit now illuminates our minds to understand and empowers us to obey. The Scriptures are our only reliable source of knowledge about who God is; what He is like; what His will is; what His plans and purposes are; what He has done in the past; what He will do in the future; who we are; what life is all about; how we can know, love, and serve Him; what are the many promises He gives us; and how we can fulfill His purposes in the world. It is another essential means for knowing God better. This seems to happen more often when we are quietly listening for His word on a particular matter. And the many promises of God throughout the Bible give us even more. As we walk with God through the ups and downs of life, lifting up our prayers to Him in faith and receiving His answers, our experience with God and our trust in Him grow. And, as the years pass, we develop a history of personal dealings with God that deepens our knowledge of Him, our faith in Him, and our love for Him. The Church As vital as Scripture and prayer are, they are not enough. The church is meant to be a vital incubator for growing in the knowledge and love of God. The church was born at Pentecost through the Spirit-empowered preaching of the Holy Scriptures. The church is neither a building nor an institutional bureaucracy. In the church, the Spirit empowers the preaching of the Scriptures, enlivens our worship and communion with the Father and the Son, deepens our bonds of fellowship with other believers, enables us to care for and minister to one another in love, and sends us out into the world on mission. This community of Christ is our family. In it we meet Christ in one another and experience His transforming power together. Seeking God Are you content with your Christian life, or do you long for something more? Do you hunger and thirst for God? Is He the desire of your heart? Do you really want to know Him more intimately and follow Him more faithfully? The pursuit of God is a prerequisite for those who want to go deeper with God. He invites us to seek Him. He shows us the road to travel. And He provides the spiritual nourishment for the journey. But these will do us little good unless we make time in our hurried, distracted lives to use them. Many of us need to take the advice of Dallas Willard: You must relentlessly eliminate hurry from your life. This does not mean withdrawing from normal life and adopting a monastic life. They led active lives in the world, but their lives were not filled with the clutter, distractions, and chronic busyness that fills our lives today. They were focused, they had priorities, they marched to the beat of a different Drummer; they sought to please an audience of One. No matter where they were or what they were doing, their inner compass was oriented toward God – His presence, His will, and His purposes. Is that what you long for? If the desire of your heart is to know God more intimately, that is a sign that the grace of God is drawing you. Your part is to respond by setting yourself to seek after and pursue Him Matt. Those who seek will find Jer. The following suggestions, drawn from Scripture and demonstrated over many centuries of church history, will be helpful as you seek Him in the days ahead: Build Christ-centered friendships there, and join a Bible study or prayer group composed of people who want to know God better Heb. Find a couple of like-minded believers of your own gender and meet regularly to pray and encourage one another in your pursuit of Christ. Read Scripture daily, asking God to open the eyes of your heart and teach you Ps. Meditation takes biblical truth deeper into our minds and hearts with powerful effect.

**Chapter 5 : Knowing Jesus vs. Knowing About Jesus - A Question for Readers | Cerulean Sanctum**

*Children's Ways of Knowing seeks to explore the experiences of children as they make sense of their environment. Prime Book Box for Kids. Story time just got better.*

Certainly many things contribute to a full and happy life, but I hope all believers would agree that knowing God is absolutely the greatest and most important of all. Without that, everything else loses meaning. The Apostle Paul put it this way in Philippians 3: He was the elite of the religious class. People knew him and they wanted to be like him. He had been a Christian for decades at the time he wrote this. He had traveled the world and been used of God as few men ever had or ever will be. Yet here he was still seeking to know God more Phil. Paul was saying that the best life had to offer and the greatest accomplishments and pursuits of any man, when compared to knowing God, ranked in the same category as manure. What does it say, when the man who wrote half of the New Testament was still pursuing knowing God decades after his conversion? Certainly there has to be a depth of knowing God that goes far beyond just getting saved. He said something very interesting in Ephesians 3: How can we know something if it passes knowledge? If we did, we would be filled with all His fullness. How do we get there? First of all, we have to realize that there is more to knowing God than just becoming a Christian. Multitudes of people have received salvation, and if they were to die, they would go straight into the presence of the Lord. Many Christians think our Father is the source of all their troubles and suffering. They think He uses those problems as tools to teach them something or change their behavior, even though the Word clearly proves the opposite James 1: Much of the blame for this falls on the church. The Bible says in Romans Knowing God eternal life is something we can have right now John 3: It is speaking of intimacy. To receive salvation and then stumble through life without experiencing intimacy with the Lord is to miss or ignore the most important part of what Jesus provided. Let me put it this way: This is where the vast majority of Christians live. So they get saved and then they get stuck. They are waiting on the sweet by and by, but struggling in the rough here and now. It begs the question, how do we get started in our pursuit of intimacy with the Lord? We can begin by spending time getting to know Him through His Word. The Apostle Peter said in 2 Peter 1: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: Knowing the Word is knowing God. I talk about the real meaning of eternal life, how to see with our hearts clearer than with our physical eyes, and much more. This is a series that may not sound really interesting on the surface, but it is one of the most important messages I teach. If you ever want to fulfill what God has called you to do, you must know Him personally, and I believe this message will make a huge difference in your relationship with the Lord.

**Chapter 6 : (Knowing God's Way) Knowing God's Ways - Sermon Index**

*Conformity to that death, where man by nature is set aside, and we have been crucified with Christ - that is a way of knowing the Lord. May the Lord use these thoughts to bring clearly into view the supreme importance and value of knowing Christ in resurrection life.*

The purpose of this paper is to explore theories and practices that support opportunities for children to engage in self-initiated, autonomous, and intrinsically motivated play both at school and at home. These ways of knowing are unique to children and often go unnoticed, unheard, and unobserved by adults. This moves further than simply thinking about how children learn, or how children interact with each other and with adults. Children have ways of being and existing in the universe that are fundamentally different from adult ways of being in the world. Christopher Day distinguished ways in which children encounter and utilize places and space from how adults experience space: Adult experience centers on how we use places; we know what they are for. To them, the world is still fresh- one big sensory exploratorium. Even single rooms, gardens, or behind-the-shed forgotten places can be whole palettes of mood, whole geographies of mountains and jungles, harbours and shops- places to live out fantasy through action. One of the chairs is South America, One of the chairs is a ship at sea, One is a cage for a great big lion, And one is a chair for me Shall I go off to South America? Shall I put out in my ship to sea? Or get in my cage and be lions and tigers? Or- shall I be only me? Heft was attempting to look at outdoor environments for children not from a descriptive perspective but from a perspective that looked at the use to which children might put the environment. What Heft found was that almost any object in an outdoor environment had a potential functional affordance for children, and that these potential affordances generally differed quite markedly from the uses that adults might ascribe to them. For the adult the principal features of this place would be the street, the path down, and the landing place. The child, particularly at an earlier school age, pays little attention to these elements. For him the main features are the wooden fence and the slopes. The fence which, for the adult, has the negative character of stopping movement, is for the child, exactly to the contrary, the very signal of movement. It invites the child to climb or jump on it or over it. Similarly, the slopes, which would have an indifferent or negative value for the adult, represent a provocative field of action for the child. If one takes the time to watch how children use space and objects when unhindered by adult cautions and proscriptions, one can begin to glimpse how very differently from adults children view not just the world itself, but the possibilities present in the world. In many ways the world for a child is full of possibilities that an adult has great difficulty seeing and understanding. What causes an airplane to fly in the sky? From a scientific perspective the adult answer might be more aligned with established principles and theories regarding aerodynamics and physics. The child makes meaning of the world in ways that help him or her become better able to navigate the complexities of everyday life. The needs of the child, in this context, are very different from the needs of the adult, and therefore the requirements for making meaning and understanding the world are likewise different. There are pedagogies, however, that eschew this view of children as individuals with no intrinsic capability to make meaning of the world on their own. These pedagogies emphasize the idea that children have unique ways of making sense of experiences in the world, and they emphasize student-initiated and teacher-supported engagement in the school. Constructivist pedagogy is an approach to teaching and learning based on the idea that learning is an active process in which students create their understanding of the world through encounters with ideas, concepts, physical sensations, and experiences. In this view meaning does not lie outside of the individual; meaning is constructed by the individual. George Hein drew a particularly fascinating distinction between the similar pedagogies of constructivism and discovery education. Constructivism, according to Hein, posits that: Not only do students have to be given the opportunity to experience, to measure, observe, interview, draw and perform; their products also need to be honored and validated on criteria other than their fidelity to an accepted canon. A compelling constructivist pedagogy can be found in the preschools of Reggio Emilia, in Italy Edwards, Gandini, and Forman, A central tenet of these schools is the belief that children and teachers can and should be co- creators of knowledge and understanding; there is not one ultimate knowledge that

teachers are duty-bound to transmit to children. Carolyn Edwards described the view of the child held by teachers in Reggio Emilia this way: Forman provided an example of the difference between display and documentation in looking at a single drawing by a child versus a videotape of the child creating the drawing, or a videotape showing how the child engaged in editing and revising his drawing to arrive at the final piece. Documentation is central to negotiated learning. The curriculum is child originated and teacher framed. The children discuss many interests, for example, what amusement rides would small birds enjoy. These interests are reframed into slightly more general concepts considered important by professional teachers. The common belief that runs through these practices is the idea that children have ways of experiencing and knowing the world that are different from those of adults. In the practices that I will describe now, there is a common theme that children are viewed by adults as worthy of respect, and as individuals who deserve to have their voices heard. Children might be given the opportunity to speak or participate in decision-making processes, but it is often adults who ultimately decide the outcomes of these processes. In the first phase of her study she was determined to find out what the young children thought about their current school. Methodologically, this posed some challenges. One-on-one and small group interviews with the children were also conducted, and children were given the opportunity to build a model of a new school using various sorts of blocks and construction materials. Mark Francis led a research and design project in California that attempted to access both child and adult perspectives on open space usage, centered around creating a new neighborhood playground in one project and creating a new school play space in another. Utilizing a number of methods, Francis found that children preferred open spaces that were challenging, that had water for playing, that allowed for change and discovery, that had loose parts that the children could use to construct games and toys and to engage in fantasy play, and that looked somewhat rough and unfinished. Adults, he found, preferred open spaces that were physically safe, that had fixed parts that could not be taken apart and reassembled in different ways, that had no water, that were static and familiar, and that looked neat and clean. These differences between adult and child preferences regarding open space qualities and features offer a vivid example of the very real differences in how children and adults view and see the world. The parallel ideas of knowledge and inquiry are fundamental to the work and practice of the researcher, regardless of discipline or field of study. These two concepts have been theorized, contested, explored, defined, argued, and developed over millennia. One of the most fascinating aspects of these concepts is that they are still debated, re-defined, and re-imagined today. This continued conversation over the meaning, use, and significance of these two ideas speaks to the power they hold over our ancient and ongoing struggle to confront deep and intrinsic questions: Foundationalist thinkers such as Rene Descartes and John Locke were in the former camp, though Descartes was a rationalist and Locke was an empiricist. Karl Popper was in the latter camp, and he quite clearly stated that there is no ultimate, absolute source of knowledge. This idea that there are ways of knowing and understanding the world outside of the dominant western European view was given support by the work of Johann Herder, who attempted to demonstrate the inappropriateness of viewing one culture through the lens or value-system of another culture. In order for there to be a dominant epistemology or structure there needs to be at least one, and probably more, subjugated way of knowing. While taking a slightly different path to organize their theoretical ideas, Minnich and Harding both explored the idea of multiple ways of knowing the world. They offered the key point that these multiple ways of knowing the world are not all afforded equal standing and equal power. Standpoint theory and other similar perspectives seek to reorient the conversation so that the almost invisible structures of power and domination embedded in and nurtured by white, male epistemologies are countered more fully by ways of knowing that are sidelined and ignored. This brief historical overview of ways of knowing has a thread running through it that is on one level obvious and on another incredibly exciting and opening to a world of fascinating possibilities. This thread is the idea that there are multiple ways of knowing the world, whether from cultural perspectives, gender perspectives, class or economic perspectives, or other perspectives less often discussed by postcolonial theorists. According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, children should be afforded the opportunity to participate in decisions that affect them, and they should be allowed to express themselves in all matters that concern them. In reality, adults frequently have difficulty with the idea of sharing power and control with children, and adults

are often not even aware of the possibility that children have deep and meaningful ways of understanding the world. I practiced his open-ended questions, the kind that seek no specific answers but rather build a chain of ideas without the need for closure. It was not easy. I felt myself always waiting for the right answer- my answer. The children knew I was waiting and watched my face for clues. While there might be an infinite number of ways of knowing the world, if one is not willing to take the time to listen and hear the unique perspectives of these different ways of understanding and making meaning, then a richness of diversity within the human race is neglected and ignored. A way of knowing the world is only as powerful as the willingness of others to listen and try to understand. Listening should be sensitive to the patterns that connect us to others. Our understanding and own being are a small part of a broader, integrated knowledge that holds the universe together. Listening should be open and sensitive to the need to listen and be listened to, and the need to listen not just with our ears but with all our senses. Listening should recognize the many languages, symbols, and codes that people use to express themselves and communicate. Listening is generated by curiosity, desire, doubt and uncertainty. Listening produces questions, not answers. Listening is an active verb, which involves giving an interpretation, giving meaning to the message and value to those who are being listened to. Listening is not easy. It requires a deep awareness and a suspension of our judgements and prejudices. It requires openness to change. It demands that we value the unknown and overcome the feelings of emptiness that we experience when our certainties are questioned She described how her colleague Bill seemed to have a remarkable way of listening to the young children in her classroom: He was truly curious. He had few expectations of what five-year-olds might say or think, and he listened to their responses with the anticipation one brings to the theater when a mystery is being revealed. Bill was interested not in what he knew to be an answer, but only in how the children intuitively approached a problem A multiplicity of ways of knowing is a source of richness, of depth, as we consider what it means to be human. There is a strength that can only be found in a willingness to listen to and attempt to understand different ways of creating meaning in and of the world. Location and publisher unknown. The idea of pluralism. In Anderson, Walter Truett Ed. De-confusing and re-constructing the postmodern world pp. New York, New York: Early childhood spaces, involving young children and practitioners in the design process. The Bernard Van Leer Foundation. Giving children a voice: Accessing the views and interests of three- four year old children in playgroup.

**Chapter 7 : Sermon - "Knowing God"**

*Founded in The mission of SermonIndex is the preservation and propagation of classical Biblical preaching and the promotion of Christ-centered revival to this generation.*

A quick example from my own life. I was reading the newspaper at home around lunchtime, when the Lord told me to get up and go to the end of my driveway. Seemed like an odd request, but I obeyed. Right at that moment I arrived at the end of my driveway, a young mother with a baby had her car die just a few feet away from me. She had run out of gas. As the place the car died is blind and dangerous, she was in a precarious spot. I quickly helped her move the car out of the way of the worst section. In addition, I had recently filled the gas container I store in my garage, so it was full. She confessed to me that she had prayed to God when she realized the car was running out of gas. That was about the same time the Lord told me to go to the end of the driveway. I was able to fill up her car, pray for her, and help her on her way. At least it should be. Some people have a tendency to dismiss those kinds of communications, which is why they never experience them. Our rationalistic culture does that to people. Jesus encountered it too. When people took Him for granted and dismissed Him, He could do few miracles in their town, remarking on their astonishing lack of faith. I hope that helps answer your question. Thanks for stopping by. Then I need to apply what I know about Jesus in my actual personal walk with Him. Prayer is talking with God. It is taking personal time with Him and He with me! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with Me. We share with each other! This is what Jesus wants with you- a personal relationship- a personal walk with the Living God! It has been said that you become like those you hang out with. If we hang out with the Lord on a daily basis, He will rub off on us- and we will become more like Him in our character. By walking with God and not only reading about Him but applying what we learn about Him in our real daily walk with Him, we will get to know Him personally and become more like Him ourselves. The Bible continues to share that Jesus is the express image of His Father; so to become like Jesus is to be remade in the image of God as was intended in the beginning. As we become more like God, we do really know Him in a personal way. But I also want to share that Jesus said: I know that there are people who are in communication with spirits that pretend to be spirit guides for our benefit, but actually they are demonic spirits that deceive, that are things of the occult. The only way to enter into a personal relationship with God is through the cross of Jesus Christ. This is first base, bending at the cross and asking for forgiveness for your sins. We all are sinners. But Jesus is a gentleman; He stands at the door and knocks: The door handle is on the inside. No one comes to the Father except by Me. Jesus is that gate! I have followed Jesus for 38 years, but when I was 19 I became severely ill, suffered from severe depression and was tempted to take my life. At this time when I was all but eternally lost in hell, I became aware of a Presence and a lot of coincidences happening in my life. I finally came to God, not because someone talked me into being a believer, but because I was aware that it was God Himself Who was drawing me. So for me I got to know the Lord more personally than have most Christians simply because I was so broken hearted and crushed. I remember after some time I moved out into my own apartment and worked as a driver. I would take the bus home. One day as I got off the bus and was walking up to my apartment, I was a bit short on money and I asked the Lord to put 50 dollars in my mail box. When I opened up my mail box someone had put an envelope with 50 dollars in my mail box! He usually works through providence but not always so out in the open and obvious. Back then I was just getting out on my own after being ill with depression and I was isolated. Later I had a dream to move to the mountains and I got up and lived in some remote areas of the mountains in California and supported myself mostly with service contracts with the Forest Service. I learned that Smokey the Bear is a real bear! People were pretty tough and treacherous up there. However, the Lord was working in my life to build character and conform me to the image of His Son, and He has always given me what I need. Five days ago I watched my Dad take his last breath. That is a hard thing I think for anyone to see.

**Chapter 8 : The Sermon Blog @ Union Presbyterian Church: Ways of Knowing God: A Sermon for Trinity S**

*Knowing our identity in Christ is one thing, but understanding how that practically changes the way we live is another. Here are a few ways that understanding our true identity in Christ can greatly impact the way we live our lives.*

That is, it underlies our very relationship with God; it underlies all our growth in grace; it underlies every fragment of our service. There is nothing which comes within the compass of the life of the Christian which does not depend upon the knowledge of Christ. But that knowledge is a thing which will never be exhausted here, however long we live, and however rapidly we grow. We shall never overtake the finality of that knowledge. We may say that for every increase in spiritual life, spiritual strength, spiritual effectiveness, spiritual usefulness to the Lord, some further measure of the knowledge of Christ is essential. We increase by this knowledge; we progress by this knowledge; we are more for the Lord in accordance with the living knowledge of the Lord Jesus which is coming to us. This knowledge is essentially a spiritual thing. It is a knowledge which is altogether closed to any capacity or ability or faculty, save that of the spirit. The measure in which we represent the Divine thought and fulfil the Divine purpose, will be the measure in which we are learning Christ after the Spirit. That may represent one of two things for different people. It may represent limitation for those who have learned Christ other than after the Spirit; who, therefore, have to unlearn a good deal more than others, before they can learn. On the other hand, it may mean everything to those whose knowledge of the Lord is by way of an absolutely new beginning. This kind of knowledge marks a difference between Paul and the other apostles. They had had a considerable knowledge of Christ which was historical, which was earthly. Paul came from the beginning into his practical knowledge of Christ on a heavenly level. Right at the very commencement of his Christian life, his was a spiritual knowledge of Christ. Every fragment from that point onward was a spiritual knowledge of Christ, and he jealously saw to it that it remained so. He positively refused to go to Jerusalem to get his knowledge of Christ from those who were apostles before him. Of course, the other apostles came into that spiritual knowledge later, but Paul had no other in experience. One may be immense in its range; the other may be very small in its measure. And yet the small thing may count for infinitely more than the immensity of the other. As we go on, and the Holy Spirit begins to unveil Christ in our hearts, then we know how true this is. We know that it is that which gives reality to the spiritual life, makes it a very real thing. It is that which establishes us, so that, while the adversities might turn us away from a creed, a doctrine, an accepted position, a profession of relationship, nothing can turn us away from a spiritual knowledge. Spiritual knowledge is a part of our being, and we can never separate ourselves from that. And that reality is capable of carrying us through anything and everything. The very assemblies for which he had so to speak poured out his lifeblood, forsook him at last, when all they in Asia turned away from him. There is nothing to account for his remaining, not only loyal to the Lord, but triumphant to the last, save the fact that he knew the Lord in a spiritual way. Reality is found there. And every other virtue and value lies in the same direction. It is what Christ is, being progressively disclosed to our hearts. They carried us through to a right place - the providences of birth and upbringing and association. And yet, unless they go further than that, the time will come when it will be proved that they lack the essential element in our relationship to the Lord. And from time to time the Lord does allow His winds of adversity to blow, He does take His winnowing fan and throw everything up into the air, and cause the wind to pass through, just to find how much there is of solid grain that will fall and remain uninfluenced by the wind, and just how much of the chaff will be carried away. Thus He tests, He tries, He proves, to make manifest to us how much of what we possess is the genuine, the real, knowledge of the Lord in our hearts, and how much is a knowledge which is not that kind of knowledge. Nothing whatever can be a substitute for that. The Lord Jesus put it in the front rank by saying: There is nothing known amongst men which corresponds to eternal life. To say that it is but an extension of life is something which the human mind can understand as being timeless, but that is not the Scriptural meaning, and there is nothing in human language to define the Scriptural meaning of eternal life. It is not only extension; it is a quality - it is the nature of the life. It is that which is called "eternal life". It is the possession and activity of something which is of God Himself, something which conveys God to us, something which is the gift of

God to us, something which is the energy of Divine qualities, which are timeless, and could not be subject to anything of corruption. The knowledge of Christ is that. We can see how different such a knowledge is from a merely mental, or historical, or professional knowledge. You know, if you have any experience of this, that, when the Holy Spirit imparts some little further fragment of spiritual apprehension of Christ, you have become conscious of a new Divine energy at work in you, which lifts you on to another level, takes you off the merely human and earth level. You know that by that knowledge you have come on to higher ground spiritually. You have been taken out of the trivialities of earth and given a sense of vastness, greatness, eternity, wonder, glory. Every fresh apprehension of Christ spiritually has an effect upon us. It is not just a stimulus, but it has the power of a Divine energy to lift us away from one order of things into another, and we can only say we have touched God, and come into another realm. The knowledge of the Father and the Son is "life eternal". There is nothing whatever that can stand alongside of that life, nothing that can compare with it, nothing that is a substitute for it. It is the one superlative, pre-eminent necessity for all our knowledge of and fellowship with God from the very first step to the last. When, from the moment of our being born anew, we have been carried through this life, through into the glory, and stand complete - then we shall have to attribute everything to the fact that there was a moment when life eternal was imparted to us, entered into us, and became the basis and means by which God caused all the Divine activities to proceed. God Himself can do nothing in us and through us except on that basis. There is nothing which takes the place of life eternal. It is life eternal! It is important for us to recognize that life eternal is not just some abstract element in the universe, which creates in us, or causes in us, some sense of, shall we say, energy. Life eternal is related to spiritual energy, and life is intended to mean to us a growing knowledge of the Lord Jesus. The two work together. Life means increase in knowledge, and increase in knowledge means the increase in life. Friendship The central element in this is suggested to us in the fragment in John Surely that means that we have to come into a relationship with the Lord Jesus of a very deep, inward character - of a very confidential nature, shall we say. There is something about that relationship which speaks of understanding born of the very closest communion. Someone may say to you about a friend of yours, that they said a certain thing or that they did a certain thing, and your rejoinder would be: I am quite sure that so-and-so never said that or did that. I know them too well. I know that they would not say or do a thing like that. It is a knowledge which understands quite well what would be expected and not expected, what could come from that direction and what could not come from that direction. But that is a knowledge which is a deep, inside knowledge. You can never get that by observation; you can never come to that position by simply listening, studying; you have to know, and when you know by communion, by living in touch with that one, you know instinctively what to expect and what not to expect. The Lord Jesus says that He takes the disciples into that relationship with Himself, and on that basis He opens His heart; that all things that He had heard from the Father He made known unto them, because of the relationship. You and I are not going to get the real knowledge of Christ by listening to addresses, by attending meetings. The value lies in the fact that we go away with what is said, into the presence of the Lord, having a background relationship with Him. Things may be true, and of the greatest value as things for our spiritual help, but we have to work those things out in the secret with the Lord. The real value will lie in the time which we spend with the Lord on these things: The estimate of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord was far above all other things. If you look back you will see that the things he counted loss were not small things, as man values things. They represented all his inheritance, which was no mean thing; all his attainments; all his position; all his prospects; all his ambitions. He tells us elsewhere that he had gained eminence above many of his own age. It means that Saul of Tarsus had been a very promising young man, who had gained a position far ahead of most other young men. He was distinguished as quite brilliant in his realm. And now he says: Was eminence his life ambition? That is his valuation of this knowledge. There is another way of looking at it, if you want to change your angle. No doubt, although the knowledge was such a tremendous thing with the Apostle, there were times when he realized that it was costing. The cost was great, when all those amongst whom he had had recognition, place, reputation, had not only dropped off from him, or he had left them, but now they were all against him, and regarded him perhaps as a fool, and certainly as deluded. And that was not the only phase of the cost. The cost was all round; and not a small part of the cost was the fact that his own

brethren in Christ did not wholly trust him, and very few understood him. For him, whatever there was to let go, and whatever there was of price to be paid, everything was regarded as refuse in comparison with the knowledge of Christ. Here again we may not be able to enter altogether into the position of the Apostle, but these things are pointed out with a view to our seeing that there is something here in the knowledge of Christ, if Paul was not mistaken, which must go far, far beyond just being saved. That brings us to the point. I cannot tell you what that knowledge is, because I do not know it, but I can say that I see enough to make me perfectly certain that Paul was right, and to know that the one thing that we are here for is to learn Christ, and in learning Christ we have everything. It is not the kind of work we are going to do for the Lord. It is not the number of Christian activities, or the tremendous measure of energy which we put into Christian activity. That is not the measure of the value. The measure of the value is just how much we are getting out of our growing knowledge of the Lord. Ministry, speaking now of service is not telling out truths. A good many people have thought that ministry is preaching sermons, giving addresses, or talking Christian doctrine.

*Preaching through a section of the Bible (or section of a book of the Bible) straight through is the Textual method. It is similar to the Expository method except that entire books are generally not covered.*

We strive to deliver the best sermon preparation resources in the world. With tens of thousands of sermons and illustrations from the most respected writers in the church, such as Leonard Sweet, Maxie Dunnam, James Merritt, you can be sure that every week you will look forward to stepping into the pulpit like never before. Customer Reviews "I just had to write to express my appreciation for your service. I subscribed to sermons. Behind the cradle, in the far distance, we see the ruins of the mighty Roman columns. The artist knew the meaning of the Bethlehem manger. Getting Rid of the Bah Humbugs Many years ago the Puritans thought that they were ruining Christmas with all their pagan rituals. But they did more than annually complain about it as we do. They took action and got rid of Christmas altogether. In Puritan settlements across 17th century America a law was passed outlawing the celebration of Christmas. The market place was ordered to stay open for business as though it were no special occasion and all violators were prosecuted. It was against the law to make plum pudding on December 25th. The celebration was not referred to as Yuletide but as fooltide. So we want to reform Christmas and clean it up do we? Well, is this how far we want to go? Do we really want to be rid of it altogether. Then will Christmas, as the Puritans thought, be saved from us and our sinful ways. Can you think of a better way of spending all that money than on gifts of love. And most of them are just that. And so what if all the lights and tinsel does create a fairy tale setting that soon disappears as does the so called Christmas spirit. At least it lets us know, if only for a brief time, what life can be like if we only try. So let the message ring out this day, not that we are destroying this holy day, but rather, that we can never destroy this day. Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be for all generations. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior who is Christ the Lord. Celebratory Fires History records for us an interesting footnote. It was during the dark winter of Lee faced the Union divisions of General Ulysses S. The war was now three and a half years old and the glorious charge had long since given way to the muck and mud of trench warfare. Up and down the line the Southerners began building huge bonfires in celebration of the event. These fires did not go unnoticed in the Northern camps and soon a nervous Grant sent out a reconnaissance patrol to see what was going on. The scouts returned with the message that Pickett had had a son and these were celebratory fires. It so happened that Grant and Pickett had been contemporaries at West Point and knew one another well, so to honor the occasion Grant, too, ordered that bonfires should be built. What a peculiar night it was. For miles on both sides of the lines fires burned. No yelling back and forth. Only light, celebrating the birth of a child. Soon the fires burned down and once again the darkness took over. The darkness of the night and the darkness of war. The good news of Christmas is that in the midst of a great darkness there came a light, and the darkness was not able to overcome the light. It was not just a temporary flicker. It was an eternal flame. We need to remember that. There are times, in the events of the world and in the events of our own personal lives, that we feel that the light of the world will be snuffed out. But the Christmas story affirms that whatever happens, the light still shines. When Professor Charles Follen lit candles on the first Christmas tree in America in , who would have ever thought that the decorations would become as elaborate as they are today. It is a long time since , longer still from , longer still from that dark night brightened by a special star in which Jesus the king was born. Yet, as we approach December 25 again, it gives us yet another opportunity to pause, and in the midst of all the excitement and elaborate decorations and expensive commercialization which surround Christmas today, to consider again the event of Christmas and the person whose birth we celebrate. Harper Collins, , p. There is one scene that has always fascinated me. Clearly the old miser is shaken by the entire ordeal. But when he awakens from his sleep does he take the message to heart. No, he simply dismisses it by saying: What have you heard and Seen this Christmas? Oh, you say, had I been there at Bethlehem that night I would have seen. I would have understood. I would have known it was the Christ child. There is one way of knowing: Ask yourself what you have seen and heard this Christmas Season. When you watched the 6: What did you hear this Christmas? Did you hear only the blast of

music and carols, or did you hear the silent sighs of the lonely and the bereaved who may be dreading Christmas because it accentuates their loneliness. And in the midst of the sounds of honking horns and people arguing over parking places, did you hear faint sounds of laughter coming from Asbury Church missions projects because you furnished food and toys for families and children. You see, so often what you see and what you hear is not dependent upon the event but upon you. If you did in fact hear the cry from the lonely, the laughter of poor children, if you saw the sheep without a shepherd, then, and only then, might you have noticed the events that took place in Bethlehem that night. In the end perhaps one of our carols words it best: No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin. Where meek souls shall receive him still, the dear Christ enters in. Illustrations can be viewed according to the lectionary or searched by scripture or keyword. Click [Join Now](#) to sign up! Get FREE sermon prep tools and exclusive content delivered straight to your inbox. Sign up is easy and you can stop any time.