

Knowing God's Ways - Part 4

by Walter Beuttler

Walter Beuttler emphasizes the importance of knowing God's ways, especially through trials in the wilderness, and understanding His lovingkindness and justice.

Duration: 58:31

Scripture: Numbers 14:2-3, Numbers 21:4-5, Jeremiah 9:23-24, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Knowing God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher talks about facing criticism and judgment from others while doing the will of God. He emphasizes the importance of being ready to partake in the sufferings of Jesus and how God tests us to see how we react. The preacher shares a personal story of how God showed His loving kindness by allowing him to change his route and avoid danger. He also mentions the pleasure that God feels when His children are pleased with His loving kindness. Overall, the sermon highlights the importance of knowing and experiencing God's loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness.

Transcript

Would you mind, would you mind if I took you back into the wilderness? No, good. I would, even if you did mind. Now, we are in the subject area of the way of the Lord.

We were basing that on Moses' prayer when he prayed, show me now thy way that I may know thee. We're also told that God revealed his ways unto Moses. I've also mentioned from Hebrews that God is grieved because his people do not know his ways.

For that reason, God is often misunderstood. I'm going to read to you in conjunction with that comment from the book of Jeremiah, chapter nine. I'll have the verses presently, twenty-three and twenty-four.

I'll take twenty-four, it will suffice. Let him that gloryeth, glory in this, that he understandeth, and knoweth me. Now here, God is encouraging us, in fact, exhorting us.

If we are going to do any glorying, we should not glory in our wisdom, in our knowledge, in our educational achievements, however fine they might be. Neither should we glory in our might, whatever power or authority we might exercise. We are not to glory in our bank accounts, but we are asked to glory in two things, that he understandeth and knoweth me.

Now this glorying here is not a proud boasting. It is a sincere, open rejoicing. There's a difference between the two, in the fact that we understand and know God.

Now God, of course, is infinite. For that reason, God can never be fully understood or unknown. Finiteness cannot encompass infinity, no more than we could put the Pacific Ocean in a teacup.

But as far as God has revealed, we may know and understand him. God divides truth into two great categories. In Deuteronomy 29, 29, The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, for those things which are revealed belong unto us and our children.

Notice the two parts. The secret things belong unto the Lord our God. There are things concerning God that are none of our business.

God has kept that to himself. God, for instance, has not revealed the nature of the Trinity. He has never explained how there can be three distinct persons in the Godhead, yet being only one God, the Lord thy God is one God.

God has never explained that. God has never explained how sin came about originally. Oh, we know where sin in man came.

We also know that Lucifer, the greatest of God's creation, sinned because of pride. But nobody knows what was it that caused Satan to sin to begin with. Where did he get his pride from? Well, we know he became proud of himself, but that is an effect of a prior cause.

The cause is not given. God has not explained how God could be the everlasting good without beginning and without end. You and I cannot comprehend a being or an existence of anything without an original beginning.

We cannot conceive of eternity. God has never tried to explain that. God has not revealed many things about himself.

God in the Bible is presented as a person, divine person, without youth or old age. God has no age. He never was young.

He never will be old. Without youth or old age, without beginning or ending, we cannot conceive of such an existence. And if we are smart, we are not going to try to.

But those things which are revealed belong unto us. And within the sphere of those things, God has chosen to reveal a revelation written in this book. Within this sphere, we may understand and know God.

So God can be understood, wants to be understood. He can be known. He wants to be known.

Reading on there perhaps, The Lord, that I am the Lord, which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, saith the Lord. In other words, God wants us to know his lovingkindness, his judgment, that is, his justice is involved, his kindness, his lovingkindness to the children of men.

Now, we'll get into the wilderness shortly. Do you know that God is awfully nice? I think we've got the nicest God there ever was. I think he is great.

You know, some, well, it's now at least some twenty-two, yes, twenty-two years ago, the Lord gave me a definite call to go and teach all nations. That's why I'm traveling every year. And in those early days, I went by way of the Atlantic.

Very often the flights weren't as long as they are now. And usually it was over to Europe, a little bit into Africa. And I guess like everybody, I like a little variety.

Now, I would always go of necessity, let's say, New York, London, New York, Amsterdam, New York, Rome, New York, Frankfurt, New York, Paris, New York, Copenhagen, New York, Manchester, and what have you. And I got tired of going more or less the same way all the time. You know, you get tired of anything, especially traveling.

And from my childhood on, I was intrigued. For some reason I cannot give, I haven't got any. I was intrigued by the Azores.

I wanted to see the Azores. And I couldn't stop there, because at that time, the airlines had tourist class travel only for what was then known as the Northern Route, and for what was known then as the Southern Route to the Mediterranean by way of the Azores, they used only first class travel. And for economic reasons, I traveled tourist class.

So I couldn't stop at the Azores. And one day I went to Italy, to Rome, and had all my plans made, even had laid them before the Lord to get a witness to make sure that I was going the right way. I wanted to be in the Lord's will, even as to the route that I was taking.

And I had such a witness from the Lord, that inner rest, tranquility, that I knew all's well, all's in the center of His will. By way of, I think I went to New York, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Zurich, Rome. And one morning I picked up the Philadelphia Inquirer, and here was an article, airlines opening up the Azores route for tourist class travel to Europe.

Oh, I thought, I've missed it. Here I could have gone by way of the Azores, no extra fare. And I went back to my Heavenly Father.

I said, Father, did you by chance read the Philadelphia Inquirer? Well, now that's exactly how I pray. I don't pray ecclesiastical prayers, like the reverends do when they want to make an impression more upon the people than upon God. Who wants ecclesiastic? So I prayed just the way I told you.

If you by chance read the Philadelphia Inquirer, don't be a smart aleck and say, hmm, hmm, Henry, he knew what was involved. I know that too, but you leave me alone. My prayers work to yours.

I added, said Father, just look at this. I could have gone by way of the Azores, but I know that I'm in your perfect will to go the northern route. But I said, Father, Father, how about letting me go still by way of the Azores? And the Lord gave me such a witness in here, no words now, only a witness.

But I understood what the witness meant. The witness meant, if you rather go by way of the Azores, get your ticket changed, makes no difference to me. I got a change.

All right, there was nothing special to it, but my curiosity got satisfied. It was only a refueling stop in the middle of the night, but still, I went by way of the Azores. I came back to school at the end of the summer and told the class what had happened.

Mentioned how good the Lord was in his loving kindness to let me change my route. When I got done with my story, there was an utterance in tongues and interpretation, and the interpretation was very close to this wording. Obviously, God was listening, as he is tonight.

God is pleased when he sees that he can please his children, for God loves to show his loving kindness to his children. And so it went on, giving to us the obvious pleasure of when God saw that I was pleased with his loving kindness, then he was pleased because I was pleased. So we were all pleased.

Apparently, God believes what has often been said, joys not shared are only have enjoyed. God wants us to know him. He loves to get us to know him in his loving kindness, for God is so kind and so good.

No wonder Moses prayed, show me now thy way that I may know thee. Now today we are preoccupied with the way of the Lord in the wilderness. Now this morning we saw God leading his people by the cloud, the glory of God, into the wilderness.

You know often we speak or think of God's leadings, but God leads into all sorts of things. He let the Spirit, let the Lord into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And there are times where God leads us into situations, not pleasant, that will do a work in us which cannot be done in any other way.

You know, we are a strange people. We think that everything ought to come first. We are in the age of instants.

Instant love, instant marriage, instant wealth, instant security, instant everything. The world is full of instants, more and more, that's our mechanical age. But there is a work to be done in us that cannot be done in an instant.

God has to put us into a given situation, and sometimes put us between the hammer and the anvil. First he puts us in the fire. There we are.

Oh, after a while out we come, he puts us on the anvil and down comes the hammer. Ouch! That isn't what I meant. Well, that's what I meant.

God has a work to be done in us. And what a job. What a pain we are to the Lord when he tries to bring us into the likeness of his Son.

And for that, at times he has to lead us into a wilderness, a place where we just don't know where we are at. We can't understand it. We can't explain it.

We are in it. And we mentioned this morning that this wilderness is a place of perils, there are dangers, we enumerated some. It can be a place of defeat, perilous being, unbelief, we talked about that.

And lastly, I mentioned rebellion this morning. We can rebel against God in the wilderness. One year I almost rebelled against the Lord because I didn't want to travel anymore.

You know, you get fed up with this traveling. I didn't want to go. I wanted to stay home.

And I found my heart approaching a state that was not far from rebelling. I checked beautifully right away. We have to be so careful with this rebellion.

And I gave you quite a story this morning, and what happened to me. I'll not repeat that, of course. Another one of those perils is murmuring, grumbling.

We used to have in Pentecost what was known as the grumbler's song. I'm no singer. Oh, they grumble on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, grumble on Thursday too, grumble on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, grumble the whole week through, grum, oh, they grumble.

Not in Oakland, speaking complainingly, often in an undertone, why doesn't the Lord keep his word? Here is his promise. I quoted it to the Lord, Lord, you said you would do thus and so now, Lord, I demand that you fulfill your word. And we clobbered out over the head with this book.

You said, Oh, where is the promise, Lord? Can any one of us honestly say that we have never grumbled, complained, speaking complainingly in an undertone? Why doesn't the Lord undertake? Why did the Lord let this and that happen? Why did the Lord not prevent? Here is a promise. Why does the Lord fulfill it quickly? Where is the Lord? Here, I just happened to pick up Job 23. Oh, that I knew where I might find him.

Job was in deep trouble. He couldn't account for his sickness. He had no longer in the awareness of the presence of God.

He groped for God in the dark. Where is he? Oh, that I knew where I might find him. That I might come even unto his seat.

Behold, I go forward, but he is not there. And backward, but I cannot perceive him. On the left hand where he doth work, I cannot behold him.

He hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him. A godly righteous man, by God's own testimony, in great distress, battered in his body by the devil, cursed by his wife, forsaken by his friends, pushed to the side by the young people. You have that in 29.

The object of the devil's hatred. Yet God standing in the shadows. Also Satan.

Satan hoping that Job would curse God in his distress. And God hoping that he wouldn't. Job in the center of the arena, with God and Satan in the bleachers as the spectators.

Job, it was up to Job now to vindicate God by his conduct in distress, or hand a great victory to the devil so the devil could look in the face of God and laugh. Here was this man groping. Oh God, where are you? God, where are you? God, answer me! And all he got was a mocking echo.

God would not He'll have to let the drama go on to vindicate his name. Yet we are told by Job that in all these things Job sinned not with his God and Satan were waiting for Job to say something by way of deprecation of God and handing Satan the power of victory. But he didn't.

God listened. He hears the murmuring, complaining, the questioning. Why doesn't God answer our prayers? I don't know, hon.

I wonder myself. Say, old man, do you think something's wrong? Goodness knows I don't, hon. You think he pays to serve the Lord? Don't ask me, I wonder myself.

Can you understand what's happening to us? Me? Who can understand that kind of a thing? Where's God now? God? I don't know. I don't know where he is. The Bible says he's everywhere, but where is everywhere? This doesn't seem to be a part of everywhere.

What do you think of the preacher? Time a dozen. Numbers 14, 2, the Israelites murmured against God's leadership. God's leadership.

They didn't like the way Moses led the people. Yet God had appointed Moses to lead the Israelites. He was under divine appointment.

But they didn't like the way he led them. So they grumbled against the leader whom God had appointed. In 14 of Numbers 3, Numbers 14, verse 3, they murmured against the Lamb.

In chapter 21, verse 4, they grumbled against the way. Was too rough? In Numbers 21, 5, they grumbled against the food. I guess they didn't get enough steak or something.

No, they didn't like the manner. They didn't like the food which God had sent them. Now, what is God trying to do in the wilderness? Huh? Deuteronomy 8, 16.

Now here we're going to get some encouragement. 8, 16, where we break right into the account. Oh, I start with 15.

Fully through that great and terrible wilderness. Hallelujah, folks. When you're going through the wilderness, He's still leading.

Oh, I can't see it. No, you can see it, but you can't believe it. What was the trouble with them? They did not believe God in the wilderness.

Wherein were fiery serpents, scorpions, drought, no water. Sixteen now. For fifty in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that He might humble thee.

Hmm. Did you know there is such a thing as God humbling us? Now, who wants to be humble? Well, that I don't know, but I do know that God wants His people to be humble. Moses was the humblest man of the earth.

I think he probably was that for keeps. That He might humble thee. Some of us need a pin in our bubble.

There are people who think they're growing when all they are is swelling. To humble thee. You know it's so easy to let pride concede.

And what have you? Developing of a nature and sooner or later God has to deal with it. What pride? I don't know. Could be pride of face.

I know we have had girls in our Bible school, they spend more time looking in the mirror admiring themselves than they did in waiting on the Lord. Pride of face. Pride of dress.

Pride of social standing. Pride of goodness knows what. There are a thousand and one varieties.

I think that some of you have heard me relate very lightly here. What's coming up on me, I must repeat it briefly. I know I mention it here.

You remember Madame Goyon? A woman, pardon? I haven't. It's alright. Thank you anyhow.

Of known beauty regarded as the greatest beauty in Paris in her day, what they called a religious mystic. But he was a deeply spiritual woman who knew the Lord beyond many people. Those of you that like to read, if you ever get your hands on a book, let's say the title would be Madame Goyon or The Life of Madame Goyon.

That book is worth its weight in gold. Don't let it go. Pick it up and if you don't want it, tell me and I'll buy it from you.

A woman of exquisite beauty. She knew she was pretty and loved to look in the mirror. She was seeking glory.

She wanted more of good. The Lord brought to her attention her pride. Pride of face.

She loved the admiration of people. Not only men but women would give her a second look at the streets of Paris because of her beauty. She wanted to do away with that pride and she couldn't.

She even prayed the Lord would deliver her from that pride because it was hindering her progress in God. And it wouldn't go. She could not pray it away.

It wouldn't go. Pride's a powerful thing. And one day she challenged God.

She said, God, do you mean to tell me you are not powerful enough to take pride out of my heart when I don't want to have anything to do with it? This time he listened. She got sick and lo and behold she had smallpox and her face was full of pox. Her friends told her they knew of salves that she could use to save her face from getting pockmarked, you know.

And she said, no, I want no salves. God is answering my prayer. God saved her life but not her face.

When all was over her face was full of pox. Smallpox pox. She looked in the mirror, was astonished at the sight.

Her beauty was gone. But so was her pride. God had answered her prayer and apparently it was the only way in which she could do to humble thee.

God uses when need be all kinds of means as much as need be to take pride out of our hearts. You know, we have the revival still. The revival lasted ten days thereabouts and three of these days were used up in public confession.

Three days of public confession in our chapel. And so many of the students would come up, stand behind the mic and confess pride. Various kinds of pride.

And that had so puzzled me. I was in charge of the meeting. I had to keep things in order, you know.

And I had known of this principle that when God deals with us to make confession of things done or stolen or said or whatever the circle of the confession should never be greater than the circle of the offense. Now I see from some of your looks you don't quite grasp it. All right, I'll give you a taste.

Among those confessions, one of our married students stood up and made a confession of adultery. Now that was a great mistake and I had dealt with him on that. He had no business to make a confession like

that before the whole student body.

They were not involved. That was a matter between him, his wife, that very party and his gut. And had nothing to do with the student body.

The circle of the confession should have been kept between the parties involved. Now he spread it over the whole school. That wasn't necessary.

And he, the students, confessed pride. I want to confess that my heart is filled with pride because I'm among those students that have the highest grades. Well, that seemed to have nothing to do with the others.

That was between them and God. And I went to the Lord about it. I said, Father, will you tell me something, please? I know that the circle of the confession should not be greater than the circle of the offense.

Why do these students have to make a public confession for a state of pride in which others are not affected? And the Lord gave me the answer. And the answer was that pride usually does affect others either directly or indirectly. But the main reason for the public confession of pride was that few people can be delivered from pride apart from an experience of public humiliation.

Now you can think that over, do with it what you like. I can see it. That this pride has such roots in us that God cannot simply pull it out.

That it has to be destroyed through a public confession when God leads, I would say, to such a thing. I think there ought to be some kind of a prompting to do that. But anyhow, the Lord takes us through situations that humble us.

I was a young preacher at my first series of meetings after Bible school. And I heard the people talk. Brother Buechler, my, what truth! Did you hear Brother Buechler? You should have heard him.

My, that fellow's good. And I liked what he said. I liked what I heard.

I couldn't help but overhear. All right, I was asked to stay a second week. Sure, why not? After all, I used a little outline like I have right here.

Say, we're not finishing the wilderness. Had a little outline. And I thought, if they find out that I'm using an outline, they won't think I'm so great.

So I was carefully hiding it below my little Bible here so they wouldn't see it. I wanted them to think I was speaking, saying all these things, using all those scriptures extemporaneously. And on a hot day, people had put a big fan on the platform in the corner.

And I was over there on the other side preaching, walking around like a caged lion. And as I turned around, I just saw my outline here and there, fluttering down in front of the pulpit and dropping to the floor. And I had to go all the way up to the other end where the steps were and go down, walk over, bend myself, side of all the congregation, picked it up, walk around.

I've been hiding no more outlines. It's the faithfulness of God on these sticks of pinion before he has to use a sledgehammer. And God focuses, gets us into situations where he deals with us.

Humble us. In school where I was, we had a lady. She was a great talker.

She had a sharp cheek that bite and sting like a scorpion. She would talk about people in such a way in her camp cottage that people walked around her cottage so they wouldn't hear what they didn't want to hear. And if you were sick or went to a doctor or took aspirin, you went straight to hell.

Straight to hell. She let that tongue go against anybody that went for any medical help. One day she didn't feel good.

And she got to feel worse. Saw me on the camp and said, Brother Buechler, what do you think of a person going to the doctor just to find out what might be wrong? I knew right away what was wrong. Don't think that would do anybody any harm.

Well, she said, you know, I've come to think the same way. She went to the doctor and what he found was so bad they put her right away into the hospital. She didn't even come home.

And she was in the hospital for quite some time. I forgot what she had but was very serious. She was there a long time.

Finally she returned from the hospital and we passed each other again as we would often on the campus. Hi, we talked. She said, Brother Buechler, I must tell you something.

You heard that I had an operation, didn't you? Yes, I said everybody heard that. Everybody was interested. She said, Brother Buechler, I had surgery but I want to tell you something.

When they performed surgery in my body, God also performed surgery in my spirit. God has delivered me from the spirit of judgment. I have nothing more to say.

When other people get sick, go to the doctor or take medicine. God has cured me from the spirit of judgment. But she had to go through this wilderness of surgery if you please so that God had an opportunity to get at her precious spirit.

And I would venture to guess that God had no way of delivering her in any other way. She had to go through it and be publicly humiliated. Everybody knew the one that had everybody else on the griddle for even taking an aspirin.

He had to go to the hospital. To some belief, hope that God has There is more to do than to crown us with glory. There is more to the Christian life than to be crowned with glory.

All right, let's halleluo while we can. But likely there will come a time when we won't feel like halleluo. We'll ask for grace to hold us steady under the knife of the divine when he performs some spiritual to deliver us from a spiritual disease.

Sometimes God is obliged to show up in some tongues and blunt the tongues that he might humble thee and that he might prove thee to prove thee to put us to the test. You know how people can sing I'll go with him through the garden. Oh yeah? That has yet to be demonstrated.

I'll go with him through the judgment. What? Well, let's see there. God hears us singing.

I'll go with him where he leads me I will follow. Then he leads us up a hill to a cross. That's for you.

I want the glory that will come after the death to prove to people Do people ever nail you to your cross with their tongue? Do they ever pierce your hands with their tongue the things you do? Do they ever pierce your feet the way you walk and where you go? Do they ever criticize what you're doing, where you're going with their tongue? God watches. Somebody said, now Brother Mueller he won't stay home from I think they wish I'd break them. That was said to my daughter and my daughter replied, that wouldn't do any good he'd go in a wheelchair.

People wanted to fail so that they'd gloat over you. People are criticized for doing the will of God in a way different from what they want you to do. To prove To prove our own sin.

Tomorrow morning there's communion. We put our hands to the cup by doing so we testify that we are ready to partake of the suffering. The Lord puts us to the test to react and to do the good at thy latter end.

Folks, in all of our trials wilderness experiences all sorts of happenings God always has in mind our latter end. To do the good at thy latter end what God does to us and for us and with us and by us now is directly related to our latter end God works today in view of our latter end to do us good in the end for it is the end which will last throughout all eternity. Today's trials, wilderness, and what have you must be understood and if not understood endured in confidence that God has in mind the end, our ultimate good and that therefore all things work together for good.

To those who love the Lord and don't call it quits until he's done greatest job. The way of the Lord in the wilderness not finished. I do not know whether I shall see tomorrow, but you've had enough for tonight to think about.

Pastors, or whatever your official title is, makes no difference

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