

Personal Knowledge Seventh Week of Easter Tuesday, June 4, 2019 Acts
20:17-27; **Jn17:1-11a** (Even science actually isn't just about facts; it's really very
personal.)

“Now this is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ.”

It is a fact that most languages have two different words for “to know.” For example in German there is *wissen* and then there's *kennen*. One is for knowing facts; one is for knowing people, and they are two different kinds of knowledge. Think about it. Same in French *savoir* and *connaitr*, one for facts, one for people. Sad to say, English does not. **English** has the biggest vocabulary of any language that has ever existed, and yet it **has an impoverished way of dealing with two of the most important subjects in the human repertoire: knowledge and love**, one word each. Further the whole modern world has been overly influenced by English. **English is the language of the modern world, and so wonderful insights that are actually common to many languages in the world, if not all, at least many, are absent from the modern mind because of the domination of English.**

Now Karl Popper, who was a very interesting and fine philosopher, some years ago wrote a book called *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, in which he said **even science actually isn't just about facts; it's really very personal.** And that's the key to understanding a lot of the problems of the modern world. We can't get along and we can't relate because my facts are the facts, but Karl Popper would say, well not really. **Even science is a personal thing of choice, interpretation, and commitment.**

Well guess what? **That's what faith is all about too: choice, interpretation, commitment.** Jesus says, “This is eternal life, that they should know”—in a personal way—“you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ.” We know from the Old Testament and our own

observations the world is full of all kinds of religion and there may be some truth in much of it, but there is also such a thing as idolatry, the creation of imaginary projections and calling those god or gods. **So Jesus is saying eternal life is actually to know the only true God, to have a personal knowledge of him, not simply to believe in him,** that is not eternal life. It's to know him, **to have this personal relationship based on interpretation and choice and commitment,** and to do so in such a way that it's inviting to others to join in because **it is not just an individual thing.** The God who is the only true God is in fact the God of everything **the ground of everything that exists. And to relate to this true God is to relate to everything and everyone in a personal way and to have some kind of commitment toward everything and everyone and some kind of empathy, some kind of shared responsibility. This is discipleship in the true sense.**

Now we know the world is full of counterfeit versions of all these things, but **this is a calling to a kind of truth that gives life and in this sense of eternal life.** So we may want to spend some time in reflecting on this passage, and what Jesus is trying to get across, and what it really means to talk about glory.