

46-13-02-To Know as We Are Known

memorial, afterlife, knowledge, perception, ultimate reality

1 Corinthians 13:12

Focusing only on the present leaves us unprepared for eternity.

### INTRODUCTION:

–1 Cor 13:12, *Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.* [A

French thinker wrote: “Do you know what makes man the most suffering of all creatures? It’s that he has one foot in the finite and the other in the infinite: he’s torn between two worlds.”] This tension we call *the human condition*. We’re *physical* beings in animal bodies and *spiritual* beings with eternal souls. Animal bodies die, but our souls live on. That’s why **HOM.idea**.

–Solomon described this *tension* in Ecc 3:11, “[God] has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.” Some see creation’s beauty and ask, “*How’s it work?*” Others ask, “*Why is it here?*” Both have one foot on earth and one in eternity, and both are searching for meaning.

–(re-read text) The “*then*” in this verse is the afterlife of Christians like \_\_\_\_\_. Paul, who wrote “*the Love Chapter*,” valued knowledge and understood philosophy. But here he gives us **2 facts** and **2 hopes** to prevent us from a being concerned only with our present life and not with our future in the hereafter. So, let’s first look at Paul’s...

### **I. Two Facts about Human Life**

A. #1 is poor perception: “*Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror*”

1. [Ancient mirrors of highly polished brass or silver, got *scratched, stained and tarnished* until they reflected faces with *increasingly poor quality*.]
2. [Plato said *poor human perception* is like being strapped in chairs in a cave watching, on the wall in front of us, moving shadows cast by images we can’t see. Philosophy may help free us to see the images. But only by exiting the cave can we find the true light that allows us to observe the whole process.] (What gives *life meaning* lies beyond our *imperfect perceptions*.)

B. #2 is incomplete knowledge: “*Now I know in part*”

1. [5 Blind Men Met an Elephant: one felt the *leg* & said *it’s like a tree*; one felt a *tusk* & said *it’s like a long spear*; one felt the *side* & said *it’s like a huge rock*; one felt the *trunk* & said *it’s like a big snake*; one felt the *ear* & said *it’s like a large thick leaf*; all went away arguing over *what an elephant was like*.]
2. [Lessons I’ve learned from life: Age 7- I’ve learned our dog doesn’t want to eat my broccoli either. / Age 15- I’ve learned I’m secretly glad my parents are

strict with me. / Age 44- I’ve learned you can cheer up a sad person simply by sending them a little note. / Age 58- I’ve learned that making a living is not the same as making a life. / Age 72- I’ve learned that everyone can use some prayer. / Age 92- I’ve learned that I still have a lot to learn.]

3. “*Now I know in part*” — Right “now” we can’t see all there is to see, because we still see poorly; right “now” we can’t know all there is to know, because all our knowledge is only partial.

TRANS: Even if I knew \_\_\_\_\_ all my life, my *perception* of h\_\_ would be *imperfect*, my *knowledge* of h\_\_ would be *incomplete*. Paul affirms those 2 facts in the *human condition*. But he also affirms...

### **II. Two Hopes in Human Death**

- A. Beyond an *afterlife hope* of *knowing each other better*, we want to get to know the One Who gave us *this inborn sense of the infinite*.
- B. So, Hope #1 is to personally meet God: “*then we shall see face to face*”
  1. Presently He hides His “*face*” and we “walk by faith,” living by what we believe is true. (We all do this, whether we admit it or not.)
  2. [Personally, I *lost my faith* as a HS sophomore, but in my junior year, I was led back by philosophy, not only to faith in a God of love, but to a certainty that this loving God had revealed Himself through His Son, Jesus Christ.]
- C. Hope #2 is to know the whole truth—to have completely accurate perceptions of reality: “*then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known*”
  1. *Do you have any questions ready, for when you meet God? I do!*
  2. *But are we ready for the questions God will ask us? Probably none of us are!* (But since we must all inevitably stand before God’s holy presence, it’s crucial for us not to let passing finite pursuits rob us of preparing our souls for the infinite...)

### CONCLUSION:

–Focusing only on the present leaves us unprepared for eternity. *Death*, and our *grief* over it, highlight the tension of having one foot in the *finite physical* and one in the *infinite spiritual*. But I disagree with that French thinker. Having *invited Jesus into my heart*, I know we’re not “the most suffering of all creatures.” *God’s love* turns being “torn between two worlds” into profound hope for the human condition. That was \_\_\_\_\_’s hope. If (s)he could speak from Heaven right now, I’m sure (s)he’d recommend for all gathered here to embrace that same hope in Christ.