

## JESUS CHRIST – PRECIOUS TO GOD AND PRECIOUS TO US

KNEC 11<sup>th</sup> January 2015

1 Peter 2 : 4 – 10

Last week we considered our relationship with God and the need to feel secure in that relationship, able to approach God with confidence and freedom.

This week I want to think about how we can deepen our relationship with Jesus Christ. Deepening our relationship with Jesus is a lifetime's task, we can always go deeper! We can never say this is as deep as I can go, Jesus wants us to explore new depths with him all the time.

Intimacy with Jesus is all about depth and not width.

It can be much easier to take a puddle of water and make it wider rather than deeper. Digging a deep well requires work and dedication, desire and sweat but widening a puddle is easy, you just need to scrape away around the edges of the puddle and it will widen out. But a wide puddle won't really get us anywhere, we could stand in it and we won't get wet.

A puddle in a hot country soon dries up and the water is gone, thirst remains. But a deep well provides fresh water day after day.

We can look at a little expanse of water and ask the question raised by the film title "What lies beneath?" A couple of inches of muddy water or a well 100 feet deep?

Is our spiritual life with Jesus today a puddle or a well?

If it is a puddle, how do we dig a well?

Last week we considered our secure relationship with God in the parallel of a child's relationship with a good parent. This week we can think about going deeper with God by considering how two strangers meet and develop a close, loving and intimate relationship.

The attraction between two people at first meeting is usually superficial, usually visual. We see something we like in the other person.

Psychologists tell us the eyes are important. Or it might be the hair or the smile or some other visible attribute. We hear the person's voice, listen to what is said, chat together, find common interests. If the chemistry is right, the couple decide to meet again and so begins romance.

In the olden days, before social media and mobile phones, before even land lines in the home, courting involved meeting up once, twice, maybe three times a week, with great excitement and anticipation as the date approached, thinking about each other every day.

“Getting to know each other” progresses much more rapidly nowadays with phoning and texting, skyping and face time, social media and numerous ways of being in touch several times a day.

But the romantic process and the deepening of the relationship is still much the same, the other person becomes more and more precious until the point where both want to make a life long commitment to remain together for the rest of their lives.

God wants us to see our relationship with his son as even more precious than the human relationships we enjoy. God wants us to delight in Jesus and to make him our treasure. Just as we might think about our romantic partner every day and long for the times when we can be together, counting the hours until the next meeting, so we should delight in coming close to Jesus and spending time with him.

It says in 1 Peter 2 : 4 that Jesus is the living stone chosen by God and precious to him.

Precious might be defined as something of great value; not to be wasted or treated carelessly. Something that is precious is greatly loved and treasured. Someone who is precious is greatly loved and treasured.

“Precious” might be used to address a much loved person, as in “Don't be afraid, my precious.” That phrase “my precious” has been somewhat hijacked for the modern generation by a character called Gollam in Lord of the Rings who refers to his much-sought after gold ring as his precious!

Peter tells us that Jesus is precious to God and Jesus should also be precious to all who believe in him, to you and I.

More precious than rings and jewels, more precious than gold and silver.

Eliphaz spoke to his friend Job and said (in modern translation The Message) **Come back to God Almighty and he'll rebuild your life. Clean your house of everything evil. Relax your grip on your money and abandon your gold-plated luxury. God Almighty will be your treasure, more wealth than you can imagine. (Job 22)**

**And Job answers in his defense that he has treasured the word of God above all things.**

We sang earlier some of the words of psalm 42 – **As the deer pants for the water so my soul longs after you, you alone are my heart's desire.** And in the second verse **I want you more than gold and silver, only you can satisfy.**

It's important that we think about the words we sing and really mean them.

We also sang **There is a redeemer, Jesus, God's own son, precious lamb of God, Messiah, Holy One.**

As Peter said, Jesus, precious lamb of God.

In the previous chapter, 1 Peter 1 : 18, Peter said **"For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or fault**

The precious blood of the one who is precious to God and who should also be precious to us.

How precious? How much is Jesus worth? Where does he come in our scale of desires? How deep do want to dig our well.

Jesus told a very short parable that describes how precious it really is to

inherit the kingdom of heaven. And since he himself is the king of that kingdom and the one who makes it valuable, the parable applies to him too. The parable is told in one verse (Matthew 13 :44). Jesus said, **The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.**

Notice well: the man does not sell all that he has begrudgingly; he does it joyfully. The reason is because he sees how precious the treasure is. He knows that, whatever he pays for that field, it's worth it. Jesus is worth so much more than anything else in all the world, that every loss endured to have more of him can be endured with joy.

Paul gave us a living example of this parable. He said in [Philippians 3:7](#),

**Whatever gain I had, I counted loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed I count everything as loss for the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, in order that I might gain Christ.**

Isaac Watts in the 17<sup>th</sup> century picked up these words when he wrote

**When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss and pour contempt on all my pride... all  
the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to his blood**

Deep and powerful words.

No Christian is satisfied with his or her present condition. No Christian wants to be a puddle, shallow, superficial, insignificant, muddy water. Every Christian should want to be a digger of a deep well and no matter how deep we dig, Jesus wants us to keep on digging deeper.

We are hungry, and the more we taste, the hungrier we get for Jesus. His value does not diminish with time—it increases. And the better we know him, the more we love him.

But we don't keep digging deeper just for our own benefit alone, so that we can love him more, although that is important. Look at verse 9

where Peter says **“You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”**

Our power to give a compassionate witness about Jesus Christ to unbelievers in 2015 will grow in direct proportion to how precious Jesus is to us in 2015. You cannot bear a credible witness to the value of anything if you do not feel its value.

I remember one time having difficulty with a car salesman who told me how wonderful his VW cars were compared with Volvo cars which were very much inferior. I think he had forgotten that he had met me four years previously in the Volvo garage when he worked there and had told me Volvo cars were the best and I shouldn't consider a VW! He was not credible because he did not genuinely believe in and value what he was selling.

Can we bear a credible witness to Jesus Christ as people who belong to God, a royal priesthood? The most important question we can ask ourselves if we hope to reap a harvest in 2015 is “How much is Jesus worth?”