**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

**Sermon**

**The Abundant Life**

**Philippians 1: 9 - 14**

*Pastor ~ Matthew Diehl*

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(Unless otherwise noted, NAS is quoted – New American Standard Bible)

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We need to keep in mind that Paul had spent time in Philippi ten years before he writes his letter. After Paul’s personal and detailed opening words to his friends. . . the *saints*, *elders* and *deacons* in Philippi, who are participants with him in delivering and living the Gospel of God in times of persecution. . . he reaches out to encourage them in prayer. In verse 9, we see that Paul writes under God’s grace and peace in praying for them.

**Philippians 1:9 - 11**

**9** And this I pray,

 that your love may abound still more and more

in real knowledge and all discernment,

 **10** so that you may approve the things that are excellent,

in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;

 **11** having been filled with the fruit of righteousness

which comes through Jesus Christ,

 to the glory and praise of God.

 Paul uses key words in his prayer to encourage them and, at the same time, lift them to God. It is worthy of note to observe the words . . . *abound*, *love, knowledge, discernment, sincere, blameless, fruit of righteousness* that Paul showers upon them in his prayer to God. All of these come through Jesus Christ, who is God in the flesh (John 1:14).

**Why is this important for us to realize?**

Because God in the flesh as Jesus demonstrated that it is possible for a person in this fallen environment to exercise all these attributes.

Then Paul focuses on the name of God as to who the Believer’s life should glorify and praise. This is important to all Believers to understand . . . in that, our lives are living witnesses of God to others. The more we mature in God’s grace-gifts the better people we become. With this maturing, God’s peace grows in us, and we are able to improve our management of and witness to this fallen world till the day we graduate from this life to our eternal life.

**From verse 9**, we see that Paul identifies **love** as the catalyst that grows in abundance (abounds) and drives the thirst for knowledge. This is knowledge about how God wants us to live and use “His” knowledge in a discerning way to advance His plan for people.

**9** And this I pray,

 that your love may **abound** still more and more

in real **knowledge** and all **discernment**,

Let us define the Greek words for, ***abound, knowledge, and discernment****.* This willenlighten our understanding of Paul’s intent to the audience.

**From: Friberg,** *Analytical* ***Greek Lexicon***

**Abound = Greek: περισσεύῃ perisseue**

verb subjunctive present active 3rd person singular from **περισσεύω**

(a) of things *be present in abundance, exceed, surpass*

Other reference - **Matthew 5:20** "For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses (Greek: περισσεύσῃ perisseuse) that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.

**Knowledge = Greek: ἐπιγνώσει epignosei**

noun dative feminine singular common from **ἐπίγνωσις**

**ἐπίγνωσις**, **εως**, **ἡ** knowledge, true knowledge; in the NT of content, used especially of intensive religious and moral knowledge, what one comes to know and appropriate through faith in Christ *(full) knowledge, acknowledgment, recognition*

**Other reference - Colossians 1:10** so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

**Discernment = Greek αἰσθήσει aisthesei** noun dative feminine singular common from **αἴσθησις**

**αἴσθησις**, **εως**, **ἡ** as a moral action of recognizing distinctions and making a decision about behavior *perception, insight, capacity for understanding*

**Other reference** *-***Hebrews 5:14** But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. (ESV)

**The Abundant Believer’s Life**

**in Contrast to the**

**Unknowledgeable and Undiscerning People’s Life**

Living the Believer’s life advances people in many ways far beyond others who do not have God working in their hearts and minds. What does this mean?

When we study the Greek meaning of the words in Philippians 9, we see God’s love empowering them. Therefore, Believers develop an enhanced (abundance) ability to gain *knowledge* and *discernment* in the application of knowledge. I see that living the life God has planned for us and calls us, increases our potential “*to be all we can be*.” The idea is that Believers **do not** live destructive lives that degrade their home, work and community environment and honest reputation. This is more apparent because Believers seek and gain ***moral knowledge***. Most people are intelligent. The distinguishing difference is the **moral choices in the application of knowledge** they possess. It is the **moral application** of knowledge that makes the difference in having a civilized society or not.

**This is the obvious problem today.**

Many leaders have knowledge but they do not possess moral discernment. Or, they may know the right moral choice but they choose to obey other forces. We all see the product of these leaders’ choices paraded before us on the 6:00 o’clock news.

**What specific knowledge do we have?**

Earth-shattering knowledge that changes the world is founded in simplicity. What gets in the way of knowledge and the application of that knowledge? Pride and being self-centered.

**Proverbs 11:2 When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom (ESV)**

**Proverbs 16:16-19 16 How much better to get wisdom than gold! To get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver. 17 The highway of the upright turns aside from evil; whoever guards his way preserves his life. 18 Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. 19 It is better to be of a lowly spirit with the poor than to divide the spoil with the proud. (ESV)**

It is my opinion that the number one point of knowledge we (Believers) possess is that we are created in the image of our “living-eternal-creator-loving-God” (Genesis 1:27). That we are created with His purpose and meaning. . .with a God-given direction in life to pursue. We are created to connect to God spiritually and have a personal relationship with Him and our neighbor.

The knowledge we (Believers) possess has the goal of producing family homes with mothers and fathers raising children with love and nurturing. Teaching children respect for other people and their property. . . in that they are to be kind, gentle, play hard but fair, being generous to the needy with an attention to their God who made their lives and all they have possible. Parents do this by realizing God has placed them as the primary responsible persons to teach their children about God and His Word. Children raised this way have healthy confidence and are self-assured to accomplish great things. These families grow to populate a culture that understands “In God We Trust”. These people understand the difference between right and wrong as defined by God. They look at their neighbor as a person to be loved and respected . . . and not to be manipulated for financial or political gain. Therefore, they understand Godly morality and will not support genocide policies like abortion-on-demand and paying people to stay on the government welfare plantation for their vote.

I have made it clear in the past that the evil opponents of God are the secular humanists, who teach children through public education they are not created but are an accidental product of primordial soup that was heated and hit by lightning . . . or some such fairy tale . . . so, they exist as an inconsequential biological form that will soon go extinct. With this teaching, single parent (fatherless) homes are formed leading to many children growing into their teen years with a high suicide and drug addiction rate leading to a life of crime, death and destruction landing them in the world’s largest prison population here in America. **This is what the lack of God’s knowledge and the discernment of Godly knowledge will do to a person and a country.**

Make no mistake, the religious leaders and political party who’s elected officials hold the belief that people **were not** created by a loving God for a purpose with meaning and direction . . . these call evil good and good evil. These are the ones who believe people are a product of that primordial soup that came to life by accident and haven’t any purpose, meaning, or direction in life. . . therefore, they are a biological blob that can be politically manipulated or aborted because they are too costly to birth. The government welfare plantation cannot get too big to manage. . . only big enough to harvest votes to swing an election. Their neighbors are seen as a means to gain a political end. They do not love their neighbors because these leaders do not love God. The two greatest commands are to love God and your neighbor (Matthew 22:36-39).

**Our Duty to God and Country . . . To Our Neighbor**

 I say that we need to tell others that if they want their life to change, they need to surrender to God’s knowledge and how He wants us to apply His knowledge. We have this knowledge given to us in the Bible. However, my life experience reveals to me that pursuing love, grace, peace, joy, gentleness, kindness, humility, patience, goodness, right-acts and self-control brings great reward and surpasses others who do not pursue or desire those attributes that are right in front of us all the time.

**Philippians 1**

**10** so that you may approve the things that are excellent,

in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;

 **11** having been filled with the fruit of righteousness

which comes through Jesus Christ,

 to the glory and praise of God.

All this knowledge and discernment that the love of God produces in a person prove the excellence of the Believer’s life, especially in contrast to the secular life. Our superior life is a witness to non-believers. Living a life exercising God’s knowledge and discernment is proof that the *fruit of righteousness* is at work. We know the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law (Galatians 5:22-23). These fruits are the personal attributes we apply as our spiritual gifts that produce a life that exhibits *right-standing* before God. The Believer’s life bears righteousness (right acts). Why? Because we possess the knowledge of God and have the humility to use His knowledge with spiritual discernment. Believers are predestined for all this (Romans 8:30) because they have surrendered to the Lord by faith.

**Greater Progress for The Gospel**

**Philippians 1**

**12** Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel,

 **13** so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else,

 **14** and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.

Because Paul possessed knowledge from God, he understands that his imprisonments will be turned into good. From reading the book Acts and Paul’s thirteen letters in the New Testament, we see that he was imprisoned, beaten and left for dead many times. All of these things brought an expansion of the Church and the furthering of God’s Gospel Message. God worked through Paul for an eternal purpose. Many may not see or understand Paul’s life calling from the resurrected Lord. Paul knew he was on a mission that would take his temporal life. Paul was like many soldiers and missionaries in history who knew they were in harm’s way, but their lives were used for the greater good. The greater good Paul’s life pursued was an eternal good that he joined and then graduated at the end of his earthly life. We can see this in the letters God directed Paul to write. Praise God, we have these witnessing letters today. These letters have life. . . because God was and is at work in them. The Gospel message is sharper than any two-edged sword. And, for Believers, with the Word of God at work in us, we can possess biblical discernment which enhances the knowledge we have.

**Hebrews 4:12** For the **word of God** is **living and active**, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (ESV)

**AMEN**