READ Philippians 3:7-11

Kids: I am going to name a few historical spiritual giants this morning. I want you to write down at least one of their names and some of the facts that I give about them. Faye McCarrol

If you read a book about them or have your mom or dad read one to you, I will make sure you get a BIG reward.

What makes a Christian a spiritual giant/dwarf?

George Whitfield—Benjamin Franklin records that he regularly preached to crowds of over 20,000 (1700s without microphone)

Jim Elliot—“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.” (61 years ago)

Inheritance?

John (million converts) and Charles (6,000 hymns) Wesley—

Susanna Wesley (19 children—10 who survived infancy); prayed for 2 hours a day under her apron
Conversion Experience?
   Martin Luther—Fell off his horse nearly struck by lightning when he called out to God; ushered in the Protestant Reformation (1500s)

Sin Debt?
   Mel Trotter—alcoholic; sold his 2 year old daughter’s funeral shoes to buy more alcohol before he stumbled into the Pacific Garden Mission in Chicago where he came to Christ; started the Grand Rapids Mission where he preached every night for forty years

Paul had all those things—Godly inheritance, Powerful conversion story, Deep sin debt—but I believe Paul fills us in on what makes a person a spiritual giant…APPETITE—Do you want God?

WHAT PAUL SAID (Painted on Bro. Tom’s wall while he was pastor)
10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,
11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

HOW WE READ IT
That I may be acquainted with Him so that I might be able to go to Heaven but still find acceptance among my old friends, remaining in my same sins, if, by any means, I may continue in comfort.

Why don’t we have an appetite for God?
   1. It doesn’t always taste good. — “If in your daily Bible reading you always leave feeling good about yourself, you are
probably doing something wrong.” Paul in Romans—“O what a wretched man I am!”

2. We have conditioned ourselves not to.
   If you eat junk food all the time, your mouth probably does not water when you think about a salad.

3. We are filled with other stuff.
   “Don’t ruin your appetite!”

That’s where Paul was. Everything that he was brought up on, everything that he was involved in ruined his appetite for God. So what did he do? He cut it out of his spiritual diet.

8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.

“Rituals of Judaism, my patriotism as an Israelite, my rank as a Benjamite, my religious rites as a Pharisee, my zeal for the law, my legalistic lifestyle of making up rules to not disobey the rules of God—it’s all trash. It kept me from feasting on His grace.”

Some of this is inherently sinful and some of this is just distracting, but if it keeps you from your relationship with Christ, IT IS SINFUL.

I have put all of that away so…
10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,
11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

**That I may know Him…**

**Two traits of “knowing…”**

**Information**

“Becoming a Christian isn’t the end of your Christian experience, it’s the beginning.” Warren Wiersbe

Paul had to unlearn some things he was taught about God in order to know the character of God.

There is information that once you become a Christian is helpful: books of the Bible, passages of Scripture, theological words…but none of that should just be to accrue facts.

New Christian in the lighthouse that went and bought a Bible trivia book.

If your favorite actor walked into your work tomorrow, just about everyone would say, “Hey I know him…that’s…” but they do not really know him. They may know facts. If they are caught up on Hollywood drama, they might know some of that person’s likes/dislikes, but they do not know him.
Intimacy

Paul's knowing God is not just facts. Read the verses with me again.

10 that I may know Him and the **power** of His **resurrection**, and the **fellowship** of His **sufferings**, being **conformed** to His **death**,

Paul is not saying I want to research the resurrection, memorize his sufferings, and be able to recite the occasion of Christ's death. He focuses on power, fellowship and conforming to Christ. His knowing is more intimacy than information.

For those of you who are familiar with the Old Testament, in the listing of generations and other places whenever it speaks of the husband and wife physical relationship, it—in a beautifully discreet way—says, “and he knew his wife and she bore him a child.” This is the same word here.

Information is needed for intimacy. Husband/wife—does she like flowers? what's his favorite meal? But I think we all agree that intimacy goes much deeper. This is a knowledge borne out of **experience**.

Here's the thing: Everyone wants to **know Him and the power of His resurrection**. There's not a human in this world who would not want to be acquainted with an Individual Who conquered death. Very few want to experience the fellowship of His sufferings. Fewer still want to be conformed to His death.
I saw this perfectly illustrated the other day…

I recently attended a viewing of the new movie, *Silence*. It is a gut-wrenching view of 17th century Japan when Buddhist authorities enacted some of the worst persecution of Christians that church history has ever seen.

The showing next to ours was of *The Resurrection of Gavin Stone*. I have not seen the movie, but I knew that it was a faith-based production.

A washed-up former child star, forced to do community service at a local megachurch, pretends to be a Christian to land the part of Jesus in their annual Passion Play, only to discover that the most important role of his life is far from Hollywood.

Having watched actor after actor portray historically accurate accounts of martyrdom and some tortured to death while singing a hymn, I was emotionally spent by the end. As I was leaving, a couple was walking out of the other film. The couple was linked arm in arm, and the woman laughed out “That was so funny.”

*The Resurrection of Gavin Stone* probably is not a bad movie, and I am not saying that *Silence* will go down in cinematic history, but the juxtaposition of the the two was heartbreaking.
God is calling us to fellowship with Him in His suffering, conform to Him through His death so that we might experience Him and the power of His resurrection, but we want to laugh.

He wants us to KNOW Him, and we are satisfied at being acquainted with Him so that He recognizes us when we die and stand before Him. That is not how it works.