

LESSON 5: THE GIFT OF KNOWING GOD

GATHERING SONG: IMMORTAL, INVISIBLE GOD ONLY WISE



MEMORY VERSE

Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

John 14:27

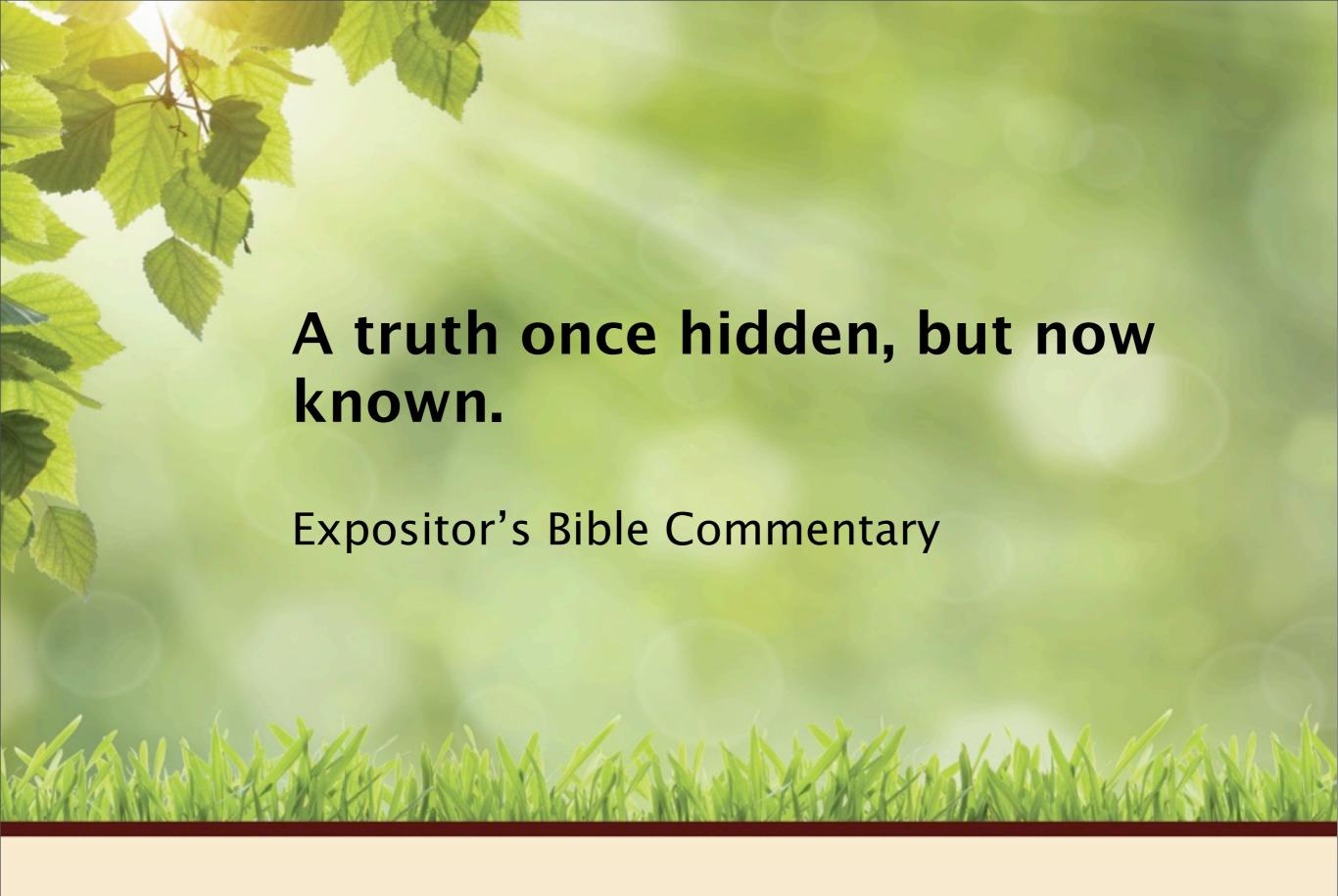
Defining the "MYSTERY"

And He made known the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ.

Ephesians 1:9

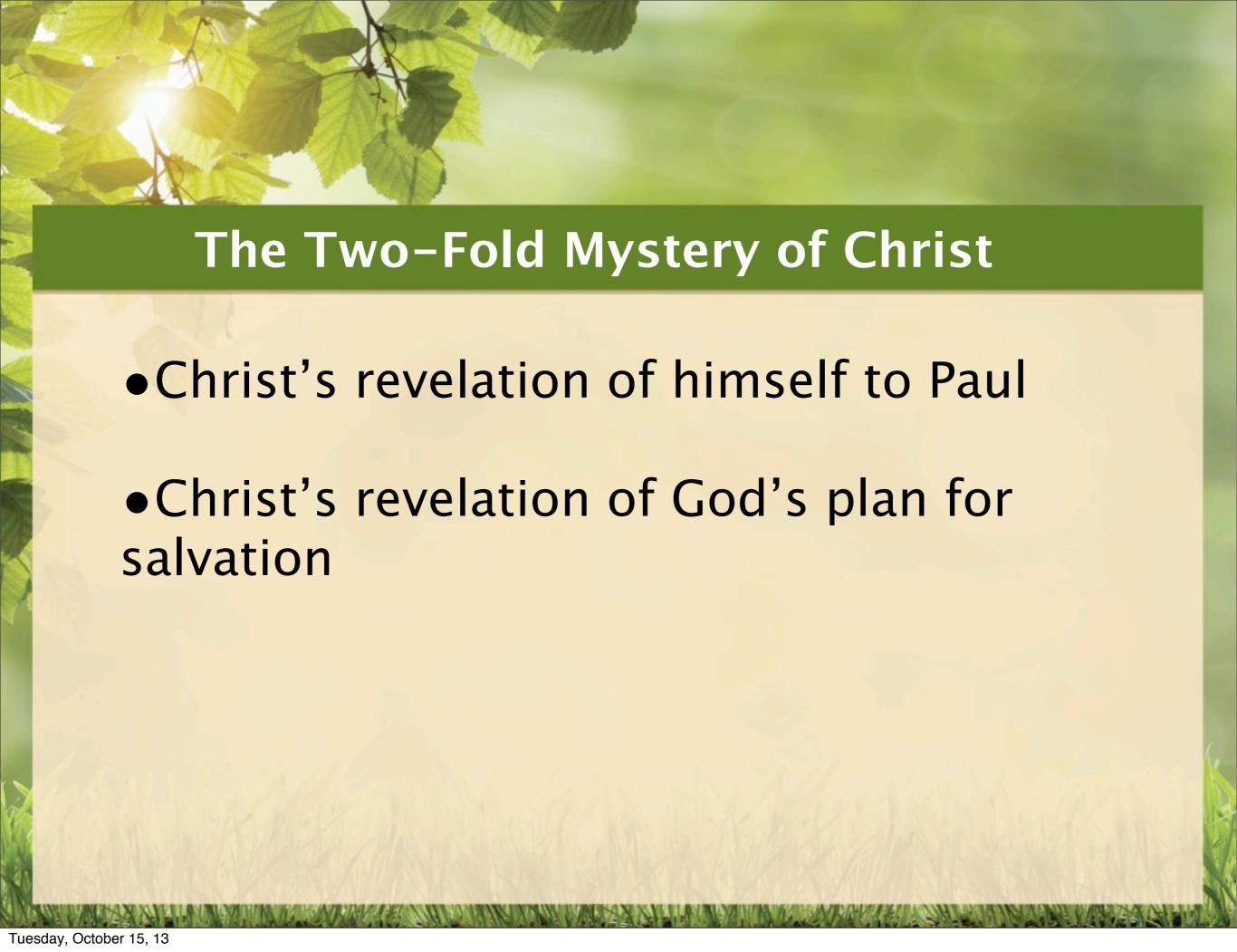
In reading this, then you will be able to understand my insight into the **mystery** of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets.

Ephesians 3: 4-5



Meaning of "Mystery" in the New Testament

- •The term "mystery" is a key concept in Ephesians: Ephesians 1:9; 3:3-4 and 9; 5:32; and 6:19
- Also repeated in other letters of Paul: Romans 11:25; Colossians 1:26
- And in the Gospel of Matthew:
 Matthew 13:11 and 35



The Mystery of God's Will Revealed Through the proclamation of the Gospel, the Gentiles are received into the fellowship of Christ on an equal footing with Jewish believers in Christ.

What This Mystery Meant for Jewish Believers

Many Jews of Paul's day believed the secret plan of God would become apparent at the end of the age. But Paul says that God's mystery was revealed by Christ's appearance in the flesh, and there is no need to wait until the last day.

Noemi's Mystery



Who are the "Rulers and Authorities in the Heavenly Places"?

Paul uses this language to refer to demonic forces, including:

- Satan "the ruler of the kingdom of the air" (Ephesians 2:2)
- "rulers", "authorities", "powers of this dark world" and "spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Ephesians 6)

Paul envisions the universe as permeated and influenced by supernatural forces, which might include cultural, economic and political forces that shape our lives each day (Mark D. Roberts)

Victory in Christ Over the Powers

The good news of Ephesians:

- •Christ is already sovereign over all such powers (Eph. 1: 20-21)
- •We have been delivered from the domination of these powers through Christ
- The role of the church is to proclaim to these powers the victory of God in Christ.
- •We are encouraged to see our lives in light of God's purposes for the whole universe.

MYSTERY RELIGIONS IN PAUL'S TIME

- Connected with fertility traditions
- Emphasized secrecy
- Had a multi-level initiation process
- Popular mystery religions in Ephesus included those around Dionysius, Herakles (Hercules), Mithras
- Mystery religions were the chief competition to Christianity in the first few centuries after Christ



- They are immortal
- They are more insightful, knowledgeable and powerful than humans, but not infinitely so
- Their distinctive quality was not goodness, but power
- They are neither good nor evil

Relationship Between gods and Humans

- Humans must beware the power of the gods and try to buy their favor
- Humans displease them by trying to rival or mock them, not by disobeying divine law

Diana of the Ephesians



- Not the Diana of Roman/ Greek mythology——Asiatic origin
- Fertility goddess
- Known as "The Mother of All"
- Sacred prostitution an important ritual at the temple in Ephesus
- Paul got into trouble in Ephesus for turning people away from worship of Diana (Acts 19:23-41)

Through Christ We Know God As:

The Father of Jesus

(Ephesians 1:2-3, 1:17, 6:23)

The Father To Whom We Have Access

(Ephesians 2:18-3:12)

The Father of Glory

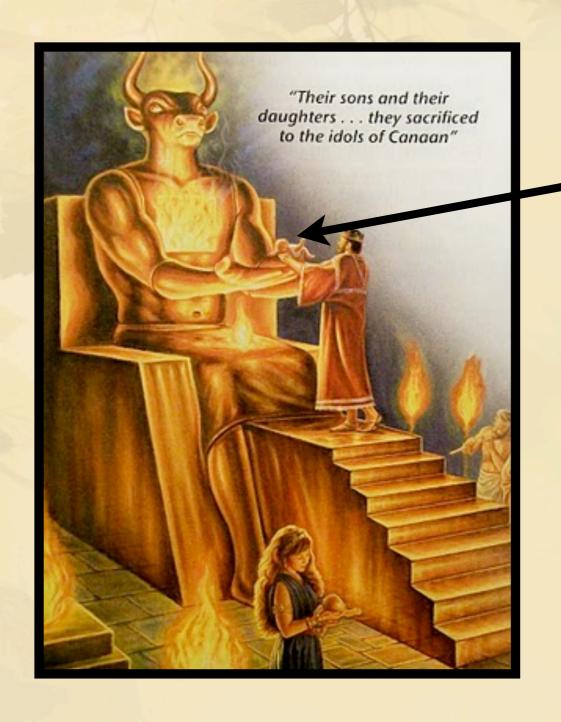
(Ephesians 1:17)

The Father of ALL

(Ephesians 4:6)

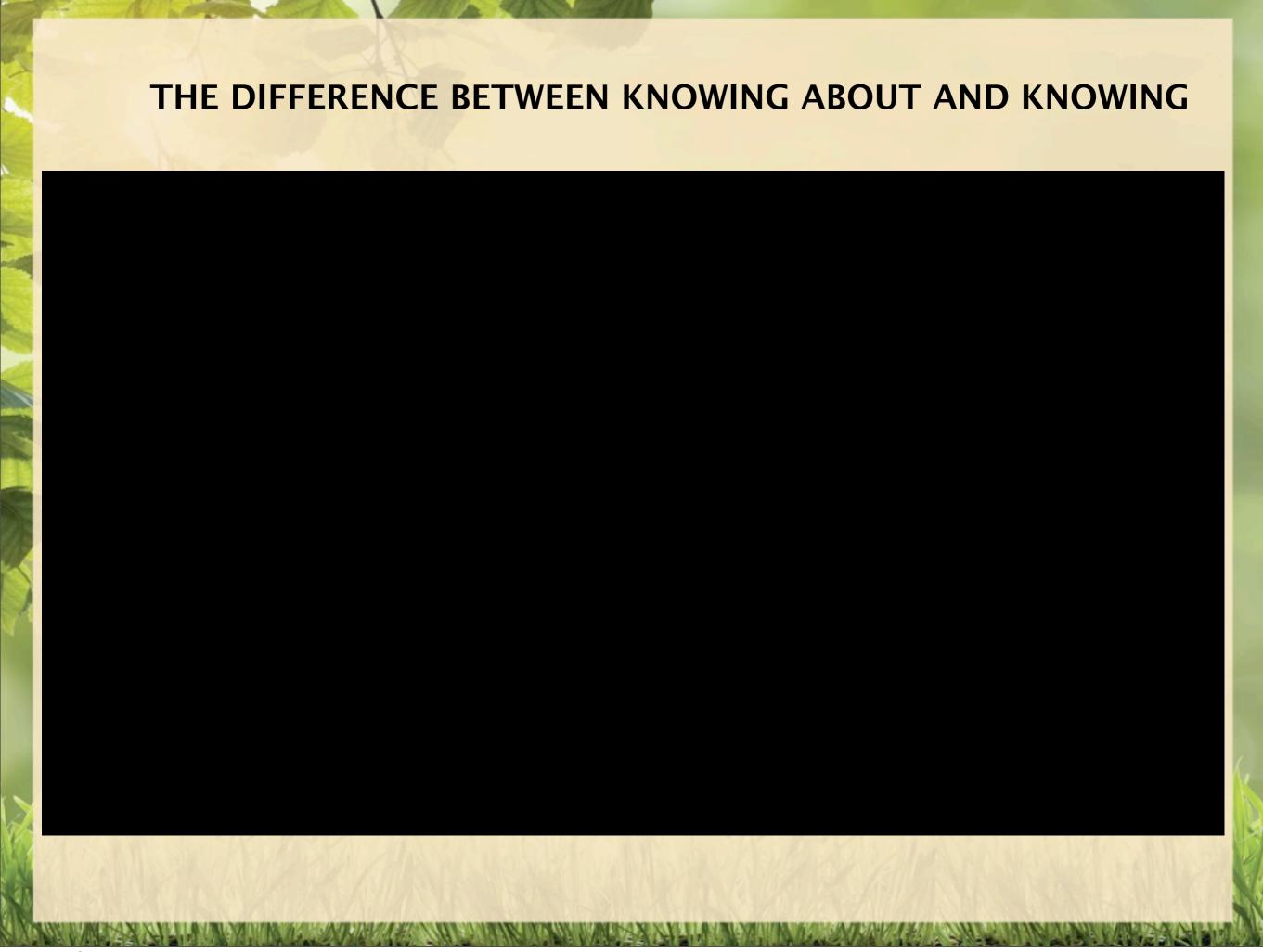
The Father To Whom Thanks Must Be Given

(Ephesians 5:20)



RELATIONSHIP OF FEAR VERSUS RELATIONSHIP OF LOVE





GETTING TO KNOW GOD

Your relationship with God is built and strengthened through:

- Acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior
- Confession of sin and repentance
- Prayer
- Listening to God through study of His word and response to prayer
- Participation in a community of believers

APPLYING THE LESSON IN YOUR LIFE

Which area of your relationship with God needs the most improvement?

Work on that area this week and share your experience with your group next Thursday.