

# Destroyed for Lack of Knowledge

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In the case of the Thessalonians their lack of knowledge led to unnecessary grieving and because of that, a poor testimony among the pagans. But in other places in Scripture a lack of knowledge can lead to something far more detrimental. Let me give you a few verses. Hosea 4:6 (I believe Anthony quoted this on Sunday), "My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge." Yes, "My people," "My people." You see, just because you're His people doesn't necessarily mean that you're just living in a secure place. In one sense it does, but I want you to know something, your lack of knowledge can get you into a whole bunch of danger.

Why do we constantly teach our children? If we don't teach our children they're still our children, but we teach our children why? So they don't kill themselves. So they don't mess up their lives. My people are destroyed, he says, for a lack of knowledge.

Then in Isaiah 5:13 he says, "My people go into exile for their lack of knowledge." Now you say, "Oh well, exile for their lack of know..." Do you know what exile was? Slavery, the cruelest forms. Murder, rape, pillage, a suffering like nothing you and I could ever even understand. It was having a hook poked through your lip or your nose, and being led off to a foreign land naked. You don't think a lack of knowledge is dangerous? It's extremely dangerous. Nineveh didn't know their left hand from their right hand. It almost led to their absolute destruction and a few decades later it did. You see that?

This is very very important. Romans 10:3, "For not knowing (literally, 'ignorant'), For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God." What does it mean? It says, in their ignorance they sought to save themselves and did not believe upon God's saving person and work, and they were eternally lost. Ignorance.

And then listen to this, 2 Corinthians 2:11, "So that no advantage would be taken of us for we are not ignorant (same word) of his schemes." "So that no advantage would be taken of us (by Satan) for we are not ignorant of his schemes." What is one of the ways that you can avoid being taken advantage of by the great enemy of the Christian faith? By not being ignorant. So many people are led astray, even by doctrines of demons—why? Because their lack of true knowledge in the word of God.

Listen, if someone comes here with great piety, that doesn't mean they're from God. If someone comes here with great [miracles], it doesn't mean they're from God. If someone comes here with just an exuberant, zealous personality that makes you think that you don't even love God, it doesn't mean they're from God. The only way for you to be able to truly figure that out is to know what God's word says. To know God's word.

Now, ignorance also leads to an unbiblical lifestyle which leads to a poor testimony. Now, you and I must be distinct from the world, you know that. We must be different, there needs to be separation between the believer and the unbelieving world, we know that. But if we lack the knowledge of the Scriptures we will not be able to maintain or even know what that distinction is without falling into great extremes—and what are those extremes? Oftentimes people will say "We need to be different from the world," but then they run off with their own

opinion of what it means to be different from the world, and it usually leads to two things that are total extremes and both dangers –and what are they? One extreme is conformity to the world. They don't know what God has said, they don't know those things that displease God, they don't know His commandments, they don't know His nature; and so the world has their ear, and they form their Christianity based upon the carnal mind - their own, and the voices of others. You see that? That's one extreme. And it's a poor testimony.

The other extreme is what? Christian fanaticism. Christian fanaticism. When, because of their so-called desire to be separate from the world, Christians begin to live doing unusual, strange things, oftentimes very severe things. That also leads to a poor testimony among unbelievers. And basically it's this, the person who is the fanatic, they do harm to the church and they do harm to the unbelieving world, in what way? To the church they lay burdens on other believers that Jesus Christ never laid upon them. You see that? Making rules Jesus never made, and burdening – like the Pharisees burdened God's people in the time of Jesus – burdening them with rules that Jesus never gave them. But also the fanatic is dangerous for the unbeliever. Why? Because the fanatic puts obstacles in front of the unbeliever so that the unbeliever stumbles at Christianity before he ever gets a chance to stumble at the Gospel. The only thing the unbeliever should stumble at is the Gospel we proclaim. Do you see that?

But oftentimes if we lay the Gospel and then a whole bunch of rules, and a whole bunch of nuances, and all kinds of different things; they stumble and say, "That's crazy," and they never stumble at the thing they should stumble at; and that is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That's why in this church we may be different in many different ways and have different expressions at times; but let me tell you something, it can not be tolerated! The thing that we must proclaim is Jesus Christ crucified and risen from the dead, and that our hope and the hope of the world is found in that. Not in some little quirk or nuance that we might have. Jesus Christ.

Now, I want to say this also. Oftentimes we see ignorance as a disability, and we see the ignorant person as a victim. Is that true? We don't look at it so much as a sin. They don't know something, it's a 'disability,' they're a 'victim' to their lack of knowledge; but the Bible never sees it that way. Now look, all of us are born into Christianity as infants, as immature, capable of doing some extraordinarily ridiculous things. But in the Scriptures none of us are supposed to stay that way. Our ignorance of the things of God is gradually to be replaced by the true knowledge of God, and if it is not, the Bible lays the blame on our shoulders –why? Because we have been given the faculty to know Him and to know His will. I've known in my life some extraordinary minds; I've said about some men that they've got more knowledge of God in their finger than I have in my whole body, and that's true; and they can seem to grasp concepts that I can't even begin to understand. I'm not saying that all believers walk on the same level with regard to knowledge and insight, but what I am saying is that all believers have the faculty to know enough about God and His will to live in the most beautiful fashion, the most glorious, and holy way.