



### ***People Spot Missile: Knowing Jesus***

I have been in the church all my life. I have been serving as a pastor since I was 18 years old. But, in recent years there has been for me a growing concern. I'm convinced that many Christians who are also very active in Church simply don't really know Jesus. I'm not doubting that they are Christian. They just haven't taken the time to really get to know Him and their lives haven't been impacted as they might have, had they really learned who this Jesus of Nazareth really is and the claims He has on their lives.

I was recently working with the Harmony Bethel Church of God. Jack Guyler is the senior pastor. I was meeting with their council. I urged them to spend 40 days in prayer and reading the gospels. The pastoral staff caught the vision. They prepared a booklet with guidelines for prayer and decided they would focus on Mark and Luke. The timing was such this could be done during Lent. It seemed a natural. The people were encouraged to pray at specific times and for specific things and read a chapter of the Gospels each day. There were temple talks during worship as people shared the impact of this effort on their lives. A follow up meeting will be held to see what God might be saying to the people and the church.

Why is it important to know Jesus? How can you know the claims He has on your life unless you know Him. Even in Jesus' day, there were people who turned away from Him when they understand what He was asking of them. There are basically three ways to know him.

First, and quite simply you must confess Jesus as the Lord of your life. You might say that is a given. I don't take anything for granted anymore. Jesus wants to be the Lord of our lives.

Second, read the gospels. It is so important that we know who this Jesus is. I have had the privilege of traveling in the Holy Land in each of the last three years. As I made those trips and have been reading through the gospels, the following thought struck me. Can't you just picture the disciples at various points in their three year journey with Jesus as they must have said to each other, "Who is this man?" When He turned the water into wine, healed the sick, raised the dead, fed the multitudes, calmed the waves, and then was raised on the third day they must have constantly been scratching their heads.

*"When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still*

*others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ the Son of the living God." Matthew 16:13-16*

As believers we are to encourage people to be confronted by Jesus so that they must make a decision about who He is. Read the Gospels. In 87 days, reading one chapter a day, you can read all four gospels. Then go back and read them again. Really get to know the Jesus of the Gospels.

Third, spend serious time in prayer. That means talking to Jesus and listening to him talk to you. Prayer is communication and communication is talking and listening. Prayer is building a relationship with Jesus. Anyone you want to have a meaningful relationship with, you must communicate with on a regular basis. This is still true with Jesus.

Why is it important to read the Gospels and pray? Because, Jesus' words to us today will be consistent with the revelation of Him in the Gospels. We check the voices we hear against the instruction of the Gospels. If they are not consistent then we know that it is some other voice speaking.

Please take the time to get to know Jesus. It may surprise you to discover what he would like to say to you.

*My newest book is now available. A little different than anything I have done before. It is A History of the Civil War as Presented by the Church Advocate. It is volume 1. It covers from May of 1859 to May of 1862. It is what was printed at the time. It is 400 pages The cost is \$40.00 plus shipping. I am also available to make a 1 hour presentation on the material.*

*I am now available to present "Starting a New Service", "Churches Have Personalities", "People Spots", "Does Your Church Really Care About People?" and "A Christian Perspective on Leadership Skills." "Stewardship and Managing Debt" jm*

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