

**Sermon – John 17 – Easter Day**  
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**III – Report cards:**

This week I took a trip down memory lane and pulled out some of my high school report cards, which are now over 20 years old...!

My worst subject was always agriculture. In year 7 my report card said 120/120. I thought I'd done pretty well. Then I realised that was my position in the year... 120<sup>th</sup> out of 120!

But then Geography and English weren't much better. Although the comments from my teachers are interesting.

\* Year 7 Geography-48%. Teacher's comment: "A poor result. Bruce puts little effort into his work.

\*English teachers always made insightful comments: year 8 – "Bruce needs to adopt a more serious attitude."

\*Year 9 - "Bruce can be a little unsettled in class." Year 10 - "Bruce has been working well – occasionally rather hastily."

\*But my favourite. Year 11 Agriculture. My result: 55%. position: 127<sup>th</sup> in the year. The comment from my teacher: "Bruce's results reflect His poor attitude he displays in class."

If you look at most of my report cards, you'll pretty much see that I got what I deserved. At least that's what my teachers thought! You'll be glad to know I did pass most subjects – the important ones like Maths and Economics! But overall, report cards really were designed to show two things:

\* 1. What we know; AND 2. What we've done

Our marks, our conduct, if we've turned up, how much attention we paid, what we knew in the exam. So much of life is put down to those two things, isn't it? What we know and what we've done.

Today we're going to look at the start of John chapter 17, and the end of it. And I would love for us to see 2 things today. And the first one is this:

**\* 1. It's not WHAT you know but WHO you know.**

have a look at the last verse of our chapter today, verse 26:

\* Jesus says to the Father: *"I have made you known to them, (the disciples) and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."*

Here are Jesus' final words before he's arrested, tried, flogged and crucified. And he prays to the Father for us to KNOW God. He doesn't say: 'I pray that they will learn a lot about God and write lots of helpful books'. He doesn't say 'I pray that they will do good things and help each other.' He doesn't say "I pray they will be blessed with good jobs, big families and healthy incomes."

No. He says: 'I pray that they will **know the Father and his love.**' Not know OF him, or know ABOUT him, but that we will KNOW God the Father the way that HE, Jesus, knows God the Father. Personally. Intimately. And why do we need to know God?

Because we are trapped in a world that is not what it's meant to be. Violence, hate, war, sickness, death. When Jesus walked on earth, as God on earth, he showed us what things are *supposed* to be like. He healed the lame. He made the blind see. He made the sick well. He raised the dead. He showed us the *power* of God and he wants us to KNOW God so we can experience, in eternity, the way the world is meant to be in a relationship with God.

And when we come to *know* God in that relationship, we can begin understand the second thing:

**\* 2. It doesn't matter what YOU'VE done. It's about what JESUS has done.**

Now to the start of this chapter: Jesus prays an interesting thing: (verse 1)

\* *“Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.”*

It's a strange thing to say, especially when Jesus is talking about going off to be arrested, flogged and killed. He could have said: “Father, lead me to my death. Take me to the cross. Let me be crucified in agony. Let all my friends abandon me. Let my own people hand me over to be killed.” But instead he says: *The time has come. Glorify me so I may glorify you.*

Where is the glory in dying on a cross? Where is the glory in being killed as a sacrifice? How is that glorious?

\* **(?) III** – skin cancer

A few months ago, I had a lump on my shoulder which looked, as they say, “suspicious”. So I went to the doctor. He said “Hmmm...” and sent me to the skin clinic in Hornsby. I saw the doctor. THAT Doctor said “Hmmm...” as well. He said it was a “basal cell carcinoma”. I said “Uh huh.” He said: “We should take it out”. I said “Uh huh...”.

So he cut it out.

And I have to say it was more brutal than I imagined. Drastic action for a drastic problem.

But it was also glorious. You see, in 3 minutes, the doctor removed the skin cancer. In three minutes it was gone. Painful. But done.

The cross of Jesus was brutal. But it was also glorious because of what it achieved. God came to earth in the flesh as Jesus. He dies on the cross, a painful, humiliating and degrading death. But in that one day, that we call **Good** Friday, he took the punishment for the sin of the whole world. Painful. But done. Once and for all. Sin cut out and death defeated. S glorious defeat over sin and death.

In one act of love, Jesus did what no-one else could. He defeated sin by dying in our place, and he conquered death by being resurrected and glorified in heaven. And so Jesus prays to the Father in anticipation of what he's about to do, in verse 4:

\* *“I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.”*

God gave Jesus the work of the cross. It is JESUS' work that matters. It's not what YOU'VE done. It's NOT what I'VE done. It's what JESUS has done. Paid for sin. Conquered death. And given us eternal life. And verse 3 explains what that is:

*“Now this is eternal life: that they may **know** you, the only true God, and **Jesus Christ** whom you have sent.”*

If getting to heaven is determined by what WE have done, imagine showing your report card to God. Would he be impressed? Or would he see (maybe) a thousand good works and then 100,000 sins? If going to heaven depends on our report card from God, if going to heaven is based on **what** we know and **what** we have done, we have a big problem.

\* Jesus tells us in verse 2 that he has been given **authority** over all people - that means that **he** is the judge. It means that **he** decides who goes to heaven. It means that **he** is the King over all the souls in this place. And this is why, in the moments before his arrest, crucifixion and death, Jesus is praying for us. He wants us to KNOW that he is the one with all authority. He wants us to KNOW that he has the power over sin and death. And he wants us to KNOW that he is the one who can give us eternal life.

Today, if you know ABOUT God, I want to encourage you to KNOW God. Personally. Through Jesus. And if you already KNOW God, I want to encourage you, challenge you, to think about that relationship. Is it a **personal** relationship? Is it a **deep** relationship? And is it a **daily** relationship? In other words, does Jesus live IN you, or next door to you?

\* In verse 26, Jesus prays *“that I myself may be in them.”*

Jesus wants to live **in** us. Do you think that it's possible to live in the presence of God every minute of every day? Is that intimacy possible?

**III** – In 1930, a missionary by the name of Frank Laubach asked this question about his relationship with God: Can you be with God all the time? (in Lucado p59 – Lust like Jesus) At the age of 45, (who's over 45?) this Christian man was finally challenged about the depth of his relationship with God. He wrote this:

*“Can we have that contact with God all the time? All the time awake, fall asleep in his arms, and awaken in his presence? Can we attain that? Can we do his will all the time? Can we think his thoughts all the time?... Can I bring the Lord back in my mind-flow every few seconds so that God will always be in my mind? I choose to make the rest of my life an experiment in answering this question.”*

He started his experiment on Jan 30, 1930.

On March 1, he wrote... *“The sense of being led by an unseen hand ... grows upon me daily... I determine not to get out of bed until that mind set upon the Lord is settled.”*

May 14,... *“This thing of keeping in constant touch with God, of making him the object of my thought and the companion of my conversations, is the most amazing thing I ever ran across. It is working. ... It is a matter of acquiring a new habit of thought.”*

June 1... *“Thou art no longer a stranger, God!.. Last Monday was the most completely successful day of my life to date, so far as giving my day in complete and continuous surrender to God is concerned... I remember how as I looked at people with a love God gave, they looked back and acted as though they wanted to go with me.”*

He sounds like a fanatic, doesn't he?

But the truth is this: Jesus died to pay for our sins. He rose again to defeat death for us, so we could live forever with him. He did all of this so we could have an intimate relationship with him for all eternity. He did this so he could live IN us each day. Do we desire to live every minute of every day in his presence? Or do we just want an hour a day, or even an hour or two a week with him? Jesus didn't die and rise again to have us for a few hours a week. He did it for every moment of our life.

\* King David was a man with a terrible report card. Lust. Murder. Adultery. But he learned what it meant to live in God's presence every moment. He said, in Psalm 139:2-6 (The Message):

*“I look behind me and you're there, then up ahead and you're there, too – your reassuring presence, coming and going. this is too much. Too wonderful – I can't take it all in.”*

Let's pray...

Pray for us to truly know God? – not ABOUT him.

Pray to truly know and understand what Jesus has done for us on the cross.

Pray that Jesus would live in us everyday?