

1. We are continuing with our series today “Fan the Flame/Feed the Fire.
2. Let me read our text that is the basis for this series. **2 Timothy 1:5-6 I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. 6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.**
3. Last week we considered the question. How to feed the flame? What are some practical ways we can fan the fire of our faith?
4. How can we cooperate with what the Lord desires to do in our lives so that our relationship with him is passionate and vibrant?
5. The first thing we mentioned was reading God’s word the bible.
6. We said that nearly every believer would agree that reading God’s word on a consistent basis is healthy for, and feeds our relationship with the Lord.
7. We also discovered that in about 15 minutes a day, it is possible to read through the entire bible in one year.
8. But we were also very truthful in admitting that for many believers reading the word consistently is a struggle.
9. Not because they don’t want to read, but because at times it is very difficult to understand God’s word.
10. The bible is hard to understand. Sometimes. Many times. It just doesn’t make sense.
11. So, how can something that is hard to understand be a tool for fanning the flame of intensity in our spiritual walk?
12. Because, **the goal of reading the word is not to understand. The goal of reading the word is to know.**
13. Here is the foundational truth that I asked you to consider last week.
14. **The Lord invites us to come to Him. But he doesn’t invite us to come so we will understand. He invites us to come so we will know.**
15. To know Him, and to know truth. In proverbs 3:5 we are commanded to not lean on our own understanding, but rather to trust the Lord. Trust and understanding are at opposite ends of the spectrum. Not that understand is wrong or bad. Not at all. It’s just that understanding isn’t effective at helping build our faith.

16. Think of your interaction with a new believer. A baby Christian. Chances are they understand almost nothing about what has happened to them. But what drives this contagious spirit is what they know.
17. I know I was a sinner. I know something has to change. I know Jesus loves me. I know he has forgiven me of my sins. And I know my life is different.
18. Knowing tends to build and ignite faith. Understanding tends to extinguish faith, because of the abundance of things we can't, and never will understand.
19. As it relates to reading the word, our goal should be to read for the purpose of knowing God, and knowing truth, rather than understanding God and understanding truth.
20. In fact, we are told in Isaiah chapter 55 that it is basically impossible to understand God because his ways and thoughts are superior to ours. We are not able to reach his level of understanding.
21. As it relates to reading the word of God, our goal should be to read to know truth, not understand truth.
22. In multiple places the bible is called the word of truth.
23. And in John chapter 8 Jesus declares that it is knowing the truth that sets us free. Not understanding truth.
24. If we read the bible to understand truth we will be consistently discouraged. But if we read to know truth we will be consistently encouraged.
25. This morning I want to build on last week's message by introducing another truth as it relates to reading the bible to know God and know truth.
26. God has created us as human beings to function a certain way. And one of the ways he has created us to function is that knowing, and understanding come in a very specific order.
27. In God's creation understanding is an outflow of knowing, and not the other way around.
28. In God's creation, knowing must come first, and only after knowing has been established can understanding exist.

29. I'm going to have Sydnie teach us a brand-new song this morning.
30. I believe it will be one of our key songs for years to come.
31. She is going to sing, and I am going to do the motions.
32. (The wise man built his house upon the rock.)
33. The wise man or woman builds their life on knowing. But the foolish man or woman builds their life on understanding.
34. Look with me at John chapter 8 again.

TEXT: **John 8:26-32** "I have much to say in judgment of you. But he who sent me is trustworthy, and what I have heard from him I tell the world." 27 They did not understand that he was telling them about his Father. 28 So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. 29 The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him." 30 Even as he spoke, many believed in him. 31 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. 32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

TITLE: **Just Say Know.**

INTRO:

1. Verse 27 tells us that as Jesus was talking to the crowd about his father, that they did not understand what Jesus was saying.
2. And as a result of Jesus realizing they didn't understand, this is what Jesus said. 28 "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. 29 The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him."
3. I want to be transparent about my understanding of that passage.
4. What Jesus said after he realized the people didn't understand, did not help me understand any more clearly.
5. And that is in light of the fact that I have all of history surrounding this event at my disposal.
6. If I had been in the crowd that day with no clue what was to come in the future, I fear I would have been one of the skeptics who turned to another and said, yeah, I don't understand him, and listening isn't making it any better.

7. And if we read that passage for the purpose of understanding, our response might still be the same in 2020.
8. But the real game changer for me is when I realize that Jesus wasn't talking so they, or even we would understand. He was talking so they would know.
9. Upon realizing they don't understand, he doesn't change the way he speaks. He doesn't say, hold on guys. Let me say that another way so you understand. In fact, he makes it clear that it won't be clear to them until much later. (at his crucifixion) Instead what he does is he continues to declare truth.
10. When this thing has happened, then that thing will happen, and you will know (not understand) that I can't speak on my own. I can only say what my father tells me.
11. And then in response to his continued declaration of truth, he says to the Jews who believed in him.
12. John 8:32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free
13. In that exchange we see a glimpse of how God works. God declares truth to us for the purpose of knowing Him and knowing truth.
14. And it is the knowing of truth (not understanding) that sets us free.
15. It's not that the Lord doesn't want us to understand, it's just that his way of relating to us is to help us know Him and know truth, and if as a result of knowing Him and truth we understand, the understanding is a bonus, not the real prize.
16. Understanding is impossible without first knowing.
17. There is a sweet little two-year old boy who lives on the other side of the state that calls me papi.
18. About twice a week we video call with them and we get to see all the kids.
19. The last month or so it has been really neat to see him pick up new things.
20. He pointed to his nose, eyes, ears, mouth, hair, feet, belly button.
21. Last weekend they were all at the house and he and I were watching a video. All during the video we repeated colors.
22. Red. Green. Blue. Yellow.
23. All one-word answers. Now why does that matter.

24. We want him to grow up and be a very intelligent young man one day. But he will never reach that place if all of us start by trying to help him understand first. We begin with helping him know. Body parts. Colors, etc.
25. Understanding is a by-product of knowing, and not the other way around.
26. Is he going to grow up one day and be an eye surgeon? I don't know. But what I do know is that he never will be if he doesn't first know where his eye, and my eyes are.
27. Is he going to grow up to be a great artist? I don't know that either. But what I do know is that he will never be able to mix the colors he wants if he doesn't know any colors to start with.
28. You say, well pastor. Are you telling us that we should all act like two-year olds all the time? Absolutely not. What I am saying is that we need to realize that the principle applies whether we are two or 102.
29. Knowing has to come first, understanding has to come second. That principle doesn't change as we become older.
30. If we try and place the higher priority on understanding, we will probably never know or understand much of anything.
31. I can know without understanding and thrive. But I cannot understand without knowing.
32. And that is the principle that explains why we must read God's word to know Him and know truth, because that is how he relates to us.
33. He's not against our understanding, it's just that understanding can't come if we don't first know.
34. That's why if you will begin to read the bible with that principle in mind you will discover that from cover to cover, God very rarely speaks so people will understand. He almost always speaks so people will know.

35. A couple of weeks ago I was reading the book of Deuteronomy in the Old Testament. In most of this book God is speaking to Moses who is speaking to the children of Israel to prepare them to enter into the promised land to begin to establish and experience every good thing he has ever promised them.
36. Deuteronomy is 34 chapters. Almost all 34 chapters sound something like this.
37. Deuteronomy 12:1-5 These are the decrees and laws you must be careful to follow in the land that the LORD, the God of your ancestors, has given you to possess--as long as you live in the land. 2 Destroy completely all the places on the high mountains, on the hills and under every spreading tree, where the nations you are dispossessing worship their gods. 3 Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and burn their Asherah poles in the fire; cut down the idols of their gods and wipe out their names from those places. 4 You must not worship the LORD your God in their way. 5 But you are to seek the place the LORD your God will choose from among all your tribes to put his Name there for his dwelling. To that place you must go;
38. All throughout the entire book you will basically hear the same theme. Do this. Don't do that. Again, and again.
39. What you almost never hear is why you should do this or not do that.
40. Now. there are a couple of ways to look at that. We could read this entire book and conclude that God is some cold, distant God, who only wants to tell us what to do and not do all the time.
41. He has no interest in our understanding anything. We are just supposed to do what he says.
42. Or is it that like a parent who teaches a child to know their colors and body parts, that what God is trying to do is establish in us these foundational truths so that later he can build on top of them something that cannot be easily swayed, moved, damaged or deceived?
43. So that when the storms of life bombard us on every side that the foundation of our soul is not washed away and the fire of our faith is not extinguished, but rather that we can stand and shine and overcome in spite of it all?
44. If it is true that God desires something much deeper and more secure for our lives, then we can approach him this way.

45. God. You invite me to come near you and what you offer me is so much more than understanding.
46. Lord. You invite me to come near you for the purpose of knowing you. Knowing what you like and don't like. Knowing where your boundaries are and what happens when I cross them.
47. Lord. Where every single person on planet earth has these parts of themselves, they are afraid to reveal, you expose every part of who you are to me and you invite me to know those parts of you intimately.
48. That's the kind of God I can learn to know first and maybe understand later.
49. Just say know.

Conclusion:

1. Before I share this last story, I want to be extremely clear that I am not praising myself or patting myself on the back.
2. The reality is when I think back on this period of my life, I am so filled with regret that it still makes me emotional almost 20 years later.
3. But it was this experience that has been so vital to my understanding of God's desire that we seek to know him first, not understand him first.
4. In 2003 my family traveled to Central America to learn a new language.
5. Prior to going there, a friend of mine had advised me. Don't try to learn Spanish ahead of time, you will just learn the wrong things in the wrong way, and you will have to unlearn it all.
6. So, I arrived in Costa Rica completely clueless.
7. Before we could begin classes, we had to have an evaluation with the director of the institute to determine how much Spanish we knew, so the director knew where to place us.
8. I can still see the look on Luis's face when he realized I did not know one word of Spanish.
9. Actually, that's not true. I did know one word. Bathroom. (bano) but he never asked me where the bathroom was, so I didn't even get to use that word.

10. Several months later when we knew each other better, he told me that in 17 years of being the director, having interviewed every single student who had entered the program, he had never met a person who knew less Spanish than I did.
11. Translation. He had never met anyone as ignorant as me.
12. (not bragging, just the opposite)
13. Fast forward 14 months, and that same man told me that no student had ever progressed and had such a handle on the language as I did.
14. In fact, he had to write new curriculum for me that no one else had ever needed.
15. Again, hear me out. Regrets up to my eyeballs. It is imperative that you know the change in my ability had nothing to do with intelligence.
16. There was one key conversation that set me on a course to overcoming my terrible ineptitude at the language.
17. After my interview with Luis, a brilliant professor who taught University level classes, I was down and discouraged. I thought I am never going to get this. I hadn't even started, and I was ready to give up.
18. A dear friend who I had know for many years, who is himself extremely brilliant sat me down and gave me some of the best direction I would receive.
19. He said, you need to know that for the first 6 months of your studies, you will understand almost nothing.
20. You will feel dumb. Stupid. You will question if you will ever learn this language. For about 6 months you will be completely in the dark.
21. Do not make it your goal to understand. Make it your goal to know the language. Learn words like nose, hair, ears, red, blue, white.
22. I said, man those are two-year old words. Two-year olds know all that. So, he repeated himself.
23. Learn to know when this word goes with that word, and when it doesn't, not understand why it works that way.
24. If you do, in about 6 months the light will begin to click on, and little by little you will begin to understand.

25. If you don't seek to know first, the understanding will never come.
26. I wasn't sure he was leading me in the right direction, and he could sense I was doubting his advice. So, he made one last attempt and it sealed the deal for me.
27. He said, several months ago, one morning nobody knew where a certain family was. They didn't show up for classes that day.
28. Somebody called. Couldn't reach them. Finally, after some investigation we discovered that they had become so discouraged with learning the language because after a few months they still couldn't understand a thing, that they packed up in the middle of the night. Got on a plane, and flew back to America.
29. Keep in mind they had prepared and planned for this moment for years, and they gave up and quit.
30. He said, I don't want that to happen to you. So, I did what he said. I made it my goal to just know vocabulary words and nouns and verbs, and as best as I could I tried to not focus on understanding.
31. And almost 6 months to the day I began to slightly understand. Oh. That's what that means and that's how this goes with that. And little by little I started to understand more and more.
32. But what's interesting was the more I understood, the more I became aware that I understood because of what I knew.
33. Every time I got confused, which was a lot, I always went back to what I knew. And what I knew put everything back into perspective.
34. That's why this little children's song connects with me. As we relate to God and read his word, the wise man or woman seeks to know. And it is the knowing that builds a firm foundation that cannot be shaken when the winds and rains pound. And that fans faith.
35. It is the foolish man or woman who builds their relationship with the Lord on what they understand. Because every time the winds blow and the rains flow what they understand is washed away. And that destroys faith.
36. Pray.
37. Salvation call. To know Jesus.

38. I commit to relating to God and his word so I can know him and know truth.
39. I commit to reading God's word for the purpose of knowing him and truth, not understanding him and truth.
40. Song. The wise man built his house upon the rock.