

NOT WHAT YOU KNOW, BUT WHO: SMALL-GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Everyone in the group: complete the sentence: "I am an expert in ..." (answer seriously!)
2. How much confidence do you vest in your expertise?

The Scribes – experts in the Law, allies of the Pharisees – were far too vested in their own expertise. To challenge them, Jesus tackles their confidence around the identity of the Messiah.

Read Luke 20:39-47. Consider:

3. What is the point Jesus makes about the Messiah?

The point is straightforward enough: if David refers to the Messiah as "my Lord", that's a clear argument against the Messiah being – merely – the "Son" (= the descendant) of David. A wide range of expectations attached themselves to a Messianic "Son of David", a political and military leader who would surely restore the kingdom to the righteous of Israel, holy in their devotion to Yahweh. As experts in messianic expectation, the Scribes became "puffed up" with their own importance and loved to put it in display (vv.46-47). Jesus declares their knowledge obsolete: as the Messiah He is so much more than the Son of David – a divine figure of holiness and power.

This passage gets us reflecting on the place of "knowing" in God's intentions for us. For starters, God wants us to have wisdom, but not necessarily knowledge. Knowledge is about insight – understanding things clearly; wisdom is about knowing what to do. It's possible to understand things well enough, yet be clueless about what to do with that knowledge. (Like the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 8-10; listen to the message for more on this and how knowledge needs to serve the needs of love in the community of faith.)

Equally, you may be quite unsure about your situation, but can look to the Lord to help you know what to do (i.e. to give you wisdom). This is a great encouragement in an increasingly complex world.

To be sure, growing in knowledge *is* a biblical virtue, even an imperative! But the kind of knowledge we need is that which gives wisdom a solid foundation, and which enables us to love well. (Check out Philippians 1:9-11, where love overflows with knowledge and insight, so that we may be able to discern what is best – i.e. to have wisdom!)

Never forget: we can always ask for wisdom. Read James 1:5-7. So long as you trust the Lord to know what to do and be interested in telling you, you can ask with confidence.

4. In what area of your life do you need wisdom? Pray for each other.

Finally, read Psalm 23:4. The person walking the valley of the shadow of death probably has no insight into their life, and no sense of how to move on: they are “benighted”. The consolation is that the Lord is alongside – invisible, perhaps, but a real presence – and that the rod of protection and the staff of guidance will give you a way to move on and ultimately out of the valley. What matters, in other words, is not that we know, but that the Lord knows. And He is our Good Shepherd, strong and wonderful, alongside us always.

5. Where are you on the road? Again, pray for the Lord to be alongside with His rod and His staff.