

It Is Worth It

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Preacher: Pastor Chris Baker

[0:00] I am the personal property deacon. We like to announce ourselves and everything you see around here needs work. That's what we do. And if you're interested in helping, come and see me. Also interested in getting some people to help me outside for landscaping. So if you have any green thumbs, let me know.

So for announcements today, atop of announcements, there will be a short meeting right after service today. It's for the people, just the people who are planning and helping organize Bible study. The teachers and that will be later. So if you're in there to help plan and organize, they'll have a short meeting right after church.

Next thing, if you look down, don't forget the Secret Sisters will be ending on May. And there will be new papers coming out so they can choose new Secret Sisters. Graduation, just around the corner. Dave Folk would like to have the names of the graduates. And he would like to have you write that out for him because he has to go get stuff purchased with their name on it. So he needs that written out so he can get the right spelling on that. Okay?

Is there any announcements that I'm missing? I don't see. Okay, May 1st and 2nd, Grad Sale. If you have any items, they're putting them in the basement. Still got room?

And if you need help, contact somebody, Ron or one of us. If you need help with stuff to put down in the basement, let us know and we'll help you get it down there. That's May 1st and 2nd, Grad Sale.

[1:35] I don't see. If you are a new visitor, there are visitor cards. It should be in front of you in the seat. Please fill it out and drop it on the plate. Am I missing any announcements? Anybody got anything?

All right. Would we please stand and give a word of prayer before we meet and greet? Dear Heavenly Father, again, we thank you for this beautiful morning.

We thank you for this time we can come together here at the church family. We ask that you be with each and every one of us and be with those of one that cannot be here today. For all those in need of pain, suffering, healing, we ask that you use their touching hand.

We ask that you be with Pastor Chris and his message this morning and that we leave here and feed those sheep. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Jesus.

Jesus.

[2:52] Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Oh, for grace to trust him more.

Oh, how sweet to trust in Jesus. Just to trust his cleansing blood.

Just in simple faith. Neath the healing cleansing blood. Jesus.

Jesus. Jesus, how I trust him, how I proved him o'er and o'er. Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus, all for grace to trust him more.

Yes, it is sweet to trust in Jesus, just from sin itself to cease, just from Jesus simply taking life and rest and joy and peace.

[4:06] Jesus, Jesus, how I trust him, how I proved him o'er and o'er. Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus, all for grace to trust him more.

I'm so glad I learned to trust thee, precious Jesus, Savior, friend.

And I know that thou art with me, wilt be with me till the end. Jesus, Jesus, how I trust him, how I proved him o'er and o'er.

Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus, all for grace to trust him more.

And remain standing and turn to page 353. 353. When you learn to trust him, there's all sorts of victory. 353. I heard an old, old story.

[5:26] How a Savior came from glory. How he gave his life on Calvary to save a wretch like me.

I heard about his groaning, of his precious blood atoning. Then I repented of my sins and won the victory.

Oh, victory in Jesus, my Savior forever. He sought me and bought me with his redeeming blood. He loved me ere I knew him, and all my love is to him. He plunged me to victory beneath the cleansing flood.

I heard about his healing, of his cleansing power revealing. How he made the lame to walk again, and caused the blind to see.

[6:47] And then I cried, dear Jesus, come and heal my broken spirit. And somehow Jesus came and brought to me the victory.

Oh, victory in Jesus, my Savior forever. He fought me and bought me with his redeeming blood. He loved me ere I knew him, and all my love is to him. He plunged me to victory beneath the cleansing flood.

I heard about a mansion he has built for me in glory. And I heard about the streets of gold beyond the crystal sea.

About the angels singing and the old redemption story. And some sweet day I'll sing up there the song of victory.

[8:08] Oh, victory in Jesus, my Savior forever. He sought me and bought me with his redeeming blood.

He loved me ere I knew him, and all my love is to him. He plunged me to victory beneath the cleansing flood.

Thank you. You may be seated. Lots of requests, but we serve a big God, folks. So let's take them to him. Lord God, as we come to you this morning, we just thank you. That as we've come together in this place as family this morning, that we can know, not just in our hearts, but we can know in our minds, that you are here with us.

That as we come together, you're in our presence. And we're in the presence of a living God that created all things, that knows all things, that can do all things.

Help us never to forget that. Sometimes here on this earth, situations and circumstances may seem hopeless. But just remind us that you are the God of hope.

[9:25] That with you, all things are possible. With you, we do have the victory as we've sung about already. Just remind us of those things. Now, Lord, you know that before us is a long list of prayer requests, and we just want to bring these to you.

We pray that you'd be with the unspoken prayer requests, first of all. And again, Lord, you know the needs, the hearts, the people, the situations, the circumstances. You know everything about them, the ins and the outs, the ups and the downs.

And we just bring these to you, and we leave them at your feet. And just pray, Lord, that you would work. That your plans would come to pass and be fulfilled. That you would bring about healing where it's needed.

Restore relationships where it's needed. Grant forgiveness where it's needed. Just work in those, Lord, as only you can do. Lord, this morning we pray for those that are sick and not feeling well. For Kathleen and for Donna and for Adlai and any others that are battling with sickness. Just give them the health that they need. Lord, this morning we pray for Tina's Grandpa Price and for Marty Combs and for Beth Burkhart.

[10:30] Lord, as each one just needs health. Just needs your physical touch in their lives. Lord, this morning we pray for those that are battling with cancer. Lord, as Pat was mentioned, as she has just a limited time left.

And she has a desire to go to her physical home before she goes to her heavenly home. And I pray, Lord, that that desire would be able to come to pass. But, Lord, wherever she's at, just comfort her.

Let her know that she is in your hands. Lord, I pray that you'd be with others that are battling cancer. I pray that you'd be with John, Tammy's father. Lord, as his time too is limited.

I just pray that you'd bless him in that. And the family as well. Just give them times of good sharing and times of being able just to be with one another. And spend time together.

Precious time. And, Lord, I pray that it's a reminder to each one of us that, for all of us, our time on this earth is limited. And you call us to make the best use of this time that we're granted as we can. [11:32] So I pray, Lord, that you'd help each one of us to do that. Lord, this morning we pray for April's father, for Stan, as he has the hernia. And, Lord, we just pray that that's able to be taken care of.

And just be with the other health concerns that he has as well. Just encourage him, Lord, this morning. Lord, I pray that you'd be with Benji that had the heart attack. And, Lord, as he's had some other things to go along with that and as he needs to recover, I just pray that you'd give him health. I pray that you'd be with Paul and Jim, Hope's uncles, and just grant them the health that they need. Lord, as Joe this morning has asked for wisdom, Lord, you tell us in your word that you will give us wisdom.

A wisdom that comes from above. And I pray that you'd bless Joe with that. Give her wisdom to make the decisions that you would want her to make. Lord, this morning I pray that you'd be with Wally Raleigh.

Lord, as he had some toes removed, and we thank you that he's home now. Just help the healing to take place. And, Lord, just be with him. Help him to be wise and to not overdo. And to be able to listen and follow the limitations and the instructions that he's been given.

[12:38] Lord, I pray that you'd be with Dick Barber. I pray that you'd be with him as he has the brain tumor. And, Lord, I know that you have a plan there. And just help each one there to realize that you do have a plan, and we put that in your hands.

I pray that you'd be with Dina as she recovers from surgery. And, Lord, we just pray that the surgery was a success. Lord, we pray that you'd be with little Onyx as he goes to the doctor this week. And, Lord, just continue to help him to grow and develop in the ways that he needs to. I pray that you would be with the families that have experienced loss with the Manns family and the Sagers family and the Leatherman family.

Just each one of those. Just provide comfort. Lord, this morning I pray that you'd be with Wesley. He's back in the hospital and has had some setbacks. Lord, those can be discouraging, so just encourage him today.

And, Lord, as Wendy has asked for a prayer for some of her students, I just pray that you'd be with those students. You know what the needs are, especially with Tommy that she mentioned. Just watch over them. And, again, Lord, we do thank you for the ways that you watch over us.

[13:42] And now, Lord, as we spend this time together, I pray that our hearts and our minds would be focused on and directed to you. Help us to realize that you have things you want to share with us this morning.

And help us to be attentive. Help us just to have a worshipful attitude. Not to be distracted by all the other things that go through our minds, but to focus on you and your word this morning. And we ask and pray these things in the name of Jesus Christ.

And all God's people together said, Amen. You know, Amen means so be it. And we're going to trust that God is going to work in each and every one of these prayer requests that we've taken to Him.

Hope. Please stand. We're going to turn to page 630 in our hymnal, and we're going to let Jesus know how much we love Him. What a friend we have in Jesus. 630.

630. 630. What a friend we have in Jesus.

[14:43] All our sins and griefs to bear. What a privilege to carry.

Everything to God in prayer. Oh, what peace we often forfeit.

Oh, what needless pain we bear. Oh, because we do not carry.

Everything to God in prayer. Have we trials and temptation?

Is there trouble anywhere? We should never be discouraged.

[15:49] Take it to the Lord in prayer. Can we find a friend so faithful?

Who will all our sorrows share? Jesus knows our every weakness.

Take it to the Lord in prayer. Are we weak and heavy laden?

Comfort with a load of care. Precious Savior, still our refuge.

Take it to the Lord in prayer. Do thy friends despise forsake thee?

[16:55] Take it to the Lord in prayer. In his arms he'll take and shield thee.

Thou will find us all is there. Thank you. You can be seated. Good morning.

And this is the time when we bring an offering. An offering of praise to God. God. And I just want to thank him so much for what last week represented his Easter, his gift to mankind.

And I tell you, I know I don't deserve it. And for him to, for God the Father to send Christ his son to die a cruel death.

We heard a little devotional that talked about why, why didn't God just send Christ as a adult to begin with and let him live on this earth just a week or something like that and then go through that death.

[18:08] And it was because he wanted to show that he was a pure, righteous sacrifice. And it wasn't just a one-time deal.

And that devotional meant a lot to me and what God did for us. So what other praises do we have to offer? Father, you are a good Father to us.

And you give us so many good things. And it's, for one, this family, as it's been mentioned, there is so much to appreciate, to love.

But it's a reflection of you. And I just pray that we can continue to do that. And as we gather the offering, we pray for wisdom. We pray that you'll give us direction on how to use it for your glory.

And we thank you for those that give. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. This time, Cindy is going to come and share Kids' Corner with the kids.

[19:44] So kids, come on up. Good morning.

No? Yep. Okay. All right. Good. All right. This week, I was in kindergarten two days. And Mrs. Wagner was talking about how she worked a 40-hour week.

And those two days, I felt like I had worked a 40-hour week. Oh, when I'm in kindergarten, they're very cute kids. But they tire me out because I'm not as young as I used to be.

And you know what? I hardly ever tell Ron where I'm going to be when I teach. I teach kindergarten through 12th grade. And when I've taught kindergarten, he'll say, You were in kindergarten today, weren't you?

Yes, I was. Anyway, Thursday and Friday, I was in kindergarten. And there was a little boy in there. We had a paper we were doing.

[20:46] And we hardly got started. And he was done. And I looked at his paper. And I said, Did you do your best? No.

And he didn't even say anymore. He started erasing it. And he started over. He just zipped through that paper. And he was done before he hardly got started. He wanted to get outside for recess. He didn't want to sit there and take his time and do his best on his paper. He just wanted to zip outside. So he slowed down. And his paper looked a lot better when he was finished the second time.

Well, you know what? That's us sometimes. We're in a hurry. And sometimes we don't feel like doing our best to the end, do we? We just want to hurry and get through something.

Especially this time of the year. You know what? Teachers want to hurry and get through the year, too, at this time of the year. Ah, we're tired of school. It's nice outside.

[21:51] And we've got more tests coming up at Ayersville. And I know some other places, too. And I know there are a lot of kids and a lot of teachers that aren't going to feel like giving it their best.

Because there are other things sometimes we'd rather be doing, huh? But God tells us in Galatians. It's chapter 6, verses 7.

And then I'm going to skip to verse 9. It says, And I try to remind myself of that verse when I don't feel like doing something and especially not giving it my best.

You know, we have to remind ourselves that we're not doing it just for us. We're doing it for who?

For God. Because the job we do is a reflection on our relationship with God, believe it or not.

And it helps us, too, if we do better. But it sends a message to people who see that job. We want to do our best so it's a good reflection on God.

[23:16] I have a story in a book I used to read to Danny and Nate when they were little. It's called Ladybugs, Bees, and Butterfly Trees. And it's talking about a bunch of different animals and insects.

And there's a story in here about ants. And, you know, ants are some of the hardest workers there are. They're so teeny tiny. But have you ever sat and just watched an ant?

They are always busy. And they are always working. Yes, Stephen. Isn't that amazing?

And, you know, not only can they lift 50 times their own weight, but they do it. Sometimes people can do work, but they choose not to.

They choose to be lazy, even though God's given them the abilities and the health and the strength to do their job. Sometimes they don't give it their best. But ants not only can do that, but they do.

[24:18] They're busy little beavers. I like to sit in the summer on my front step and eat my lunch. And I watch if I drop a crumb. And before very much time, there's a little ant scurrying up, getting that crumb, and taking it for later.

So it's got a storehouse for when it needs some food. It doesn't sit there very long before that ant picks that up, and off it goes. They could just say, eh, that goofy lady dropped a crumb and go on by it, couldn't they?

But they don't. Well, this little story is about cowboy ants. It says cowboy ants tend aphid. Now, if you look at this picture, here's the ant, and here's this little white bug.

And if you really saw an aphid, it would be very teeny tiny. So cowboy ants tend aphid, which give off honeydew drops. Baby ants like aphid milk better than lollipops.

In wintertime, ant cowboys hide their cows in tunnel barns. And they have cows in quotation marks because they're referring to the aphids. They put them in their storage for the winter.

[25:33] In summer, they'll get more milk from them, so must keep them safe from harm. The ant cowboys work so hard. Be like them, God tells us.

When mom and daddy ask for help, pitch in without a fuss. And there's a Bible verse from Proverbs 6.6 that says, Go to the ant, observe her ways, and be wise.

What? We can learn from an ant? Yes, we can. We can learn from an ant. And you know, I tell the little kids at school, because those big kids go through the hall, and they're so noisy, and they don't do what they're supposed to.

And I say to the little children, You know what? You do the right thing. You'll be an example to those big kids. You can be an example, too, by the way you live for God.

Now, I did some handwriting here. Which one do you think I did my best? Boy, this first one, I scribbled that off.

[26:46] It was kind of fun, because I never just scribble. It was kind of fun, but you know what? I wrote, Do your best for God. And I knew, even when I was doing that, I wasn't doing my best.

I scribbled. I rushed through it. Did this take me more time? Oh, yeah. But, is this my best? Yes, it is.

Do your best for God. So, remember that. When you are doing any task at home, at school, any place, don't give up. Don't become weary in doing good, in doing the right thing.

Let's pray. Lord, sometimes we are so tempted just to rush past someone who needs our time. We are tempted to just do the minimal amount that we need to to get by, or to not even tackle it at all.

But, Lord, that does reflect upon you, and you expect us to give it our very best, and to spend time being a good example and a good witness for you.

[27:57] So, we pray, Lord, that you would help us to just give everything our best, to see it to the end, to make it to the finish line. In Jesus' name, amen. A lesson for each one of us, doing our best for God, is what He asks of us.

And, you know, this summer, I'm sure that, if you haven't already, I'm sure that you will shortly be seeing ants here and there, and some places where it's okay for them to be, and other places where you really wish they weren't.

But regardless of where you see them, remember that God's Word says that there are lessons that we can learn from them. And you look at their activity and how hard they work, and that should be a reminder to us as Christians of what God asks of us.

This morning, if you have your Bibles, I'd encourage you to turn to Ephesians, chapter 4, right after Galatians, before Philippians, Ephesians, chapter 4. We're going to look a little bit at a topic that each one of us should spend some time in our lives considering and thinking about.

It's one of those topics that I believe it's important that we really once in a while sit down and take a good long look at ourselves like we're looking in a mirror and kind of asking ourselves how we're doing.

[29:16] I know sometimes it's uncomfortable for us to sit down in front of a real mirror and look very long. Why can that be uncomfortable? Sometimes you don't like what you see.

The longer you look, the more things that are revealed and the more things you find at least you perceive as wrong with yourself. You know, I think spiritually sometimes that we need to do that. Not in an effort to just see what all is wrong with ourselves, but to take an honest look at where we're at as believers and as Christians. To take an honest look and evaluate ourselves and look at maybe some areas we need to work on and improve.

And we're going to look a little bit this morning at kind of the topic of maturity as a Christian, as a believer. Whether we're maturing in the way that we should. Whether we're developing and growing in the way that we should.

Ephesians chapter 4, beginning in verse 11, and we're going to read down through verse 15, and I encourage you to follow along. It says this, And He gave some to be apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, under the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness, by which they lie in wait to deceive.

[30:55] But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, who is the head, even Christ. Let's pray. Lord God, again, we thank You for this morning.

We thank You for Your Word, and Lord, for the lessons that You have for us. And I pray this morning that each one of us would really focus on Your Word. Lord, I know there's lots of activities that we've been doing, and that we have going on, even yet today.

And Lord, I just pray that we'd set those aside, and take some time to look at Your Word, take some time to reflect upon our own lives, and see how we add up, see how we measure up.

Lord, I just pray that You'd grant us that ability this morning, and we ask and pray these things in Christ's name. Amen. You know, as we look at these verses this morning, the first thing, the first verse we read, talks about several positions.

You know, it talks about teachers, and pastors, and prophets, and several different positions. But you know, all these positions that it says, all these positions and people are to help to, what it says, perfect us as believers.

[32:01] To help perfect us. How close are you to being perfect? That's quite a question, isn't it?

We're a long way off, if we're honest with ourselves, aren't we? But, the thing that it's talking about is not that we be perfect, because the reality is, while we're here on this earth, you're not going to be perfect.

The reality is, while I'm here on this earth, I'm not going to be perfect. Because we're human, because we have flaws, because we have weaknesses. But that doesn't mean that we're not supposed to be getting more and more like that.

That we're not supposed to be developing and growing as believers and as Christians to be more and more faithful. To be more and more like Christ.

There's a growth that should be happening. If you look on down in verse 13, look at what it says. Unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

[33:04] Starting to measure up more to what Christ asks of us. To measure up more to the example that He set for us and left us. That's what we're to be thinking about.

To measure up to His stature. You know, it's kind of like a child when they're little. They want to do what? Grow up to be like their dad.

Or grow up to be like their mom. You know, that's something that they desire. To grow and grow and be more and more like them. I know I'll pick on Caleb, because I enjoy picking on Caleb,

because he picks back, so it all comes out even in the end.

But I remember from the time he was about this high, you know what he wanted to grow? He wanted to be as big as dad. He wanted to be taller than me. That was his goal. He hasn't got there yet.

But he's close. He's close. And I think he's still working on it. He's still growing, and I'm not. But that was something that was always on our mind.

[34:03] And for Hannah and Leah, too. You know, we'd measure them, and there's a doorway, and we'd have little marks on it. And you remember, we probably all do that. And that was to monitor the growth, their stature, what was happening in their lives physically.

But for you and I spiritually, the same thing kind of needs to happen. We need to be thinking about our growth. We need to, in the end, be growing up. Look down in verse 15.

But speaking the truth in love that we may grow up into Him in all things. We need to be growing up. We need to be maturing. You know, we can look at that. Sometimes we look at maturity in a couple different ways. You've kind of heard the expression or maybe said to somebody, you're never going to grow up.

That can be taken a couple different ways, can't it? I know once in a while, Tammy tells me, you're never going to grow up. You know what I say sometimes? You're right.

[35:02] Don't plan on it. And in some ways, that's good. Isn't it? At least I think it's good. You know, sometimes we think that for people that just enjoy life, they enjoy having fun, I enjoy playing with kids.

That's one of my favorite things. I like to be able to sit up here with them during Kids' Corners. And that's an okay thing. But when we start talking about not growing up as in making childish decisions, as in making foolish decisions, that's a whole other ballgame, isn't it?

That's a whole other way of not growing up that's not a good thing. But as believers, sometimes we need to look at that too. As far as our maturity, as individuals, are we growing up the way that we should?

And as mature believers, there's some things that should happen if you look in verse 12. We need to be perfected for the work of the ministry and for the edifying of their body. You know, we need to be mature believers so that we can minister to the world around us.

We need to be mature believers so we can build up the church. Those are jobs that God has given us that we can't really do if we're not maturing in the way that we should. And there's a couple different really things when it comes to maturity that I want to look at.

[36:13] The first one, I want you to turn to 1 Corinthians. 1 Corinthians, chapter 14. It's not too far off.

1 Corinthians, chapter 14, verse 20. 1 Corinthians, I'll give you a minute. Chapter 14, verse 20. It shares this. Brethren, so who's it talking to? Us. That's all of us. Brethren, be not children in understanding.

However in malice be ye children. But in understanding be men. If we look at that verse for a minute, if we think about what it's really saying, it's saying that we are not to be children in our understanding.

One of the things about maturity that we need to look at is kind of an internal maturity is what I wrote down. It's being mature in our thinking. It's being mature in the way that we view things.

[37:25] In the way that we view the world. In the way that we view circumstances and situations that come into our lives. How we look at those things. You know, if we are maturing, if we are becoming more and more the mature believer that God wants us to be, we will deal with those things better and better as we go through life.

Do we understand that? That we will grasp more and more God's view of things. See, that's becoming a mature believer. Becoming more and more like Christ. Seeing things more and more the way that He did and the way that He does.

You know, in I believe it's James and in 2 Peter, it talks about having the mind of Christ. That we as believers are to have the mind of Christ. What does that mean? What's that mean?

Think like Him. To think like Him. That means when situations happen in your life, what process goes on up here? How do you view it?

Do you view it in the way that Christ would? You know, as we mature more and more, we should look at things the way that Christ would look at things. That's what it's talking about. not having the understanding of children, but more and more having the understanding, the mature understanding that Christ would want us to have.

[38:45] And that affects our actions. That affects the way that we view the world around us. The way that we even watch the news that's happening in the world around us. How do we respond to all those things?

Our response is always based on how we think about it. Whether we think about it from a spiritual mind or just from a physical mind. That's the first question. Your internal maturity as a believer, how's it coming along?

Are you maturing in your thinking, your thought processes? You know, it's interesting in this verse, the other thing it says, look again. Be not children in understanding, however in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.

What does that mean, in malice be ye children? What's that mean? Innocent?

What else? What's malice? Evil? Anger? You know, in those things we're supposed to be childlike and innocent towards those.

[39:49] But in the rest of our thinking, again, it's to be mature. When bad things happen, when something happens, maybe you're at work and something happens that frustrates you, how do you view that? How do you view it?

What would be an immature way, I want to get a little practical here. What would be an immature, spiritually immature way to think about it and to respond to it? What's that?

Have a fit? It's not fair, have a pity party? Any other thoughts?

Go tell other people, get them on your side? Gossip about it? What's that? Blame other people?

Would you all agree that most of those would be spiritually immature ways of thinking about it and handling it? Now, you don't have to answer out loud, but how often have you done that? Think about that.

[40:52] I mean, being spiritually immature in our thinking means that we go by what our natural reaction would be. Because our natural reaction would be to do all those things. I can't believe he did that.

What an idiot! He's a jerk. I can't believe that he did that or said that. Can you? Can you believe he did that? He's doing stuff like that all the time, isn't he?

That's our natural response, isn't it? Spiritually, as we mature, how should we handle those situations?

Right. What else? Stay calm. Forgive. Think about it.

Think about Christ. That's the stature. That's the measure that we want to attain. How would Christ have responded to situations like that? Would he blow up?

[41:56] Call him an idiot or a jerk? Or would he pray for them? Would he forgive them? Would he handle it in a more mature way? Folks, that's the kind of thinking that God really wants us to mature into.

And it's not an overnight process. It's not something that boom, you're there, you've got it down and you're set. It's something constantly that we have to be aware of in our lives and work towards to be responding in a godly way.

And other people watch the way that we think, the way that we respond. That's what other people see. And it makes an impact. So maturing in our thinking is important.

The other thing that we also need to think about, I want you to look in Hebrews chapter 5. Hebrews chapter 5. Internal maturity, the way that we think, the way that we view things, the way that we view people.

But also as we mature, there's an external side to it, our actions, things that we should be doing on the outside, physical things. Hebrews chapter 5 verse 12 shares this, For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God and are become such as have need of milk and not solid food.

[43:22] I want to look at just the first part of that verse. For when for the time ye ought to be what? Teachers. You know what that verse says to me?

That as we develop and grow and mature as believers, there ought to come a time when we are what? Teachers. Look at that verse again. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, as we grow and mature as Christians and as believers, there ought to come a time when we are ready to teach others.

That's part of that growing and maturing process. Now that doesn't necessarily mean that all of you need to be a Sunday school teacher or some formal teacher in the life of the church. That is something that many people should be.

God calls us to that as we grow and mature. But it does mean all of us should be at the point where we can teach others about our faith. Where we can teach others by the example that we live. Where we can teach others by our life.

That we live on a day-to-day basis. We ought to get to the point where others are learning from the way we live our lives. That's a point we ought to get to as we're maturing.

[44:37] It's expected. Isn't that what that really means? It's expected of us? When for the time you ought to be teachers? When you say you ought to be something, what does that mean? You should be there.

You should be that. And that's what it's saying. A teacher, that's something external, isn't it? Something that's coming out of you. You're sharing something. You're imparting something. You know, in our lives as believers we ought to get to the point where we have an external maturity. There are things that are coming out of us and being imparted to others. God calls us to be teachers to others. I want to challenge you with those two things.

the way that we think and then the actions that we do. Are you maturing as a believer? Are you becoming more and more spiritually mature as you go through life?

I talked at the beginning of the sermon about that time spent looking in a mirror to really kind of evaluate yourself and then beginning to see some things that maybe aren't what you wish they were.

[45:37] As you think about your spiritual maturity, I encourage you to take a look at yourself to really look at whether that growth process is happening. Whether you're maturing and growing the way that God would expect and want you to.

And you know, this doesn't matter whether you are five years old or whether you're 95 years old. You should still be maturing as a believer.

Just getting older age-wise, is that any guarantee that you're getting more spiritually mature? It's not, is it? And the thing about, you know, I was talking about growing as a child grows.

Do they ever go backwards? Not until you're really old and start shrinking, right? But the kids, as they grow, do they ever go backwards? No.

Can we go backwards in our spiritual maturity? We can. We can. That's a danger. It doesn't matter our age.

[46:42] You can start growing and maturing spiritually and get to this point and then all of a sudden you start neglecting things and the maturity level starts to go down. You let the world affect you more and more.

You spend less and less time in the Word, less and less time in prayer, and neglect church, and next thing you know, your maturity is sliding. That can happen whether you're 30, 60, or 90.

Can it? That danger is always there. Which direction is your maturity going in? The other thing I think that we need to do if you look in Philippians, right after Ephesians, Philippians chapter 3, verses 14 and 15, Paul is talking and this is what he says, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Let us therefore as many as be perfect be thus minded. And if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

He says this is the mind that we should all have. And if any of us don't have that mind, who's going to reveal it to us? What does it say? Who? God will reveal it to us.

[48:00] I believe in our lives that we need to be praying and asking God where maturity is needed in our lives. Lord, where do I need more maturity as a believer? What areas do I need to grow up a little more in my spiritual faith?

Ask God and He'll reveal that to you. But you need to ask. You need to be seeking. You really need to kind of want to know the response. Sometimes we don't ask because why? They don't want to know.

Because if we know, then we're responsible to change it. So we'd just rather not even ask. Folks, we need to ask God. And when we do, He'll show us the areas that we need to grow and be more mature.

And the number one thing in all of this, at the end of the verses that we were reading in Ephesians, it talked about not being as children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine. Not being tossed to and fro means we need to be, there's one word, consistent. Consistent. How important is consistency in our spiritual life?

[49:07] Think about that for a minute. How important is that? We're like real up here in maturity and then we drop way down here for a while and then we're kind of back up here and taking it serious again and trying to grow and then we slack off and we're down here and we're not consistent.

What message does that send? What message does it send? We're not committed. It's not important. You know, when I, in my life, it seems like I've gotten to do a lot of counseling with parents and about their children.

And that's the thing I try to convince parents of. One of the most important things is consistency. Not just in spiritual things but in all things really but in spiritual things especially.

You know, if the children see their parents and they're serious about their faith one minute and then the next minute they're not, you know what message that sends? Confusion. Must not be important. Or it is and then it isn't so I don't know what to think. Consistency, folks. God wants us to have a consistent growth in our lives. Consistently becoming more and more mature so that we can impact the world around us.

[50:23] That's my challenge to you today. That's God's challenge for you today. Are you maturing as a believer? Are you taking your growth seriously as a believer? In your thinking and in your actions are you showing more and more maturity in your life?

Does that mean you have to act all serious all the time? No, that has nothing to do with it. It means being more committed to acting and reacting and thinking like Jesus Christ.

That's what it's all about. Where are you at with that? Are you growing and maturing? You know, the best thing that can happen in the life of a church is for people to be growing and maturing as believers.

Because when that happens, God uses that. God does things with that. So that's the challenge, folks. Are you growing? Are you maturing as a believer? Let's bow our heads and pray.

Heavenly Father, we just thank you for this day that you've given us. We thank you for your word, for all that it contains. Lord, as we've talked this morning about growth, about growing up into Jesus Christ, growing up to be more and more like him in our thinking and in our action, Lord, we certainly see the way that Christ thought, the way that he viewed the world, the way that he viewed people with love and compassion and forgiveness and understanding.

[51:43] Lord, I pray that we have all those things or that we're growing into those things. And then externally, the way that he always was concerned about teaching others. Lord, I pray that as we mature that we would teach others, whether it's a Sunday school class at church or whether it's in our day-to-day lives, that we would be a teacher to those around us.

And Lord, I pray that we have consistency in our growth, that we can see a steady improvement, a steady growth in our spiritual lives and in our spiritual maturity. Lord, if we look in the mirror this morning and we see that that's not there, I pray you'd reveal that to us.

And I pray that you'd help us to be serious about growing spiritually, to be consistent in our prayer life, to be consistent in your word, to be consistent in thinking on things that are pure and just and true and all the things that you tell us to focus on in our lives.

Lord, help us to do that so we can have the spiritual growth that you desire to see within us. And again, Lord, if there are areas we're lacking, just reveal it to us. And we ask and pray these things in Christ's name.

Amen. This morning, the altar's open. Whatever your need, maybe you just want to pray that God would show you areas you need to mature. Come and pray. Maybe it's another need you have. The altar's open as we sing.

[53:00] Hope. Please stand. Take your handmaids and turn to 562. 562, Be Thou My Vision. Be Thou My Vision, O Lord of my heart, not be all else to be saved that Thou art.

Thou my best thought, by day or by night. Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.
Be Thou my wisdom and Thou my true word. I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord.
Thou my great Father, I Thy true Son. Thou in me dwelling and I with Thee one.
Riches I heed not, nor mass empty praise. Thou mine inheritance, now and always.

[54:26] Thou and Thou only, first in my heart. Thy King of Heaven, my treasure Thou art.

Thy King of Heaven, my victory won. May I reach Heaven's joys, bright Heaven's Son.
Heart of my own heart, what never befall. Still be my vision, O ruler of all.

I pray in your life that you're growing into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. You're maturing as a believer in your thinking, in your action, and that God is using that to build His kingdom.

If we're not, I pray that we're asking God to reveal that so that He can work in us and through us and cause that to happen. Let's bow our heads as we close in prayer. Heavenly Father, we just thank You again for this morning.

[55:41] And Lord, I just pray that You'd help each one of us to be maturing and growing as a believer spiritually in You and in Your Word. Watch over us as we leave this place and I pray, Lord, that through our consistent growth, through our actions, through our thinking, that we would be a witness, that we would be a teacher to the world around us each and every day of our lives.

Help us to have an impact on the world that we live in. And we ask and pray these things in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. God bless you and have a great week. If you're going to help...