

**'I know whom I have believed'.**

There was a little girl who went to Sunday school for the first time, she really enjoyed it and had lots of fun. When she got home her mother asked her, 'hi honey, how was Sunday school compared to her normal school?' And the little girl replied, 'Oh! I like it much better, there are no exams, and at the end, you go to heaven instead of high school.'

I guess there are some things in life we are absolutely certain about and if you're a Christian, going to heaven is one of them. But there are also some things in life we just don't know or can't pretend to even to begin to know about. And for that reason, in mind, I would like you to turn your songbooks to **number 524**.

I like this hymn a lot, but I also like it because written within it are a series of lessons. Some of them I must admit, I just don't understand why or how, or I just can't get my head around it and I ask myself, **is this speaking about me too?** It contains lessons on, **Grace, Worthiness, Redemption, Faith, Persecution, Fulfilment of promises, Final coming and Belief**.

It also tells us of the writer's knowledge of God's word. He's obviously read **2 Timothy 1:12** where it says, **'I know whom I have believed and am convinced that he is able.'** And I think that's a great answer of humility when people ask us some questions about this God of ours, because we don't have all the answers, we don't fully understand because we're always learning more. And the more we learn, the more we realise there is so much more to learn.

I would like for us to look at the song verse by verse. Let's read **verse 1** of the song, **'I know not why God's wondrous grace, to me he hath made known, nor why, unworthy, Christ in love, redeemed for his own.'** Before I get into what I believe to be the crux of the lesson in this verse. I think we have to try to understand what **Daniel W. Whittle** means, when he says, **'I know not'**.

In this verse **'I know not'** simply means, **'I do not understand'**. If **'I know not'** is taken literally, then it's answered in the same verse by **'Christ in love'**. In other words, **'I know not why'** is answered by **'because of love'**. That verse focuses on grace, worthiness and redemption.

**What is grace?** Alex Strachan once explained it this way, **'God's Riches At Christ's Expense'**. Grace is more than that, but this is an excellent explanation, but I remember before I had heard that explanation, I used to wonder what **'grace,'** meant and what was the difference between **'grace, justice and mercy'**!

Someone explained it to me like this. **Justice** is when you **do** get what you **do** deserve. **Mercy** is when you **don't** get what you **do** deserve. **Grace** is when you **do** get what you **don't** deserve.

Let's look at, justice is when you do get what you do deserve. We know all about that because **Romans** tells us **'the wages of sin is death'**. We deserve to die for our sins because we are sinners. Now as Christians we do understand that because nobody can go to God on judgment day and say, **'God, I didn't know I was a sinner!'** But if you're a Christian you understand that, because it doesn't matter how good a person you are or how many good deeds you have done in your life, you still need God's mercy.

Let's look at mercy is when you don't get what you do deserve. **That reminds me of a story about a man who died and went to the gates of heaven where he met Peter. Peter asked him, 'What can I do for you?' The man replied, 'I want to come into heaven.' Peter said, 'No problem, all you need is 1000 points.' The man said, '1000 points, well I'm sure I have got that.' He said, 'I have been a faithful member of the church all my life, I have preached God's word for 40 years, I have been an elder for 30 years, I have got 2 daughters who both believe, one works in the slums helping the poor and sick and the other works in an elderly home, taking care of their needs and I go out once a week to help work in a soup kitchen.'** The man asked, **'How many points is that?'** And Peter replied, **'Oh, that's one point.'** **To which the man fell down on his knees and shouted, 'Lord, have mercy'. To which Peter said, 'Ok, that's 1000 points come on in.'**

And the point is, nobody can earn their way to heaven because we don't deserve to go to heaven and live with the Father for eternity.

**What does it mean to be unworthy?** In the Old Testament in **Deuteronomy 13:13 KJV**, the phrase **'son (or man) of BELIAL'**, is used, which this simply means, **'worthless, or lawless man'**. In the New Testament in **2 Corinthians 6:15 KJV**, the word **BELIAL** is generally understood to mean **'Satan'** or **'worthless, or lawless man'**. So, in human terms, we might say, **'not worthy of Christ's consideration.'**

Have you ever met someone who is worthy of Christ's consideration? I know I haven't, and that's because no one is worthy of getting to heaven on their merit.

Let's look at grace is when you do get what you don't deserve. Loved ones, I don't care who you are or what you've done in the past, if you are a Christian, you totally rely on God's grace daily, especially when it comes to your salvation. If you're not a Christian, then you need to accept that grace which God has to offer you.

What is Redemption? Have you ever been to a pawnbroker? You see, what you do is go and trade something of value to you and get some cash for it, to help you through a bad time maybe. But after you have got on your feet again, you can go back and buy your item back again but usually you'll find you've been conned somewhere along the line.

Keep that in mind as we go on. When we were all under the age of understanding, we were sinless. How could we commit sin, go against God's teachings, when we couldn't understand the difference between right and wrong? When we reached the age of understanding, we had a choice to make. We have the choice to follow the dull, boring and unattractive lifestyle of the 'goody-two-shoes' or we could choose to copy the bright, happy and attractive lifestyle of the so called 'in crowd'.

In our immaturity we usually chose the 'in crowd' to some degree or other. In effect we pawned our lives to Satan in exchange for short-term pleasures. God looked down from Heaven and thought, 'this is wrong! What is needed to redress the balance?' And Satan replied, 'blood!'

So that's why God then sent His son, Jesus Christ, to shed His blood in order to buy back, redeem, the souls of whoever would leave Satan and return to God. The world is being 'conned' by Satan's offer of 'pleasure'. But Christ came to redeem us and now we have 'come to our senses'. Now you might be thinking, 'I do not understand this' Why can't I understand this! Well, my answer to that is, 'neither do I'. But as the song title tells us, 'I know whom I have believed'.

Let's read verse 2 of the song, 'I know not how the Spirit moves, convincing men of sin, revealing Jesus thru the word, creating faith in Him.' This is a complete lesson on evangelism. The best example I could find for the moving Spirit, revealing truth and creation of faith is found in Acts 8:26-30.

'Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Go south to the road--the desert road--that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' So, he started out, and on his way, he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit told Philip, 'Go to that chariot and stay near it.' Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. 'Do you understand what you are reading?' Philip asked."

Look at verse 34, 'who is the prophet talking about'. Now look at verse 35, 'then Philip began with that very passage and told him the good news about Jesus'. This is revealing truth! The next verse says, 'Why shouldn't I be baptized?' This is creation of faith! Verse 39 says, 'The Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away'. This is the moving Spirit!

This tells us that God's Spirit is never static, He never stays still. The Holy Spirit doesn't just help you get one area of your life fixed out and then leave you as if, that's it, His work is done in you. He never stops working in you. He'll be working in you until Jesus comes back and the work, which He is trying to do in our lives, is finished. And what is that work? To make you look like your Saviour, Jesus Christ so that other people around you will see Jesus in our lives.

This little boy's mother had just given birth to a little baby girl. And the little boy was told that this was a gift from God. The little boy turned around to his mum and said, 'Mum, quick, before you forget, what does God look like?' Do you know what God wants to be able to say, when someone asks him, 'what does Jesus look like?' He wants to be able to say, 'it just so happens, I have got a lot of people in my church who look a whole lot like him.' That's what God wants to be able to say and that is the main work of His Spirit in our lives.

Let's read verse 3, 'I know not what of good or ill, may be reserved for me, of weary ways or golden days, before his face I see.' Christ never tells us that life will be a 'bed of roses'.

John 15:18-16:1 'If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will

persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. Now, however, they have no excuse for their sin. He who hates me hates my Father as well. If I had not done among them what no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have seen these miracles, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. But this is to fulfil what is written in their Law: 'They hated me without reason.' 'When the Counsellor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning. 'All this I have told you so that you will not go astray.'

Now this might sound a bit harsh to you but the last part of verse 3 says, 'before His face I see.' Revelation 22:1-4 says the same thing. 'Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.'

There is a gravestone at Neston on the Wirral which has the following written on it.

Remember me as you pass by,  
As you are now, so once was I,  
As I am now, so you must be,  
Readers prepare to follow me.

The time is coming when everyone past and present is going to see His face, the Bible tells us that all will die and come face to face with our maker.

Let's read verse 4 of the song, 'I know not when my Lord may come, at night or noon day fair, nor if we'll walk the vale with him, or meet him in the air.' This is obviously talking about, what some people call 'The Second Coming of Christ' but don't like that saying only because it implies He might come back a third or fourth time. I prefer to call it, 'the final coming of Christ', which implies a more definite application of, 'this is it, it's time to go home.'

Do you ever get home sick, when you're away on holiday and you miss your loved ones? Do you ever get to the point where you're almost physically sick because you miss them so much? There's a lot of misunderstanding about when Jesus is going to come back, so for that reason I'll let Jesus speak about it, and Jesus says in Matthew 24:37-44

'As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left. 'Therefore, keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So, you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.'

Jesus says, 'no one knows when that time will come, but when it is time', He says, 'It's time to go home, if you're a Christian.' Do you ever get home sick for heaven? Do you ever just love Christ so much that the only place you really want to be is with Him? That's why the apostle Paul could say to the Philippians, 'I want to go home to Jesus but for your sakes I need to stay here on earth.' He longed to go home to Jesus and be with Him.

Let's read the chorus, 'But I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able, to keep that which I've committed unto him, against that day.' This chorus is talking about belief. There are many words used in the original text with what we define as 'belief.' The Greek word 'peitho' is one of them and it means, 'to be persuaded of God's truth'.

It's the same word which is used in Acts 17:4 where it says, 'Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women.' It's the same word which we find in Romans 4:20-21 where it speaks of Abraham, 'Being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness.'

Have you been persuaded? Have you been persuaded that God has got the power to do anything in your life? I think most of us have or we wouldn't be here in the first place. Paul said, 'I can do all things through him who gives me strength.' Not some things, but all things. And not just for short period of time, but as the song says, 'until that final day.'

You see, you believe one thing in life until you are persuaded otherwise. You never go into a shop and just buy a product. You're usually persuaded to buy it because maybe your friends have persuaded you to. Even television is very good at persuading people we need to buy this product and not that one.

But what about Jesus? Do people need persuading that Jesus is coming back and if they don't accept Him they will be lost forever? Absolutely. What about Christians? Do they need to be reminded that Christ is coming back soon to take them home? Absolutely.

But we need to be reminded because of the hope that lies ahead for us. Because as Christian, we know that we totally rely on God's grace and mercy. We know whom we believe in, we know who our hopes are built on, we know we're going to heaven to be with Him. We may not fully understand what God has done for us. We may not fully understand God's grace, love and patience. We may not fully understand why Jesus came. We may not fully understand His word. We may not fully understand how His Spirit works in our lives.

But do you know what happens when you begin to understand a little? We begin to understand just how unworthy of it all, we really are. We begin to understand, just how much of a sinner we really are. We begin to understand that this life has nothing to offer us without the hope of knowing Christ Jesus.

It's like the little boy who left his place in the choir and made his way to the lectern for the first lesson. He went up the steps and began to read from Isaiah in his deep bass voice, 'Thus says the Lord, I am the Lord your God.' With the satisfaction of one who has discovered the truth at long last, his friend looked up and said, 'Oh, so that's who God is!'

Paul says, 'God is un-measurable, un-searchable'. But Loved ones, he never once says that, 'God is un-knowable.' You can know God, you can know Him by looking at your brothers and sisters who are sitting next to you, you can know Him by reading His word. And when you finally find out a little more about God, do you what will happen?

You will be overthrown with praise for Him. All you want to do is sing praises to His name. All you want to do is tell other Christians what new truths you've found in His word. All you want to do is go out into the world and preach the Gospel to a world, which refuses to want to know Him.

Have you ever had that overwhelming experience? It can happen at any time, it's nothing mysterious, it's nothing weird. It's just an overwhelming of thankfulness, which comes from the heart.

One time, a few years ago, I was driving to work in Dundee and I was just listening to a Gospel song I had on a tape. When for the first time I really started to listen to the words. I could sing the words of by heart, but I never really listened to them. Well, this particular day I did, and do you know what happened? I had to stop the car in a lay by, on a busy road to just worship God. I was crying but couldn't really understand why. But I knew I was beginning to realise just what God had really done for me and what Jesus went through for me. The song was called, 'How beautiful,' and from that day on, I have never sung that song in the same way as used to.

Loved ones, songs are there to help and encourage our hearts until Jesus comes to take us home. Let me finish by telling you a story. This young man had just become a Christian and he decided to write a letter to the Inland Revenue, so he wrote, 'I can't sleep at night, so I am enclosing a cheque for £100 which I forgot to declare.' And underneath he wrote, 'P.S. if I still can't sleep I will send the rest.'

Why do I love this song? Because it tells me that I don't fully understand what God has done for me, but I won't forget to thank Him for everything He has done for me, when I see Him face to face. The things I don't understand and even more for the things I do understand. But most of all, I can sleep peacefully at night knowing that if I wake up or not, I will wake up in the presence of Jesus.