

That I Might Know Him - Part 3

by Peter Brandon

The sermon emphasizes the importance of striving for spiritual maturity, apprehending Christ through faith, and being prepared for the coming of the Lord Jesus.

Duration: 41:49

Scripture: Philippians 3:11

Topics: "Anticipation of Christ's Return", "Knowing Christ"

Description

Peter Brandon emphasizes the importance of striving to know Christ deeply, using the metaphor of a race to illustrate the journey of faith. He discusses the concepts of attaining, apprehending, and comprehending the Christian life, urging believers to forget past failures and press forward towards the goal of Christlikeness. Brandon warns against the dangers of worldly distractions and encourages the congregation to be examples of faith, highlighting the imminent return of Christ and the transformation that awaits believers. He calls for a life filled with the Spirit and a readiness for Christ's coming, urging everyone to live in anticipation and preparation for that glorious day.

Transcript

Reading from verse 11, If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead, notice the word attain, not as thou had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Now from 15 to the end, he is dealing with the prospect.

Let us therefore as many as be perfect, be thus minded, and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us as an ensemble.

For many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ. Notice this, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things. For our conversation, our behaviour, our citizenship, or it can be translated our politics, is in heaven.

From whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things, unto himself. Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord. We've looked at the cost, we've looked at the content, knowing the power of his resurrection, fellowship with him in suffering, being made conformable unto his death, so that when he comes again, when the Lord Jesus comes, we have been fully developed in him.

Then he goes on to speak about comprehension. Now this is the comprehension of the contents. In other words, the way in which we are going to arrive at that position.

Very interesting. And you will notice now that he uses three words. He uses the word attain, he uses the word apprehend, and then he uses the word the prize or the goal.

And if you bear in mind it's a race, and the idea of attaining simply means when a man is going to run a race, he's got the object before him. Then when he's running, he's apprehending. That means he is appropriating all the strength.

And then if he wins, he gets the prize. Now if you bear that in mind, that's what the puzzle has before him. Now the word comprehend that I have used refers to knowledge and it refers to experience.

In the Greek, so that the scholars inform me, it's a beautiful word, it's the idea of a bird, flying, and it sees some food, and it takes the food, and then it goes into the crop, or some of it does, and then it goes right into the constitution of the bird. Now it's the food that goes into the constitution of the bird that this word means. Now I don't want to worry you with the offerings, but there's something very beautiful in the bird's offering.

Do you remember the poor man that could only offer a fowl? The feathers were not offered, nor was the crop. What does the crop speak of? Undigested food. In other words, head knowledge, crop knowledge, it's cast on the east side of the altar.

Now my dear friends, what he's talking about now, is that word that gets right into us, so that it becomes a part of us. Very interesting, in Colossians and Ephesians. In Ephesians Paul speaks of being filled with the spirit.

Now I want to take up that next week, because that's life. But in Colossians, he doesn't use that expression. Do you know what he says? Let the word of God dwell in you richly.

In other words, not the crop knowledge, but the knowledge that you have apprehended, that has become a real part of you. So really that's the meaning of the word comprehend. Now what about these three stages? Attain means the object in view.

Therefore all of us should have the object in view, and that is that Christ should be formed in us. You see that's Christianity. It's not basically the externals.

The externals are good if we live them out. But it's the great thought of Christ being formed in each one of us. And you know there's nothing more beautiful, nothing more lovely, than to see a group of people full of the loveliness of the Lord Jesus.

You will never see anything more beautiful than that in society whilst you're living upon this earth. Then secondly, he uses the word apprehend. And that means exactly what we said when we were talking about the word comprehend.

It means to take hold of something so that it becomes a part of you. Now there's a wonderful illustration of this in the Old Testament. And it's concerning that man that we all love because he's all like us.

That's Jacob. I love Jacob. Because he started off bad and he finished good.

And it's wonderful to think that that old shepherd walked in the presence of the great old Pharaoh. And he put his hands on his head and blessed him. And the one who blesses is greater than the one that gives the blessing.

And that was Jacob. There was a time when the Lord met him and we all made that at Jabbok. And we read that the man of God wrestled with Jacob.

Now what does that mean? Forgive me doing it. He got hold of him. And he held him.

And he said you're mine. And thank God the Lord Jesus has got hold of every one of us like that. And there's no power in the world that can take us out of that grip.

He has apprehended us. So that we might apprehend him. So Jacob said something beautiful.

He said let me go for the day breakers. That was a kind of a teasing. And he said I will not let thee go except thou bless me.

Can you see it? A double apprehension. One moment the man of God the Lord Jesus lays hold on him. And the next moment he lays hold upon the man of God saying I will not let thee go except thou bless me.

But then I know what some of you are saying. How do we lay hold on him? By faith. What is faith? Now unfortunately I must go into this when we are preaching the themes of the gospel.

It's not just sitting on a chair. It's not just getting on a bus and putting faith in the bus driver. It's not even getting on a plane and putting faith in the plane and the pilot.

And instead of the chair being the object instead of the bus being the object instead of the plane being the object it's the Lord Jesus. Do you know what that's called in the realm of logic? Mathematical probability. You do that by instinct.

When you sat on that form you just sat on it. But what is faith? Ah, now that's what we've got to learn. It comes from the Greek word pistis that means three things.

To know what you believe. To trust what you believe. Here it comes.

And to appropriate and make it your own what you believe. So you say it's man. And what's the illustration used in scripture? Abraham.

You know when he was nearly a hundred God said to him he was going to have a child. And he looked at Sarah and all her productive organs were dead. As we say in London dead as a dodo.

Absolutely dead. And when he went and told his servants and he had hundreds I'm going to have a child. They must have said his marbles are going.

You see it was impossible. But this man did something that was wonderful. He believed in God.

He apprehended him. And he stood on the promise and said it's done. In other words the promise became a real part of him.

Have you got it? Now apprehending is that. It's laying hold upon Christ so that he becomes a part of you. And it means standing on his promise and saying it shall be done.

Now I know how you feel sometimes when it comes to a point of Christ being formed in you. And you feel that you're so much unlike Christ. You begin to say how can this really be done? The spirit of God is in you.

And all he wants you is to take that act of faith and apprehend. What does that mean? You take up your stand at the cross and you say I cannot fully understand it. But I believe that I have been crucified with Christ and I stand upon it and therefore I'm going to reckon myself to be dead indeed unto sin.

That's the first thing. Secondly, I look up and say the Lord is risen and there's all power and I look within me and I realise that the Holy Spirit is there and I have the faith to say I believe you can form Christ in me. And that's the way to run the race.

Reckoning yourself to be dead to sin and here it comes alive unto God and the Holy Spirit within you and all the time you're reckoning you're apprehending and you're running well and you're getting your second breath and you're coming near the end of the tape and quite frankly you're well in front. So that is apprehending. Now what is the goal? The goal is when you stand before the Beamer and as you stand before the Beamer it will be a wonderful day.

You will stand there in grace with a glorified body and then you will see what you did in the body and all the stresses, all the strain all the suffering, all the reckoning all the apprehension of the death of Christ and the resurrection of Christ all that's been produced by faith in grace you'll see Christ coming out of it and you'll say Thank you Lord Thank you Some of you who have been through deep sorrow some of you who have been through deep water some of you who know what it is to have a spiritual bomb in your life and everything has been blown to smithereens and you've come through it you'll see it in that day and worship the Lord It's Christ being formed in you You see He's not preparing us for earth He's preparing us for the eternal day and what a wonderful moment that will be

Well that's the comprehension There's many things I would like to say about the up-calling but we haven't got time Now we come to the prospect and the prospect is the coming of the Lord Jesus that should ever be before us and may I say this I believe the Lord is coming very, very soon You know if you were in Europe and you could see the whole of Europe coming together and if you were in the country and many Christians were praying that judgment would come on Britain because only before I came they lowered the age of homosexuality and it's come God's answering prayer We are living right in the last seconds of the last days and quite frankly I don't think I shall ever be back in Australia not because I don't want to but I'm expecting the Lord to come very shortly So that's the prospect

we're going to finish with Now you will notice in the prospect there are three aspects There's an example of the prospect and that's seen in verse 14 down to 18 and 19 and then there's an explanation of the

prospect that's seen in verse 21 and then there's an exhortation of the prospect and that's seen in verse 20 Now let's get through that and then we will close Now as far as the examples are concerned there are only two, good and bad Let's look at the good first verse 15 Let us therefore as many as be perfect be thus minded and if anything need be otherwise minded God shall reveal even this to you Now that word perfect worries many people It comes from a strange Greek word that means to fulfill and if you would like to stretch it it means to fill and the word fill means to be mature

It's like the idea if you're a gardener and there's two beans one may be 14 inches long FULL and the other might be all withered NOT FULL Now that's what the word means perhaps a better illustration I was once staying with a couple of boys in Canada and they had a gym and one was a weight lifter and he weighed 18 stone he was about 6 foot 3 and he didn't have an ounce of fat on him and I used to go down the gym and see this fellow working and he used to pick up these weights and it was marvelous and then when he went one day how stupid can an older man be I thought I can do it and I went got it there and then I got it there and then I was straining my knees were buckling then I got it there and I got stuck and thank God he came in and took it from me One day I was down watching the boys

and I was watching his brother forgive me saying this he was 12 and he was a real weed he was like a skeleton and I was eyeing them up and down you know, you do it don't you and the mother came in and she read my thoughts and she said I know what you're thinking of Peter how did they come from the same stock and that's what I was thinking and then she said this when he fills out he'll be as big as him and I said some hopes well would you believe it she never forgot it about 5 or 6 years later they were at a wedding and would you believe it she sent me a photograph and there's that weed filled out as big as his brother massive you see beloved there are many Christians who have never grown can I say it they're weeds but this word matured means you apprehend so that you're filled out and

what with the beauty and the loveliness of the Lord now that's the meaning of the word matured and that's the object that he has in view then you will notice these examples are not only perfect men matured men filled out men nevertheless where unto we have already attained let us walk by the same rule let us mind the same thing now the word attained there has to do with ambition it has to do with achievement but achievement that's yet to come in other words there they were appropriating the power of his resurrection appropriating the fellowship of his sufferings appropriating to being made conformable to his death so in a sense they've arrived but there's much more to come they're the examples and then you will notice they're model examples verse 17 brethren be followers together of me

and mark them which walk so as you have us as examples may I say this please to spiritual leaders you are an example I am an example now if I can share this with you please take it to heart all the ministry I give that's not practical will never bless the Lord's people if I am not living out this ministry in my own home life it's meaningless we help people by example now may I say this to elders you are an example and what we must say is this if they all followed me if they followed you what kind of thing would they do now when you come to your retirement don't pray that God will give you an autumn because in the autumn in my country the leaves fall off the tree and it's all bare when you get to the end of your life pray for a spiritual springtime and this what happened in my country

people got to a certain age they threw the sponge in they went to the seaside and many of them died don't do that be an example right to the end and God will bless you and remember this that people follow the walk of a man far more than his worth but then you have the bad example notice what he says about them it's quite awful really for many walk of whom I have told you often and now tell you even weeping that they

are the enemies of the cross of Christ whose end is destruction whose God is their belly and whose glory is their shame whose mind earthly things now can you see this and this is very important indeed he is talking about the coming of the Lord Jesus he is talking about these good examples and then he gives us a description of the bad examples now why just before the Lord Jesus

comes iniquity is going to abound and the love of many shall wax cold so we must say if we are living in the last seconds of the last days I am either going forward or I am going back now that's a fact all of us should be saying that as far as our local churches are concerned it's revival or removal we are living in the last times and then we must tell ourselves there is going to be great deception now I believe that these people were not the Judaizers but they were the Gnostics who mix philosophy with theology and they basically thought that some of the things we called sin were not sin and that we ought to go in for the things of the world and enjoy the world in other words they were saying that the sin that we speak of is not basically sin in fact it was an encouragement to sin now my

dear friends we are beginning to see that today we are beginning to see liberal ideas coming among the assemblies we are beginning to see people doubting inspiration verbal inspiration we are beginning to see people who will spiritualize the miracles but will not believe in the miracles we are beginning to see people who don't believe in preaching the blood and we are beginning to see people now that tell us there is a heaven but hell is an alienation now all that is the deception of the last days in other words these people didn't lose life whose God is their belly can you see it they were wanting to gain life not losing life so you have two examples you have a good example and a bad example now could I speak to the young people don't follow the bad examples they will offer you the world

and all the gimmicks of the world but they will lead you astray follow godly men and women and God bless you then he goes on about the explanation of his coming look at verse 21 who shall change our body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body now you will notice here it's the subjective idea of the Lord's return and not the objective now why in Thessalonians we have the objective point of the Lord's coming and he says the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout what a moment we've seen in our studies there in the early morning to wonder that it's going to be a resurrection shout it's going to be a gathering shout and praise God all the labels will fall off isn't that wonderful all fall off even Marks and Spences and things like that everything will fall off and

then it's going to be a great triumphant shout it will be a shout of triumph when we shall move right in the domain of the devil now I believe this that when the Lord Jesus said to Peter upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it he was speaking right in the presence of Satan and when he completes his church he'll take it right in the realm of the devil and he will repeat it all over again the gates of hell shall not prevail against it and not one will be lost and Satan and all his hosts will see the many sided glory of the church of God and then into God's presence we go now what about the subjective idea well the subjective idea is this the dead in Christ shall rise first and who will raise them the Holy Spirit and if the Lord Jesus Christ

came now he will change our body now note this and we can almost close when the Lord Jesus comes the same Holy Spirit that has been forming Christ in you got it year by year forming Christ bringing pressure upon us to form Christ teaching us to crucify that old nature called the flesh forming Christ everything he brings upon us is to do one thing to form Christ in us God loves us so much that he wants us to have the best prize ever and that's why he brings all these pressures upon us he wants us to be formed in Christ now when the Holy Spirit hears the word shout I think he will say Hallelujah in fact I'm sure he will and the

same Holy Spirit that has been changing your personality and transform it will immediately change your body no evolution in that that's why you can't be a theistic

evolution when you believe that because he is going to change even the dead decompose dust if you like a more scientific word they are atoms he will bring them all together and with it he will make a completely new body and then he says by the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself now what does that mean when the Lord Jesus comes we shall have a glorified body and we shall get a glorified state and we shall be in a glorified sphere called the city four square I wish we could talk about it dear friends the city four square will be a million times more beautiful than the millennium the millennium will be wonderful but there will be death millennium will be wonderful but there will be drought sometimes if they do not come up and worship oh yes it's going to be a

marvelous time but in that city four square we know where the church of God will be it will be absolute perfection and some of us probably nearly all of us will be able to come and go according to the bidding of the Lord we shall be able to come with a body that can be seen and not seen we shall have the power of levitation it will be a glorious moment and we shall see the millennium in the way in which the people in the earth will never see but really dear friends our final state is the eternal state when there will be a new heaven and a new earth and everything that's out of gear with God the Holy Spirit will subdue now do you see the mighty power that's in you can you grasp it this mighty power that's within you so powerful that when the Lord comes this body he will change immediately

let's ask him to so work on us that the beauty of the Lord will be seen in each one of us before he comes now the exhortation now in the second chapter he wanted us to be lights and that's what we are to be lights in the world and what kind of light it seems luminaries it means stars now some stars burn out so the astronomer tells me I think everyday about 2000 stars burn out but this is not a star that burns out this is a bright light that continues in a dark place you know I was caught out terribly last week but what a wonderful lesson I learnt from it a brother was telling me a story of a man that had a dream that he went to heaven and he looked upon the earth and it was so dark he said to the angel why is it so dark he said the coming of the Lord is very near hmm and then he said as

he looked he saw beautiful light so magnificent that it caused him to weep he said what are those lights he said they are the saints whose bodies are full of Christ they are light he says when I go back to earth would you give me their name and addresses I would like to write to them so he was given their name and addresses and he wrote to thousands of people who were lights and commended them and then the brother said to me you know what was in the letter don't you I said no he said didn't you receive one brother shook me now have you got it beloved are we light or let it be that we may be a light for the Lord to all our neighbours then he wants us to have life now brothers I am so glad I am not here just for teaching you know you can teach and teach and teach and teach and you will

understand when I say this it makes that much impact on the faith I have seen it where we are we have Saturday lectures all over the shire but there are divisions there is coldness there is unhappiness you see it just rolls off us but when you preach the gospel what a difference you know one night there at Toowoomba we have been seeing a man coming every night and I will never repeat this again because I don't believe the Lord wants us to talk about the blessing and here is an assistant headmaster in a senior school and first of all he was a little critical then you could see conviction coming upon him as he was coming every night and then last Saturday I was speaking on the subject what does it mean to believe we got to the point where I said it's a matter of stepping out in complete

faith and abandonment and trust Christ and then I said don't wait to the end if God has spoken to you switch off from me and trust him now and I saw him do it down went his head I could see his lips moving and I saw something else that I am not going to mention but his eyes were very misty then I saw his head coming up and he was full of joy and on Thursday night as he was going out he said this Mr.

Brennan I want to say that Jesus Christ is my Saviour and Lord I said but when Kevin he said Saturday night I said I saw it happen now beloved we are going to have some gospel meetings let's all join in let's not be shall I say sectarian all concerned about our own little group let's join in let's bring the unsaved so that before the Lord we can see life coming to precious souls wouldn't it be lovely to see in this building night after night souls born again you see the coming of the Lord is near these are the last seconds and let's throw everything in it and then lastly let's be looking for his coming now what does this mean look it's the idea so the scholars tell me and with this I will close of waiting for a friend and he is late you know what it is when you cook a lovely dinner and they are late and you are walking backwards and forwards waiting for them and then you are saying to the children clear up the mess put that away keep the place tidy they may be here any moment yes that happens then all of a sudden the man says I think they are lost and he goes out and this would only apply to an Easterner and he stands on his toes he is on a little hill and he stretches his neck and he is looking to see if he is coming in the distance now that's the meaning of the word get on your toes stretch your neck be like a giraffe and look for his coming beloved are we doing that are we standing on our toes looking for his coming one of the stories I love is concerning old Shackleton the explorer and he wanted to reach the North Pole and he got there his men came ashore with all the stuff and they had forgotten implements that were absolutely essential so he did something that was very risky he says I am going back and I shall be here in five days time but the ice was closing in on them and unfortunately the fifth day came and everything was frozen there was Shackleton so near and yet there was this ice pack Shackleton was a believer in God and he prayed that there might be good weather and an unusual thing happened a Thor came but it only came within an hour and he went in with his boat and they were all ready quick he says get on we have only got twenty minutes and they were out and just as they were getting out they could see the ice closing on them and he said to one man who was a sergeant and said how is it you were all ready he said the lieutenant told us everyday pack up your sleeping bag boys he may be here and everyday he said pack up your sleeping bag boys he may be here brethren got it pack up your sleeping bag he may be here to die Amen

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