

"What Dead Men Know"

If the graves could open and the dead could speak, we'd learn several important spiritual truths! Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today we're exploring what the dead men know and we need to hear! Stay tuned.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. God's word opens the door to the most important treasures of wisdom and knowledge. The apostle Paul spoke of Jesus Christ and said, "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2 and verse 3). We need that wisdom to know how to think and how to live. We need that wisdom, because it's the key to eternal life. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

Now if you and I as living people could know what the dead men know, we'd see things from a new and a spiritual perspective. As it is, we're limited in what we know and often distracted by the things of this world. When we get too focused on this present world, we may miss the most important lessons that affect this life and the life to come. Paul prayed for the Colossians, asking "that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you'll walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects" (Colossians 1, verses 9 to 10). Have you considered what is necessary to please the Lord Jesus?

You know, there are two ways people know things. First, people learn intellectually through listening, observing, and study. Second, people learn through experience. Hebrews 5 and verse 8 says that Jesus "learned obedience from the things which He suffered." The experience of His suffering on the cross taught Him what obedience truly means. I've wondered, "How could one teach Jesus anything, since He's God's Son?" But Jesus experienced in death something He had never experienced before; He experienced the agony of crucifixion and death. You know, it's one thing to talk about obedience; it's another to give your life in obedience. That's what Jesus did to save us from sin.

Now we offer this study free on what dead men know. If you'd like a printed copy of our study and you live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website, www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Psalm 103, verses 8 to 12 and explore what dead men know!

Our reading today comes from Psalm 103, verses 8 to 12. This is a Psalm of David, where he blesses God for all of his blessings, and reminds us of the nature of God. "The LORD is compassionate and gracious. Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness. He will not always strive with us, Nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, So great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us." Oh I am thankful we have a God like that.

Let's pray together. "Father we're thankful that You are merciful, compassionate, and forgiving. Help us heavenly Father to live in such a way that we please You, and Father help us to be compassionate towards others. May our love for You grow more and more. And help us Father always to do Your will. In Jesus name, Amen."

Dead people know things about God and the afterlife from experience. We today know things by faith, since the Scriptures teach them to us; but the dead are now experiencing them. They know these

things are real and they beg you to pay attention. Some people think that when we die, we'll simply go to sleep and not ever know anything.

I hear people quote Ecclesiastes 9 and verse 5, which says "For the living know they will die; but the dead do not know anything, nor have they any longer a reward, for their memory is forgotten." Well, they would do well to quote this passage in context, paying attention to verse 6, which says "Indeed their love, their hate and their zeal have already perished, and they will no longer have a share in all that is done (and then has the phrase) under the sun." The phrase "under the sun" refers to the dead body not to what our spirits will experience in the afterlife.

Recently a man called me and said that Psalm 146 says our ability to be conscious ends at death. Psalm 146 and verses 4 says, "His spirit departs, he returns to the earth; In that very day his thoughts perish." Well sadly, he missed the context of this passage: Psalm 146:3 to 4 says, "Do not trust in princes, In mortal man, in whom there is no salvation. His spirit departs, he returns to the earth; In that very day his thoughts perish." Now the point here is not to trust what men teach. Unlike God, the teachings of men perish, but God's teaching continues forever. So, don't believe those who tell you, that "When you die, you cease to know anything." They're leading you astray.

Now here are some of the things the dead people know and wished live men took them seriously. First, the dead will have consciousness in the afterlife. In Luke 16:19 to 31, the Lord Jesus reveals what happened to the rich man and to Lazarus after this life is over. Lazarus was in a place of comfort and knew it; the rich man was in a place of torment and knew it. They both could see, could speak, could hear, and could feel what was happening to them. In Matthew 17, verses 1 to 5 Moses and Elijah, though they had been dead several hundred years, were having a conversation with Jesus. In Revelation 6, the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God cried out to God the Father wondering about avenging those who had killed them, and God gave them an answer. They were conscious of their past and their present. Now many today mock the idea of God, but no one will mock that idea in the afterlife.

Second, they know the God of the Bible, the God of heaven, is real. Some proudly proclaim they're atheists or agnostics who don't know whether there is a God, but there will be no doubts about God when this life is over. Ecclesiastes 12, verse 7 describes death this way, it says "then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it." When we die, our bodies will return to the dust; but our spirits will go back to God who gave us that spirit. We'll know what is happening around us. You'll remember when Jesus died, that very day He went to Paradise (Luke 23:43) and He committed into the Father's hands His spirit (Luke 23, verse 46). Now if we're faithful to God we'll experience the same blessing. While we live in the flesh, we can't see God; but when our bodies die, our spirits will go to Him. We'll know He is real!

Third, dead people know every word in the Bible, every word in this book is true. They know the prophecies are true, the promises are true, and the warnings are true as well. They realize that everyone who is "of the truth" listens to the voice of Jesus Christ (John 18, verse 37). They also realize many people have believed a lie and had false hope. Many people fall for the deception of wickedness and perish, "because they didn't receive the love of the truth so as to be saved" (2 Thessalonians 2 and verse 10). They will know that people who do not obey the truth will not find salvation. They will also know that those who obey the truth and remain faithful will enjoy all the promises of God.

Now you may think, "Well it doesn't matter what we believe"; but God's word in Scripture determines the spiritual truth that saves souls. And don't imagine that God is going to set aside His word just to please you. You must know His word and please Him. Remember the words of Jesus, "But

He answered and He said, this is to Satan, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'" (Matthew 4 and verse 4). Now whether something is biblical or not matters to your spiritual life. God never said, He never says anywhere in scripture, or even suggests that "It doesn't matter what you believe." Now the devil is a liar and the father of lies; and this notion, that it doesn't matter is really from the devil not from God. The Bible declares there is but one gospel in Galatians 1:6 to 9 and one faith in Ephesians 4 and verse 5. The Lord Jesus said that He was the only way to the Father, in John 14:6. Now dead people will know the Lord means what He says, and we need to learn that in this life.

Fourth, the dead know that life can end suddenly. They know the words of James are true. When he said in James 4 and verse 14, "Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You're just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away." David said in Psalm 103:15 to 16, "As for man, his days are like grass; As the flower of the field, so he flourishes. When the wind has passed over it, it is no more, And its place acknowledges it no longer." The Scriptures are clear: Hebrews 9:27 says, "it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment." Now each one of us has an appointment coming with death and judgment." Death and judgment are appointed and certain.

As a minister, for many years I've had the sad duty to have to bury infants, small children, teenagers, and adults of all ages. Friends, we have no assurance that we'll live long and do all that we wish to do in this life. God is in control, and He may require our souls this very day. Please don't fail to prepare your soul for eternity. Once this life is over, we don't get a second chance to make things right with God. We must come to the Lord, and obey the gospel, and stay faithful.

Now this leads us to our fifth thing that dead people know: they know death is when our destiny is settled. In Luke 16:22 the poor man who was right with God "died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom, a place of comfort. The rich man in this story was not right with God; he also died and was buried." Verses 23 to 24 says, "In Hades he lifted up his eyes being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried out and he said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.'" Now Abraham couldn't send Lazarus, because there was a great chasm fixed between those who were righteous and those who were unrighteous, and no one can cross that chasm (Luke 16, verses 25 and 26). The Lord Jesus reveals the unfaithful and unrighteous are separated from God and from His blessing from the time that they die.

Now folks, that ought to wake us up and cause us to repent. We must do what is right by loving God, keeping His commandments, and loving others! Romans 13:11 to 14 says, "Do this, knowing the time, that it's already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts."

We put on the Lord Jesus Christ first by believing in Him and by being baptized. Galatians 3:26 to 27 says, "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have (put on or) clothed yourselves with Christ." You know it's not enough simply to become a child of God, we must keep on putting on Christ throughout our lives here on earth. And we do this by how we think, how we speak, and how we treat others, and how we live. People who want to live with Christ in eternity put away sinful behaviors and live like Christ keeping the morals He taught. Don't let wickedness deceive you. Being a Christian means walking in the light as He is in the light. You can't

walk in spiritual darkness and then expect to have the blessing of God. Many people celebrate sin and laugh about it in this life, but no one will be laughing about sin in the life to come.

Sixth, dead people know there is a great difference in God's eyes between the faithful who are saved "in Christ" and the lost who are "outside" of Christ. Those who are outside of Christ are "separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2 and verse 12). But those who are "in Christ" are "no longer strangers and aliens, but you're fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household" (Ephesians 2, verse 19). Now if you're in Christ, you're a fellow citizen with the saints; you're God's son, you're God's daughter. And you matter to Him, because you're family to God. As God's child, you have an inheritance with Him in heaven! And nothing you will ever do is as important as maintaining that faithful relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Last, the dead know there is a judgment day. 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 10 says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he's done, whether good or bad."

Some imagine, "God is too good to condemn anyone." When they say that, you can be sure they've not read what God said in Scripture but have listened to other people. 2 Peter 2:4 to 9 speaks of God condemning angels when they sinned, condemning the ancient world in the days of Noah, and condemning Sodom and Gomorrah for their immorality. He concludes in verse 9, "then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment." You can't refuse to repent and still escape God's judgment! You're only fooling yourself. God is holy and He is a just God; He will punish those who choose sin and ignore Him.

Now the Judgment Day doesn't have to be a judgment against you. At the close of his life, Paul said in 2 Timothy 4:6 to 8, "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I've fought the good fight, I've finished the course, I've kept the faith; and in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing."

Let us pray. "Oh Father, help us to finish the race, to finish the course with faith and love and obedience to Your will. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen."

If the graves could open and the dead could speak, they would say to each of us clearly and emphatically, "Draw close to the Lord and obey Him. Don't let anything come between God and you." The wicked dead and former unbelievers wouldn't want you to follow their steps and end up where they are. The righteous dead would plead for you to put your trust in the Lord and obey Him. They would passionately urge you to stay faithful to the Lord Jesus. And they know how serious a matter salvation truly is. Are you getting this? Wouldn't it be foolish to ignore this warning and find yourself lost like the rich man of Luke 16?

Our Father in heaven has no desire to see you lost. 1 Timothy 2:3 to 4 says, "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." Our Father in heaven hopes you will look at the cross and come to love the Lord with all your heart. No one loves you like the Lord loves you. No one wants your salvation more than the one who died on the cross for your sins.

You can find salvation from sin and judgment in the grace of our Lord Jesus, who shed His blood for our sins. Trust in the Lord Jesus, turn from sinful thinking and behaviors to serve the Lord humbly and repent, confess the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized into Christ by an immersion in

water for the forgiveness of your sins. Study Acts 2, Acts 22, and Romans 6. The Scriptures will teach you the truth about baptism into Christ. And then get involved in the church and stay faithful.

We hope that today's study about what dead people know has stirred you to consider your soul. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now you can download these lessons or a newsletter online at www.searchtv.org. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches that are in your area. Now you can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, we're not here to exploit you, we want to help you to be saved and to be right with God.

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