

“I Know God”

Jamie Norman

Do you remember the story of the Prince and the Pauper, in which a poor beggar changes places with the heir to the English throne? The deception only worked, of course, because the boys were so amazingly alike. Alike, that is, in looks yet different in their personalities and behaviour. I remember feeling much like one of those boy's friends must have felt. I was talking to my wife and, although outwardly she appeared to be the same person I had always known, there was something different about her. She had changed, almost overnight it seemed, into a different person. “Jamie”, she said to me slowly and seriously, “*I know God*”. She was not smiling but there was a twinkle in her eye that told me she was thrilled about something. “It is hard to describe to you”, she continued, “It is like something that you read in a book but never believe it could happen to you. I have a living relationship with God and really know His presence in my life”.

Arrow

These words hit me like an arrow to the heart. I had always gone to church in my earlier years. Though I no longer attended a place of worship, religion was something I took for granted. I knew about God and about Jesus, and I felt sure that when I died I would go to heaven. But, this was the thing that was worrying me, though I knew *about* God, I certainly did not *know Him*. Though I had often prayed to Him, I had never really felt that He was close to me. I looked at Angela again. She seemed to have an inner strength that I had not seen in her before. Our marriage was going through a very difficult period at this time, and yet despite all our problems, she appeared to have an inner peace. I decided that I wanted to be like her. If it was possible to know God, then I wanted to know Him too.

Evangelical church

Angela had recently started attending our local Evangelical church in Coedpoeth, near Wrexham and she assured me that it was the preaching there that had triggered this change. I made up my mind to go along with her. I felt a little uncomfortable at first but was surprised at how relevant and thought-provoking the sermons were. Not at all like the dry, boring ones that I recalled from years past. I did not agree with everything the preacher said, of course, but it certainly made me think, and I also started to read my Bible.

Realisation

Gradually, as the weeks passed, a horrible realisation came over me. Far from being sure of heaven when I died, I began to realise that I was not worthy of heaven. I was beginning to see that all my life I had rebelled against God and disobeyed Him and that He had every reason to send me to hell. I remember this really hitting me when I was driving my car on the motorway and the thought came to me that if I crashed and died, I was certain of going to hell. I began to read my Bible more earnestly and started praying to God for help. I now understood that Jesus Christ had come into the world to save sinners

just like me and I prayed that He would take my sins upon Himself and grant me pardon. Night after night I would get down on my knees and plead for forgiveness and mercy.

Assurance

After many days, God finally gave me assurance that He had forgiven me, and the weight of sin and hell was lifted from me. The ironic thing was that I had thought myself a prince – fit for God’s heavenly kingdom. But God had shown me that I was nothing more than a pauper, dirty with sin and lacking anything that would commend me to Him. Yet, in His mercy, He saved me, made me a joint heir of His Kingdom and granted me a rich inheritance in heaven. I too could now say “I know God.”

Providence

Since that time, I have been astounded by the way God has so graciously dealt with me and provided for my family and me. In His providence, He has brought us to Holywell and we have joined Holywell Evangelical Church. It is the greatest privilege to be part of God’s family and one of my greatest desires is that others here in Holywell would come to know God through Jesus Christ His Son. Why not come and worship with us, and hear more of these things, that you too might *know God*.