

Sermon – 13/08/2006 pm

Secret and Revealed Things

Study Text: Deuteronomy 29:29

Over recent decades we have seen what some call a ‘knowledge explosion’ is how some describe what has happened in the last few decades. Libraries are full to overflowing. But now we do not even have to go to the library. We surf the web instead. To Google something is fast becoming a verb in its own right.

But one thing about research and increasing knowledge is that we find out how much there is that we still do not know. We may hate to admit it because of our pride, but we often have to say ‘I do not know’. Some think the medical doctor knows everything, but still people die because ‘the experts’ do not know what is causing the sickness and /or do not know how to cure it.

In addition to scientists we also have philosophers who want to know all about the meaning of life. They join with religious experts in studying the spiritual realm, and in seeking to determine whether or not God/ gods exist. Some think that life just happened and we evolved over millions, billions, or trillions of years! *Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? God has made foolish the wisdom of this world* (I Corinthians 1:20).

There is someone who knows everything. Yes our Maker, the Lord our God knows everything. He not only knows everything about science and about history but also about the future. Many people are desperate to know the future. They pay lots of money to forecasters and fortune tellers to tell them about the future. But God knows the future.

We have not really progressed very far since the days of the apostle Paul. He was confronted by a fortune telling slave girl who made lots of money for her owners. When Paul cast the evil spirit out of her, her owners were furious. They cared nothing for the girl, just the profit she brought them. Paul cared for the girl and for the glory of God (Acts 16).

The Lord God is omniscient. He knows everything about this universe for he made it. *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too high for me to attain* (Psalm 139:6). *Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out* (Romans 11:33). David and Paul, two of the greatest men who ever lived, humbled themselves before this all knowing God. They stood in awe of his wisdom and knowledge.

The Lord God knows everything, but he has chosen not to make everything known to man. There are secret things that belong to the Lord and there are revealed things that belong to us said Moses (29:29).

Secret Things

The verse before us is best understood as concluding this part of Moses’ address. Man cannot keep anything secret from God, but God has secret knowledge which man cannot know. There are things which the Lord has chosen not to reveal to us, for whatever reason.

Searching after such knowledge is futile, and even harmful. ‘Audacity and excessive curiosity are to be condemned’ wrote Calvin.

Eve was led into sin by the suggestion that God was hiding knowledge from her – *God knows that the day you eat of it your eyes will be open and you will be like God, knowing good and evil* (Genesis 3:5). Some are still reaching out for that forbidden fruit in the hope that they will get special knowledge.

There are people who are waiting for God to reveal himself to them in a vision or dream. They want their own secret revelation. ‘Unless I see with my eyes I will not believe’ they say. There are those of course who claim to have had their own revelation from God. They say they have secret knowledge.

Before the Lord Jesus left this earth his disciples asked him about Israel’s political subjugation. When would they be free of the Romans? Jesus said to them – *it is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in his own authority* (Acts 1:7). Such knowledge belongs to the secret or ‘covered’ things.

Similarly the day when the Jesus returns belongs to the secret things. God has set the day but neither the angels nor even the incarnate Jesus know that day (Mark 13:32). How then can any man expect to know! But still we see proud and audacious men, men who love to display their knowledge, telling us the day when Jesus will return. No man knows the day nor the hour when the Son of man comes (Matthew 24:36) for such knowledge belongs to the secret things of God.

Let us be very clear. There is knowledge that belongs to God alone. It is not for us to seek after these ‘covered’ things for they do not belong to us in this life. *Now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I am known* (I Corinthians 13:12).

Revealed things

What the Lord God wants us to know he has revealed to us. All that we need to know has been revealed to us. We do not have to go searching in all manner of places. *Do not say in your heart ‘who will ascend to heaven’ or ‘who will descend to the abyss’, for the word of God is near you, in your mouth and in your heart* (Romans 10:6-8).

People love to tell, and others love to listen, about near death experiences. They claim they have seen what is beyond death. They do not listen to what God tells us in his word. That would be too easy! People look at the stars and study the rocks seeking to find the origin in life. They do not listen to what God tells us in his word. That would be too easy! People invent their own gods to worship, but find them unable to save. They do not listen what God tells us in his word. That would be too easy!

Those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law (29:29). There are three points here.

Firstly, revealed truth belongs to us. This word of God, this divine truth belongs to us. How wonderful! Do you realise how blessed you are to be in possession of divine revelation. Many people, including the Jews, are still searching for divine revelation. But you know that God’s

full and final revelation is in your hands. This is the living word of God. Imagine a world without the Bible.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me said the Psalmist (Psalm 39:6). He stood in awe at the knowledge of God – secret and revealed. He was a person who mediated on this word day and night (Psalm 119). He was a man who called this word *a lamp unto his feet and a light to his path* (Psalm 119). Paul prayed that our *love might abound more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things which are excellent* (Philippians 1:9). How will you know what is excellent if you do not know what God has spoken?

Men have risked their lives just to get a page or two of God's revealed word. It is so precious to them. They read this page over and over. Their prayer is that they will one day see the whole Bible and maybe even have a Bible of their own. Do you understand their desire? How many Bibles are on a shelf gathering dust, or in the back of a cupboard somewhere? This revealed word of God belongs to us. How blessed we are to have it as our possession.

Secondly, revealed truth belongs to our children forever. It is the birthright of our children. Let us not deny the children this right, this right to hear all that God has revealed unto mankind. Great emphasis was placed upon teaching the children under the terms of the Old Covenant (Deuteronomy 6). Day and night they were to hear the word of God.

Are Christian families today diligent in passing on this revealed truth to their children? Do parents rejoice in their children's knowledge of the Bible as much as they rejoice in their knowledge of science or maths? All knowledge of this world will pass away, for this world is passing away. Only the word of God will remain. This revealed truth belongs to our children according to this Scripture.

Thirdly, this divine truth is revealed for us to obey. We read the Scripture *that we may obey all the words of this law*. It is not just to satisfy our curiosity, it is not simply to read for interest. 'These treasured revelations are not simply to be stored in the enquiring mind so that we amass an increasing store of Biblical teaching, good as that may be. The truth is to be obeyed and that is possibly the most demanding aspect of uncovered truth'.

Moses stressed doing **all** the words of this law. Revealed truth is one. It is not a mix of diverse, often contradictory ideas as many think. It was revealed progressively over a long period of time, but it is all inspired by the one Spirit of God. We must accept it all, and obey it all, as the truth revealed by God. *The word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart* (Hebrews 4:12).

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