

February 28, 2018
Lent 3 Midweek
Jeremiah 15:15-21

Who knows?

We say that a lot about all sorts of things. Why is it that I was pulling red fish out of this spot like crazy last week and today I'm not even getting a nibble? Who knows? Why is "abbreviated" such a long word? Who knows? Why in the world did the president tweet that? Who knows? Saying "who knows" typically suggests that nobody does.

When we read through the Bible we often say, "Who knows?" Where did evil first come from? Who knows? Why did God wrestle with Jacob that one night? Who knows? How bad are things going to get before Jesus returns? Who knows?

Last week the passion reading showed that Jesus was in charge. This week it is equally as clear that, "Who knows?" Jesus knows.

In the very moment Peter is professing his great loyalty, Jesus knows Peter will deny him three times. Jesus knows how horrible His ordeal will be and, very humanly, prays for a release. But He knows the Father's will perfectly and, *"nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will."* Jesus knows Judas and company is there even before they arrive, *"Rise and let us be going. Look, the one who betrays Me is here."* He knows only He will be taken away. He knows it isn't the time for swordplay. He knows the angels would come to Him if He bade them.

Most of all, Jesus knows His cross is not His end. *"But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee."*

Jesus knows. In His human nature Jesus may have willingly suppressed declined to use the whole divine nature that has always been His from eternity, that true. But He always knows what it was to be completely faithful to the Father. And in His ministry, He always knows the

will of the Father for us in Him, that He would die and rise for the forgiveness of sins, sealing the salvation promised from Adam on. Now, risen from the dead and at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, Jesus knows all. He knows me. He knows you. He knows our forgiveness is a done deal and, He knows that we, being called by the Holy Spirit to trust His truth, have that forgiveness.

A big chunk of the right repentance we so focus on during this time of Lent is believing this—Jesus knows. Jesus knows and reveals His truth to us in His Word. Maybe a target many of us need to set as part of our Lenten discipline is to get back to knowing this, believing this and trusting this—that Jesus knows.

I say this because when it's convenient for us, we have this amazing ability to revert to, "who knows?" This happens a lot in the midst of our temptations.

At work a Christian is tempted to "borrow" some office supplies. "Well, it's a big business with lots of office supplies...and they don't really pay me what I deserve...and I do lots of extras for them, so **who knows** if it's really wrong to take them." Jesus knows God's Law and kept it perfectly. Jesus know "Thou shall not steal." Jesus is Lord of all and provides all you need. He knows it's sin, and through His Word, so do you.

But it's more than just temptation to sin. It's our proclamation of Jesus in the way we live our life also. We do it in lots of ways when we think and act like we know better than that to which God's Word clearly calls us.

Here's a common one—think of the angers we have at people who have wronged us, or maybe even groups of people with whom we vehemently disagree. "Who knows how God feels about them. They're wrong! They're nasty! They're evil!" Somehow, we think we're right to feel

superior, more righteous than them. Often, we feel justified in our being angry and holding a grudge. “I know I’m right!”

Jesus knows...they need forgiveness. Jesus knows...He loved them so much He died for them. Jesus knows...each one of us deserved condemnation, and He died to save us. Jesus knows that following Him is to bear your own cross, and part of the cross is loving and forgiving those who may not deserve it, just like He did.

There’s so many truths Jesus knows that He has passed on to us in His Word. I could go on for hours with examples of places we go and willingly or happily forget them.

But there’s the place many Christians end up forgetting that Jesus knows. It’s now a place they are lured to go. It’s not a place they willingly go. It most certainly not a place they happily go. It is a place called despair.

A bad thing comes and takes the wind out of one’s spiritual sails. It is most often some type of loss. It might be financial hard times or losing a career. It might be a valued relationship that was once strong facing the trials of the world and now weakening and turning sour. It might be the consequences of one’s own sins coming back and bringing life crashing down in some way. It could be the death of a loved one or our own body betraying us unto infirmity and death.

Whatever, we despair and say “Who knows? Nobody knows how bad it is!”

Jesus knows.

Jesus knows where His children are in their afflictions, and He is right there with them. Jesus knows loss, for He gave away everything of the world in His flesh to save the world. Jesus knows your afflictions, for He took them upon Himself to heal them. Jesus knows the consequences of your sins—He died under their punishment! Jesus knows death—He’s been through it for you.

And Jesus knows that on the other side of all of it, there is life, pure, unpolluted, everlasting, wonderful life. Jesus knows because He is living it right now and forever! Jesus knows, and in His Word and Sacraments He is calling you to know it also! By the gift of faith He gives what He knows to you, by you coming to know His love.

Jeremiah starts out his complaint to God and even voicing His doubts of God for how badly life has treated him with, *“O Lord, you know; remember me and visit me...”*

God’s response is quite simply, “repent”. *“If you return, I will restore you, and you shall stand before me...I will deliver you out of the hand of the wicked, and redeem you from the grasp of the ruthless.”*

To our complaints and doubts, Jesus response is the same. “I know all about the fallenness of the world, and I know I’ve taken care of you by my cross and empty tomb. Repent, and believe this good news.”

Jesus knows...the path to salvation. He has lived, died and lived it. Know that Jesus knows. Repent, and follow Him home.

Amen.