

# Let us go on to Maturity

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] let's turn in our bibles to the passage of scripture which we read the letter to the hebrews chapter 6 and as god would help me i'd like to concentrate on one phrase in verse 1 so we'll read again hebrews chapter 6 verse 1 therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of christ and go on to maturity not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward god it's that phrase in the middle let us go on to maturity let us go on to maturity now this passage of scripture which we read contains some alarming statements for those of us who profess christ but if we study them carefully we will discover that they're actually very enlightening and actually quite encouraging if we spend time meditating upon them the context is that the writer is unable to teach them some doctrines because the believers the readers were so immature believers they were but they were immature believers as we read there in chapter 5 by this time you should be teachers you should be fed on strong meat but you're still to be fed on milk however according to verse 9 in chapter 6 he the writer makes it very very clear he does not question the genuine christianity of his readers though we speak in this way in verses 4 to 6 though we speak in this way yet in your case beloved we feel sure of better things things that belong to salvation he's saying but as far as you're concerned i'm convinced you're genuine christians immature yes but genuine christians now immature christians are to be distinguished from non-christians there is all the difference in the world immature weak christians are weak in wisdom weak in strength weak in faith they lack discernment they're easily tempted and led astray but they have christ my friend there's one thing needful in life and that is to have christ if you have christ you have everything but you ought to go on to maturity you ought to develop and grow now the lack of strength and discernment and subject to temptations and easily led astray that is due to lack of bible knowledge we read there in two places actually the word of god is what strengthens you and you can never be strong if you don't know the word of god you can never be a strong christian and we need to practice something we don't do much in this day and age and we preachers are responsible for

not thrusting more upon you the need for medication a w pink who was buried here in sandrick cemetery there and wrote that very well known book the sovereignty of god he said on one occasion the word of god is not meant to be read the word of god is meant to be studied and what good advice that is if you want strength and growth feed on the word of god feed on the word of god now in verse 9 he's trying to assure them that he still thought that his readers were genuine christians although he had to give them the warning in verses 4 to 6 it is impossible in the case of those who've once been enlightened who've tasted the heavenly gift who've shared in the holy spirit have tasted the goodness of the word of god and the powers of the age to come and then have fallen away to restore them again to repentance since they're crucifying once again the son of god to their own harm and holding them up in contempt now that all that ought to alert us but take careful note what it's saying these people actually as far as can be made out were never real christians it worries people to say that it's impossible for to in their case to to restore them again now what should be surprising about that if there is one way only of salvation and you set aside that one way well of course there's no hope for them if there's only one way if christ is the only way and they despise christ as it says they're they're crucifying christ putting him away saying he's not what we want well of course it's impossible to restore them because he's the only way it's a it's simply a case of mathematics one way of salvation you despise that one way well of course there's no other hope one minus one equals nothing it's not profound it's not deep it's not rocket science as we say it's just mathematics it's just mathematics there's one way you won't have that one way well there's no way now these people were not shrinking violets these people addressed here were assertive aggressive apostates now just look at the passage there is no mention in that passage verses four to six that these people had faith not mentioned there it's not mentioned in that passage that these

people had their sins forgiven it's not mentioned in that passage that these people were born again it's not mentioned that they've got eternal life these people were not christians genuine christians but you see how it says here that they were once enlightened yes they were once enlightened in their mind but christians are renewed in their mind these people were merely informed of the truth they were not transformed by the truth

it's through the renewing of our minds and are being transformed into the image of christ that christians enjoy ah but you see they say they tasted the word of god yes they tasted it but they did not feed upon it they tasted it they tasted it and said oh that's enough once a week's quite enough for me maybe once a month's enough for me how are your taste buds these people tasted the word of god and that was sufficient just a wee taste that's all i want they don't want more they don't want more of christ they don't want more of the word and christians feed upon the word oh but you see it says they're they're sharers of the holy spirit yes mere sharers of the holy spirit's provisions christians have the holy spirit indwelling them but these people the spirit wasn't indwelling them they merely shared in what the holy spirit provides the holy spirit provides the word and they were sharers of the word they read the word they heard the word they were sharers with god's people they were sharers in god's house but the spirit did not indwell them so these people never were genuine christians as far as we can make out you see there actually is a huge difference between a back slider on one hand and an apostate on the other hand there's quite a difference the back slider his sins are passive rather than active it's a loss of interest in spiritual things he has rather than being hostile against and attacking the word of god the back slider is cold and indifferent it's a loss of interest in these things that he has he withdraws from the company of the people of god and the house of god and the word of god he opts out of being involved in church things rather than being maliciously attacking the things of god which an apostate does and one clear mark is the back slider returns he always returns but on the other hand the apostate which these people seem to have been they willfully they intentionally deny the gospel back sliders have lost interest apostates deny it apostates attack it they publicly oppose christ his word and the gospel god is an enemy not just somebody they're no longer interested in but an enemy the apostate unashamedly lives in open sin the back slider is ashamed the back slider hides the apostate unashamedly living in open sin refusing to obey god and to serve him and therefore you see there is no such thing as a secret apostate someone says to you oh i'm afraid i have been apostate absolute nonsense an apostate willfully intentionally knowingly attacks the things of god and publicly unashamedly opposes the things of god enough of the negative let us move on to go on to maturity having received christ accepted christ developed from that now how does one mature you see you cannot expect a new believer to be like an aged christian any more than you can expect a new baby to be a grown up adult how does a baby grow how does a child grow well i'm told he grows through three things he grows through time you can't grow up overnight you grow through time a baby grows by being fed initially by milk but then go on to strong meat and the third you grow on by exercise now you cannot grow in maturity you can't grow on to go on to imperfection in isolation you cannot grow in maturity alone you grow in maturity by as a result of growing in other things there's no button to press there's no one simple quick prayer

Lord make me mature you become mature by growing in other things you grow first of all in knowledge our bible tells us elsewhere grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ now we're growing in maturity is growing in Christ likeness growing more like Christ there's no verse in the bible that says we're predestined to salvation do you know that no verse in the bible says predestined to salvation what the bible says is you're predestined to be conformed to the image of Jesus now the first step in that of course is conversion is salvation is by faith it's the first step but the goal is to become like

[ 15 : 29 ] Christ and that's what you've been predestined to be now listen how can you become more Christ like if you don't know what Christ is like how can you be Christ like if you don't know what Christ is like that's why the word says you want to grow in grace grow in the knowledge of Christ read about Christ speak about Christ learn from Christ what did Christ do when he was in this situation i'm in grow in the knowledge of Christ and as a result as a byproduct you'll grow in grace and in maturity you grow in maturity as you grow in faith and love do you remember in Luke chapter 17 verse 5 the disciples came to

Jesus the apostles said to the Lord increase our faith you want to grow in maturity grow in faith well here's the saviour's reply to the apostles when he said to them increase our faith the Lord said if

you'd faith like a grain of mustard seed you'd say to this mulberry tree be uprooted and planted in the sea and it would obey you full stop that's all he said and I'd have to say for years and years I was just plagued with that I couldn't understand what was the saviour teaching what kind of answer was that but of course I was rebuked because the disciples seemed perfectly happy with the answer they understood I didn't understand and someone said to me ah yes

I've got it he said the saviour is more or less saying to them look you don't need more faith a grain of mustard seed is sufficient what you need to learn is how to use that one grain of mustard seed you see faith is not like a concrete block you want to build a house you want to build a wall and you say oh lord send down some more concrete blocks no no no you've got one but faith is not like a concrete block faith is like a seed an acorn seed planted in the ground and that wee acorn seed grows now the saviour was teaching in there in Luke 17 you were little the kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed isn't it wonderful a grain of mustard seed of faith saves the soul that's all you need but you need to learn how to use that grain of mustard seed and that one seed will grow and develop the kingdom of heaven he said the saviour said is as a grain of mustard seed which is the smallest of all seed yet grows to be the largest if you know how to use it the law is not going to send you down more seeds until you've used the little seed you have grow in maturity grow in faith grow in love the theologians call faith and love the identical twins you can't have one without the other it's like the two sides of a coin and if you're not sure if your faith is in Christ ask yourself the question do you love

Christ and if you love Christ your faith is in Christ you cannot have one without the other want to grow in maturity grow in love and it's interesting the context of Luke 17 when they asked increase our faith it was just after the Savior told them you have to forgive your brother seven times a day now I'd be rather inclined to say if someone comes to me and says sorry for doing the same thing seven times a day I'd be rather inclined to say you're not serious but the Savior taught us that's how to grow in love practice forgiving practice loving and by practicing loving you grow in faith you grow and again in Luke 17 grow in service

I got your newsletter or whatever you call it five or six pages plenty things going on in the church plenty things for you to do are you doing them you'll never grow strong you'll never grow mature unless you grow in service what are you doing for his body the church what are you doing for his name as you grow in service you grow in maturity you cannot grow in isolation grow in obedience grow in submission there's a difference between obedience and submission you obey the commands but you submit to God's will you see I can be keeping all the commandments I can be doing nothing wrong and then

[ 22 : 03 ] God gives me cancer and I'm not pleased with God I'm not submitting to his will you can keep all the commandments legalistically and then God brings a providence and adversity into your life and you're angry with God we have to learn to submit to God's will God is not God allows to happen to us what's for our good and that's where faith comes in do you really believe this adversity this problem this disease this trouble this disappointment do we really believe it's working for our good that's where faith comes in that's where growth comes in that's where we get mature putting up with inconveniences for Christ's sake for

God's sake we take a long time to learn that God appoints tribulation for our good he has made it very clear be of good cheer in the world you will have tribulation never ever say if you're doing some outreach evangelizing never say to a Christian oh life things will go straight forward for you if you become a Christian they won't it's a wonderful life it's the best life but there'll be difficulties in the world you will have tribulation nevertheless be of good cheer I've overcome the world Paul tells us through much tribulation we inherit we enter the kingdom of heaven it's natural for us to be upset when problems come into our lives disappointments that's natural but what we're talking about here is being spiritual can we say well

I do not understand Lord I don't like what you're doing but I believe it's for my good and I'm just going to carry on which leads to the next thing I'm going to say we grow by persevering by just carrying on isn't it wonderful when your world collapses when God brings things into your life that you don't understand and you don't like what are we to do with only one thing to do you know what it is just carry on whatever you do never ever give up Satan wants you all he's got to do is get you to do one thing give up give up defy him defy him and just carry on

God knows what he's doing there's a glorious future ahead of every Christian a wonderful future look forward to it enjoy it don't worry about what happens down here trouble with us as we want our

heaven on earth my friend you'll hardly be able to cope with heaven in heaven it's wonderful I tell you you'll be you'll be you'll be what 60 seconds in heaven and you'll say what on earth were we worried about this is glorious this is wonderful just plod on just continue loving serving Christ one other thing before we conclude I must say how in this world can you grow as a Christian if you don't take what Christ has provided for your strength and growth

I refer to the communion to the table don't have the impudence to say I'm too weak to take to take it to take it what would you say if you have lost your appetite and the doctor asks you are you taking your food oh I've lost my appetite what would you say if the doctor well how can you complain to the doctor you're weak if you're not taking your food the table has been provided for your food for your strength for your encouragement don't dare complain you're weak in faith you're weak in anything if you're not taking the food Christ provided for your strength don't dare complain well oh sorry our time's up just three lessons in conclusion they're really actually they're not new they're just more or less what I've been saying there is no such thing as a sinless

[ 27 : 44 ] Christian there's always sins for us to confess and there's always sins for us to repent of I saints are sinners who constantly confess and repent of their sins repentance repentance is not something you do once at the beginning of your Christian life it's something you do daily if not hourly I was in the wilderness spiritually for years before I realized I was a Christian because I thought whenever I would put my faith in Christ there'd be no more sin and it was years before I came realized saints are sinners who confess their sins and daily repent of it no such thing as a sinless

Christian but second and secondly no such thing as an easy Christian life the Christian life friend is not easy so if you're struggling being a Christian rejoice you're in the real race it's a warfare the biblical language is a battle a fight we wrestle against the powers of darkness and we wrestle against them with a frail sinful body it's hard but listen it's wonderful the Christian life is not easy but listen it's great it's wonderful it's wonderful it's the best life there is but it's not easy finally there's no such thing as sudden growth blessed be

God their sudden conversion blessed be God their instant forgiveness of sins blessed be Christ I can have an immediate title to heaven and no one can pluck it out of my hand that can be obtained friend instantly the moment you confess your sin to Christ and trust in instant salvation but there is no instant maturity growth is gradual growth is accumulative one thing on top of another growth is so often imperceptible you don't see it it's like the grass you go away for a week and come back and the grass is grown it's imperceptible you don't see the grass growing but it's growing all the time it's the nature of growth gradual accumulative imperceptible there's no sudden growth sudden conversion but no sudden growth therefore friend take your foot take your foot plod on just persevere just continue loving him and serving him as best as you can and be strong in the Lord and the power of his might go on to maturity may God the Holy Spirit make his word effectual to every one of us let's just bow our heads in prayer