

2 Timothy 1:12 - I know whom I have believed

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[0 : 0 0] Tonight I'd like us to turn back to 2 Timothy chapter 1 and we're going to look at various things in this chapter but we're mainly going to focus on the latter part of verse 12 where Paul writes, but I am not ashamed for I know whom I have believed and I'm convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me and we are especially going to focus on the words there in the middle where Paul says I know whom I have believed.

As I said when we were reading this is the last letter that Paul wrote in terms of those recorded in the New Testament. He may of course have written others but in terms of what has been preserved to us this is Paul's final letter. He is in prison in Rome and he is fully expecting his life to come to an end very soon and he writes to Timothy who in many ways has been his closest companion and his best friend in the work of the Gospel over the years and in writing this letter he wants Peter, he wants Timothy to come to him. If you go to chapter 4 you can read it later on he says I want you to come as soon as possible so the purpose of the letter is really to tell Timothy to come but as Paul writes and as he makes this request he gives Timothy some wonderful and valuable words of encouragement of teaching and of warning and whenever you read 2 Timothy it's really important to remember the context. Remember this is Paul's last letter. As Paul writes these words he knows that time is short so he is highlighting to Timothy the things that really matter. Imagine you were writing your child or your husband or your wife or your best friend a final letter. You wouldn't talk about trivialities, you would focus on what really matters and so as we read this letter we need to listen to what Paul is saying aware of the fact that these are the truths that we urgently need to listen to. I want us to start just by looking at an overview of chapter 1 to just summarise some of the things that he is saying. Even a quick read through this letter shows that it is written at a time when Paul and the church are facing great challenges. We picked up a wee bit at the very end of chapter 1 where Paul describes how everybody in Asia has turned away from him. People have deserted Paul among whom are phygellous and hermogenes. Later in the letter we read about how false teachers have infiltrated the church and they are causing chaos. Paul names Hymenaeus and Philetus in particular in chapter 2 verse 17. Warning

Timothy about these false teachers. Paul also talks about the fact that people are exploiting their position in the church, they have an appearance of godliness, they look great on the outside but in reality they are using their position to take advantage of vulnerable people. Paul talks about that in chapter 3. Other people have backslidden and abandoned the gospel. Paul mentions Demas in chapter 4 who having loved this world turned away from the truth. Other people are doing their utmost to hurt Paul and he mentions Alexander the Coppersmith towards the end of the letter. There are huge challenges facing Paul and facing the church. It is so easy to think that in Bible times things must have been so great for the church, so much better than they are now. It is not true, the church was battered and was constantly facing challenges. And of course Paul himself who in many ways was the great leader of the New Testament church is now locked up in Rome and he will soon be executed. So this letter is written at a time when it seems like the whole world is against the church, which of course is a reality that has been true of the church ever since and it remains true today. We face challenges, we face opposition, it will always always be a reality in the experience of Christ's church. But in chapter 1 Paul reminds us of three great responsibilities that Timothy has and that we have in the face of the challenges we experience as a church. Paul gives us three great responsibilities that we must ensure we hold on to. First of all he highlights the fact that we must communicate the Gospel.

That's one of the great things he urges Timothy to do throughout both his letters to Timothy. Vershade says, do not be ashamed about the testimony about our Lord. And even though the world is opposing the Gospel message we need to continue bearing testimony to the good news of Jesus Christ. Timothy is going to in many ways step into Paul's shoes as a teacher and a witness for this truth and we need to do the same. Paul is passing on the baton as we said to Timothy and Timothy passed it on to the next generation and it's been passed on and on and on through the nations of the world and down through the ages of history and it has come to us. We have had the amazing privilege of hearing the Gospel and now we have the great responsibility of passing it on. We need to come to keep on communicating the Gospel. So wherever you are this week whatever you're doing in your home, in the community, in your workplace, in your recreation, in your past times, in everything that you do we want to be tools of Gospel communication so that our character, our conduct and our words speak out for Jesus and bear witness to him. We must communicate the Gospel. That's one of the great themes that chapter one is highlighting. Secondly we must suffer for the Gospel. Look at Varshit again. First of all we have to communicate.

Don't be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord nor of Me, His prisoner but share in suffering for the Gospel by the power of God. We have got to be ready to suffer for the Gospel. Paul himself has suffered a huge amount in his life. He continues to suffer. He is in jail and he's telling Timothy you've got to be ready to suffer for the Gospel and so do we. And it's true that communicating the Gospel will very often lead to suffering for the Gospel. As Paul says in these verses in verse 11 and 12 rather he says I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, a teacher which is why I suffer as I do. Now suffering for the Gospel as you know can take many many different forms. Sometimes it can involve direct persecution and that's something that is less of a reality for us but as we know from the prayer points we highlight every single Sunday morning it is a very very real experience for many many

[8 : 32] Christians for millions of Christians throughout the world. They are facing direct opposition and persecution because they are Christians and as a result they suffer. That of course was the experience of Christians in Scotland in years gone by and of course as our nation becomes more secular and intolerant we may well be facing days like that again. So sometimes suffering can involve persecution but suffering can come in other ways as well. Sometimes suffering involves rejection. People were turning away from Paul, people who were once by his side, people who were once his friends, people who I'm sure he would have trusted and really depended on. They abandoned him, they turned away and people may well do the same to you.

People might reject you because you're a Christian, people might who were once your friends they might not like the fact that you've become a Christian, they might want to keep your arms length, they might change in the way that they are and that is incredibly hard and it is immensely painful and when people reject you in any way it's not a we thing, it's a really hard thing. But John writes in his first letter, do not be surprised brothers that the world hates you. So suffering can involve persecution, it can involve rejection, I have to excuse me my throat is a wee bit dodgy tonight but not too bad. Suffering can also involve sacrifice. Materially speaking Paul has lost pretty much everything and even his coat we read in chapter 4 he left it behind and he says to Timothy please take my coat with you and my books and my parchment, he's lost everything, he was arrested, taken to

Rome, he's lost all his material possessions and your commitment to Jesus may well have cost you as well. You may well have sacrificed your time or your money or your energy or maybe even career opportunities. You may have sacrificed these things because of your love for Jesus but that is a precious, precious thing in God's sight and you will never lose your reward. As Jesus himself says in Matthew 5, blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account, rejoice and be glad for your reward is great in heaven. Now naturally we want to avoid suffering, we recoil from it but we have to remember that all too often suffering is the pathway to great success. In chapter 2 you can read it when you get home, Paul uses the image of an athlete as an illustration for the Christian life and here's an interesting question, what do all great athletes have in common? What one thing do all great athletes have in common? They are good at suffering, they are good at pushing their bodies through that pain, through that exhaustion, through that hardship, they are good at suffering. Did any of you see the news where, have any of you heard of Mark Beaumont, the guy who he cycled around the world, a few years ago he was one of the first people to cycle around the world on a bike, he's from Scotland and then he did it again this year except he did it in 80 days. So he cycled around the world in 80 days, an absolutely amazing accomplishment, he had to cycle something like 250 miles every day and they were speaking to him afterwards and he said, he said there's one thing you need to be able to do something like this, you need the ability to suffer. So there you've got a guy, he's set a world record, first person to ever do it, incredible success, how did he get it? By suffering, suffering is often the pathway to great success. When I think about all of this I look at myself and I pray God please give me the courage and the strength to be better at suffering for you. We will have to suffer for the Gospel. Thirdly, we must guard the Gospel, this in many ways is perhaps the strongest theme being emphasised. Verse 13, follow the pattern of sound words that you have heard from me in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus, by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you. As we said this was a time of great challenge for Paul, for Timothy and for the church and one of the most dangerous and serious things that they were facing was the influence of false teachers.

Now this is a massive issue in the New Testament and it has been a massive issue throughout the whole history of the church. It is something that Paul has always been deeply fearful about the threat of false teaching. If you go back to Acts chapter 20, that's what Paul was deeply concerned about as he left the Ephesian elders. In Acts 20 Paul gathered the Ephesian elders together and they met up, I think it's in Miletus and he speaks to them before he leaves them knowing that he's more than likely never going to see them again. He says, I know that after my departure, fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock, and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things to draw away the disciples after them. The threat of false teachers was immense in the early church. In 2 Timothy, he talks again about it and he describes them. Look at the word that he used to describe them. He says, their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenes and Philetus who have sworn from the truth saying that the resurrection has already happened. They are upsetting the faith of some. Now that word gangrene can also be translated cancer. The point that Paul is making is that false teaching is absolutely deadly. That's a very simple and obvious point, but it's one that often is overlooked. The Gospel as Paul says in verse one is the promise of life. The Gospel gives and brings eternal life. That's what makes the Gospel so brilliant, but it also means that anything which twists the Gospel or obscures the Gospel or corrupts the Gospel, anything that does that is a lethal poison that will bring death. Now I'm not a doctor, but basic medical science proves that this is true. For example, look at this statement on the screen. It says, take for paracetamol tomorrow. Something that would ease a headache or help if you're a sore back. Take for paracetamol tomorrow. Good advice, yes? Absolutely. You change one digit in that sentence and it now becomes a lethal message that will destroy anyone who listens to it because that's a fatal dose. And so just a tiny change can turn a message of life into a message of death.

And exactly the same point applies to the Gospel. If we change or distort or twist the message of the Gospel, then it is a matter of eternal life or eternal death. And this is where we see what really matters in a church. This is what really, really matters. This is what Paul would be concerned about if he came to do a visit in our church to inspect what we're doing. All too often we worry about what clothes we're wearing or we worry about the order in which we do things or we're wondering about where we're going to sit or what the style of the service is going to be or whether the building is the way we want it to be.

[18 : 29] We worry about all of these things, but every single one of these things is totally, totally subordinate to the question that matters more than anything else. The life or death question is this church teaching the truth? That's what matters. That is what matters. And if we are teaching God's truth, then the next life or death question is, do you believe in what we are saying? The truth of the Gospel is so important and the influence of false teachers is a perilous threat. That's why Paul says to Timothy, guard the Gospel. And it reminds us that it is the Gospel that is our treasure. All too often we're quick to guard our preferences. We're quick to guard our traditions. We're quick to guard our routines.

We're quick to guard the things that we like. But for the sake of our eternal well-being, we must, must, must guard the Gospel. Because in the Gospel, God is telling us the truth.

God is telling us what we need and we need to hold on to that with every ounce of strength that we have. So Paul is saying to us, we need to communicate the Gospel. We need to suffer for the Gospel. We need to guard the Gospel. They are vital, all three in our lives as Christians. But I am sure that if you had anything like me, when we talk about things like this, we all have to confess that each of these things is hard. They are daunting responsibilities. Communicating the Gospel is hard. It's not easy. It's really hard.

Suffering for the Gospel is hard. And guarding the Gospel takes immense effort and care and energy. These are big responsibilities and it's easy to feel like we want to shy away and to think, I don't know if I can do it. And we can look at someone like Paul and we think, how did he do it? What was Paul's secret? Now an interesting question. What was Paul's secret? What enabled Paul to communicate the Gospel, to suffer for the Gospel, to guard the Gospel in such an amazing way? What was Paul's secret? Well, Paul's secret is not a secret because in verse 12 he tells us what his secret really is. Right there in the middle of verse 12, we see the secret that lies at the heart of fulfilling these duties. Paul says, I know whom I have believed. The key to communicating the Gospel, the key to suffering for the Gospel, the key to guarding the Gospel is to know the one in whom we have believed.

In other words, if we know God better, then we will be far, far more greatly equipped to fulfil these responsibilities and to live out our Christian lives in the week ahead and in however many weeks we have left in our lives. We need to know God. And of course that's opening the door to the biggest and greatest subject that we can ever turn our attention to. The knowledge of God is such a vast subject. In fact, it's an unsearchable subject because God, biological definition, is the infinite Creator and because of that he is beyond our understanding. But the amazing thing about the Bible is that it is God's revelation to us. God has given us these words as words of revelation. In other words, in the Bible, God is showing you and me what he is like in order that you might know him.

[23 : 06] And the Bible teaches us just an abundance of amazing things about God, which is why theology is such a brilliant topic to study. But what I want us to do for the rest of the time tonight is I want us just to go back over this chapter. You've got the whole Bible teaching us about God. We're just going to look at one chapter and we're going to look over it and we're going to see what it teaches us about God or some of what it teaches us about God because I have no doubt that I'll miss out a lot. But I hope that as we do that we will see that knowing God makes all the difference in terms of serving him more effectively.

And always remember that whenever you read the Bible, a good question to ask is, what does this passage teach me about God? So let's just read through the passage, the chapter again, and we'll see how many things it tells us about God. So I put it back up on the screen.

Let's go through it bit by bit. Verse one, Paul and Apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus. There we go. Straight away. Three things about God, three massive things about God. God has a will. God makes promises. God gives life. One sentence straight off from Paul. Verse two, to Timothy my beloved child grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus, our Lord. Another massive sentence about God. God bestows grace, mercy and peace. Who is God? God is Father who is Jesus Christ. He is Lord. And so we see the character and provision that God makes and we see the nature of God as God the Father and as Jesus, our Lord. Verse three, what does it say? I thank God who might serve as did my ancestors with a clear conscience as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day tells us that we serve God and we do so as part of a heritage that runs across the ages of history pointing us to redemptive history which we looked at a wee bit this morning. And not only that, we can pray to

God night or day and he listens. We'll move on down to verse six on the next slide. For this reason, I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God. God gives gifts we discover in this verse. These are summed up in verse seven. God gave us a spirit not a fear but of power and love and self control. So we discover that God is a giving God. What's next in verse eight? Therefore do not be ashamed of it. The testimony of our Lord, not of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God. That's telling us that God is powerful who saved us and called us to a holy calling not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace. So God has power, God empowers us. God has a purpose. God has grace. God is eternal because that call comes from before all the ages.

Verse 10, God is a savior providing his son, Jesus Christ to rescue us. Down to verse 13 follow the pattern of sound words that you've heard from me in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. That's telling us that a relationship with God is not one of fear, not one of enmity, not one of hostility. It's one of faith and one of love. Verse 14, another amazing truth about God, he dwells within us by the Holy Spirit. And then verse 16 to 18, we see another astounding truth about God. May the Lord grant mercy to the household of an esophagus for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. But when he arrived in Rome, he searched for me earnestly and found me. May the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that day. God is merciful. Now that was very fast. Don't worry, we're going to summarize it all. But I hope you see that even in just one chapter, it's like bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, teaching about God. And we can summarize 13 points that this chapter tells us about God. God is eternal. He is the creator of all things. He is the one who has engaged in activities before all the ages of this universe began. He is the explanation of life. He is the reason there is something and not nothing. God is eternal. God is holy.

[27 : 47] He has given us a holy calling. He is the one who is set apart as the only God, the one who is pure and righteous, the one who is nothing but perfection, perfectly righteous, perfect in truth, perfect in goodness, perfect in love. Everything about God is set apart in a category of his own. God is holy. God has a will. God is not an uninterested, unmoved spectator on the world. God cares what happens in the world. God has a will. There are things that he wants. There are things that he doesn't want. There are things that are right. There are things that are wrong. And at the heart of God's will is that you would be his child, that none would perish, but that all would come to eternal life. God makes promises.

God talks about the promise that God's made. And that reminds us that God is a covenant keeping God. If he says he will do it, he will do it. He is utterly consistent, utterly fair, utterly dependable. God has a purpose. God is good to his very core and therefore in a world that has been ruined by sin and made bad, God's great purpose is to put that right. And he is working across the ages of history towards that great goal when creation is restored and renewed. God gives life from the very beginning of the creation. God is the one who brings life into the world. And when sin brought death into her experience, God initiated a plan of restoration to reverse the damage that sin had done and to bring a promise of life to all who trust in him. We relate to God through faith and love. At the heart of God's purpose, at the heart of his plan is his love for you and for me. And his great desire is that we would simply depend on him, leaning on him in faith, relying on all that he has done. That's why faith is at the heart of the Gospel, because faith is simply an expression of dependence. And the beauty of the Gospel is that we are placing our total dependence on the one who loves us so perfectly. So we relate to him through faith and love. God is our Father. The relationship that we have with God is not simply created and creature, it is Father and child. Jesus is our Lord. Jesus is our Saviour. We needed rescuing from sin. And who is it that does the rescuing? God himself, in the Persian and work of Jesus Christ. So God is our Father. Jesus is our Lord and Saviour. And the Holy

Spirit dwells within us. We had been alienated from God because of our sin, but God's desire is to reverse that alienation and to draw as close to us as he possibly can, so that all who trust in Jesus become the very temple of God with the Holy Spirit himself dwelling in your heart. So God is as close to you as he can possibly be. We serve God and in order to do that, he gives us gifts and he empowers us to be the people that he wants us to be.

He has our role for you to play and for me to play and he enables us through the gifts of the Holy Spirit to fulfil that role in his church. God is gracious. The God who owes us nothing but punishment is the God who blesses us with indescribable and immeasurable privileges.

And God is merciful. The God who we have let down so badly looks at us. And what does he think? Does he look at you and think a fed up of them? Does he look at you and think no they've gone too far? Does he look at you and think no I'm not interested? Not at all. God looks at you with overflowing compassion and kindness and a longing to be good to you.

[32 : 45] God longs to be good to you because he is merciful. So there's a summary of everything that this one chapter says about God. Just one chapter. But we end up to ask ourselves what difference does it make to know all that? What difference is it going to make to your life as a Christian if you know these things? Well if you are trying to communicate the Gospel to the people around you, you need to make sure that you know the God in whom you believe. We must remember that God is the eternal God who holds the whole world, the whole universe in his hands. He is the God who commanded light to shine in darkness and absolutely nothing is too hard for God. No heart is too hard for God. No soul is too lost for God. No conversion is out of God's reach. God is the one who is able to save every person that you can think of. No exceptions. God is able. We have to remember that God has a will as we go out with the Gospel. What's God's will? What is God's will as we go out with the Gospel? We often think what's God's will? Should we do this? Should we do that?

Should we go here? Should we go there? If you are going out with the Gospel, what is God's will? God's will is that the people you meet will be saved. That's God's will. That is what he wants and no matter how much we want the people of Carlyway to come to faith, God wants it a million times more. That is what lies at the heart of God's will. God desires that none should perish but that all should come to find eternal life in Jesus Christ.

So every time you invite somebody to church, every time you try to reach out in love to someone in your community, every time you pray for a lost friend or a lost family member and even every time you stutter out some poor attempt to try and share the Gospel, every time you do these things, God says that's exactly what I want. Keep doing it. Keep praying, keep inviting, keep showing people that you love them. Keep doing it because I want these people to be saved. We need to remember that God has a will. We need to remember that God gives life so no matter how dead in sin someone might seem to be, no matter how broken a life may look, no matter how much of a mess they are in, no matter how hard their heart may be, it's not, not too hard for God because God gives life. And we need to remember that

God is gracious and merciful. And as we look round our community we see people whose lives are ravaged by addiction. We see people whose hearts are broken by sorrow and betrayal and all the effects of sin. We see people who are hardened by the suffering of life. We see people who are hostile to the Gospel and we need to remember that when God looks at these people, he sees a precious soul, a precious, precious soul made in him, made in his image and God's desire is to show these people grace and mercy. And you remember that if you are seeking the Lord or if you are not yet a Christian, God's great desire is that you would be saved.

God's great desire is to show you mercy and grace. We need to remember all of that. We need to remember that God empowers us to serve him. He's given us gifts so as you go out with the Gospel, when you try to communicate the Gospel, you are not doing it on your own, you have the Holy Spirit dwelling in you so there is never a split second when God is not right, right with you to help you and strengthen you as you go out and do the work of the Gospel. Make no mistake, make absolutely no mistake, who is God going to use to bring the Gospel to the people of Lewis in 2017? Who is he going to use? You. And he will empower you and strengthen you and enable you to do that. As we communicate the Gospel, we are the messenger of the God who is able to save, who is willing to save and who empowers us to reach out. We are communicating on behalf of the God who can do anything, the God who can do amazing works in our midst. So when you're communicating the Gospel, you need to know who it is in whom you believe. And exactly the same thing applies to suffering for the Gospel. When you suffer in life, whatever that reason may be, make sure you know who it is that you believe in. Because we must remember that God has a purpose. And so what might seem like light momentary affliction is actually preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison. God's purposes are bigger than our circumstances. And no matter how much, no matter how much you suffer for Jesus in this life, no matter how hard it is, no matter how bad it is, you will only need to be in heaven for about 10 seconds before you say it was worth it. And when we suffer, we also have to remember that God is our Father. And part of his deep love for you as his child is that he will teach you things through trials. Hebrews 12 sums that up really well. The Lord disciplines the one he loves and chastises every son whom he receives. It is for discipline that you have to endure it. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his Father is not disciplined?

[39 : 47] For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant. But later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. We must remember that God is our Father. We must remember that Jesus is Savior. His great goal is to rescue us from all the pain and wreckage of sin.

You think of all the suffering that sin has brought. You think of all the pain that sin brings in your life, whether that's physical pain, emotional pain, spiritual pain, whatever it may be. Jesus wants to rescue you from that. Which is why the great goal of Christianity is the new heavens and the new earth, the new creation. And what will that place be like?

What is going to be the characteristic of the new creation? It is going to be a place where he will wipe away every tear from your eyes and death shall be no more. Neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore. For the former things have passed away. Jesus, the destiny that Jesus has for you as a Christian or for you if you become one, is a place where suffering is gone forever. And so if we are suffering, we do so as those who are utterly loved and cared for by our Holy Father, a Father who has got a far better and greater purpose for his creation and the one who will ultimately gather us into his arms and keep us safe forever and forever and forever. If we are suffering, make sure, if you're suffering, make sure you know it, you know the one in whom you have believed. And finally, if we are guarding the gospel, which we must do, we need to make sure that we know the God in whom we believe. In fact, that's why we guard the gospel, because it's his gospel.

He is the Holy God. He is the one who has provided us saviour. He is the one who makes the promise of salvation. He's the one who is gracious, who is merciful, who is loving.

The gospel is his message. And God is telling us the truth in these words of the gospel. And we desperately need to listen, because we desperately need salvation. He's telling us the truth of the perilous state that sin has left us in. He's telling us the truth about how he has fully accomplished everything required for you to be saved. And now he is freely offering the gospel and salvation to every single one of us. God is telling the truth. God is offering life. God is saying to you, I really, really, really want you to know me. Isn't that amazing? God wants you to really know him. To know his love.

[43 : 21] To know his protection. To know his wisdom. To know his goodness. To know his strength. To know his power. And if we are going to know him accurately, we must guard the truth that he is telling us in his word. God is who he is. God has done what he has done. God has said what he has said. We must guard the gospel. We must hold on to it. And as we do so, we will get to know better the one in whom we have believed. So I really, really hope that you can see just how urgent it is that we would really know God. But you know the amazing thing, you don't get to know God by becoming a theologian. You get to know God by becoming his child. By coming as a child to your loving father. Spending time with him. Listening to his voice as you read his word. And getting to know him. That was Paul's secret. That's what kept him going. And may God grant that it will become the secret for our lives as well. In every situation you face, ask yourself the question, what do I know about God that will help me here? There's absolutely nothing more wonderful than knowing God. And you can know him. You can know him by praying to him, by reading his word. And it's the most amazing thing. And that's what Jesus wants for you. Jesus wants you to know God. Do you remember what we read at the very beginning of the service?

When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour has come. Glorify your son, that the sun may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life. That they know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

Let's pray. Our Father, we confess that we don't know you nearly as well as we want to.

And so we pray, oh God, that you would just give us open hearts and open ears and open minds to be taught from your word that we would really know you and that we would remember all that you are and all that you do for your people and all that you have promised, all Lord God, that we would be people who really know you, that we as a congregation would really know you and that we would see more people coming to know you. That's our prayer, and we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.