

Pleasant Valley  
Church of Christ

3317 Amidon  
Wichita KS 67204  
(316) 838-4195  
www.letjesusleadus.org

## Schedule of Services

### Sunday

Classes . . . . . 9:30 am  
Worship . . . . . 10:30 am  
Evening . . . . . 6:00 pm

### Wednesday

Classes . . . . . 7:30 pm

The Pleasant Valley Church of Christ is a non-denominational group of believers who are committed to following Jesus in our attitudes, our relationships, and our worship. If you want the same thing in your life, please contact us. We'd like to help.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

# Wings



*"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31)*

July 26, 2009

## To know God

by David King

"Shall you reign because you enclose yourself in cedar? Did not your father eat and drink, and do justice and righteousness? Then it was well with him. He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well. **Was not this knowing Me?**' says the Lord" (Jer. 22:15-16).

This was written to one of the last kings of Judah, Shallum (also known as Jehoahaz). Shallum reigned only three months before being taken away by the Egyptians. But during that brief time, he demonstrated his character as a self-serving scoundrel. His nation was on the verge of collapse, yet Shallum devoted his energies to building a large palace for himself (v. 14), while cheating the workmen out of their wages (v. 13).

In our opening text, Jeremiah contrasted Shallum's behavior with that of his father, Josiah. Josiah was a good and decent king. Instead of squandering his nation's resources on himself, Josiah worked tirelessly to help the people, especially those who were powerless. He died in battle before he could complete his reformation of the kingdom, but history remembers him well.

We are interested here in God's summary of Josiah's work: "Was not this knowing Me?" (v. 16). We often speak of the need for people to "know God," but we fail to adequately define what that means. Since the subject is "knowledge," we usually assume an academic definition that focuses on learning the Scriptures. So we conclude that the more we study and know the Scriptures, the more we know God.

But this definition misses the mark. While knowledge of the Scriptures is certainly necessary, our text suggests that it is only a means to a greater end. To "know God" is to "do justice and righteousness," and to "judge the cause of the poor and needy." In other words, knowing God is more a function of what we **do**, rather than what we intellectually **know**.

The implications of this fundamental truth can teach us some important lessons.

First, we do not need to be Bible scholars in order to know God. Treating our fellow human beings with respect and compassion is a simple standard that anyone can follow. Bible study can help us refine and polish our skills in this area, but the basic requirements are universally recognized. We just need to make up our minds to do them. And as we get better at this behavior, we gain a deeper insight into who God is and what it means to serve Him.

Looking at this from another perspective, it is entirely possible for someone to know the Scriptures backwards and forwards, yet not know God. History offers many examples of men who could quote reams of Scripture, yet lost sight of basic standards of decency when it came to dealing with others. Think of the Pharisees in Jesus' day. They were the guardians of the Law, yet had no problem with cheating widows out of their livelihood (Matt. 23). Ironically, their knowledge of God's law blinded them from seeing God.

Shallum did not know God, because he was too busy serving himself rather than others. Let us not make that same mistake.