

Good Soil for Maturity

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[0 : 00] Okay, as we send the kids off, now it is time for the rest of us to also receive instruction from God's Word. And so I invite you to pray along with me.

I'll be leading us in prayer as we prepare to hear God's Word to us this morning. Our Father, I thank you that we have your Word, your Scriptures. Think of the line from Psalm 119, the unfolding of your Word gives light.

It imparts understanding to the simple. And so, Lord God, we open our mouth and we pant because we long for your commandments. So, Lord God, as we have asked before, give us ears to hear, eyes to see, hearts to understand all that you have for us.

I pray, Lord God, hold me back from saying anything false, any error, or any words that are unwise. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

Amen. I meant to take a photo and then I completely forgot about this. I was going to, but you guys have seen plenty of photos of the Aurora Borealis that showed up here in Squamish a few weeks ago.

[1 : 18] I know, it's like your social media feeds were filled with everybody else taking camera, you know, photos from their phone. It was a really great light show. And that night, kind of on short notice, I got a few friends together.

We met up at my house and we carpoled up to Tantalus Lookout north of town. And that was well away from the city lights. You get a clear view of the sky. I've never seen it so busy there.

It was chaos. For those of you who were there, it's the kind of thing where, you know, nothing is guaranteed. Anytime people say the northern lights are out, you never quite know if you're going to see it or not.

But we decided to show up in the best place we knew of to go view the lights. And what we were rewarded with was a pretty amazing view. Now, that being said, that wasn't my first viewing experience of the sky that evening.

Because the very first viewing experience I had was before anybody else arrived at my place, I thought, you know what, I'm going to step outside. And maybe there's something out there already just outside. So I step outside onto my back porch with the intent of, you know, take a look at the sky, see if there's anything visible just yet.

[2 : 30] And as soon as I walked out my back door and took a few steps out, the motion sensor light came on and completely blinded me.

And just like a floodlight, the whole back deck and all the trees all lit up. And it had a brilliance of its own, I suppose. But it wasn't quite what I was going for. Because whatever was in the sky, whatever happened to be in the sky, was completely drowned out by that sort of light.

I was in the wrong place to see anything at all. Sort of a, maybe there's a little bit of parable of our own in that.

Because you aren't in control of when and how the aurora may show up around here. But you are in control of where you position yourself.

If you put yourself in the wrong place, you're guaranteed to get nothing. Or almost guaranteed. Maybe it could be just so bright that that will override your terrible decision making.

[3 : 36] But if you put yourself in the right place, something will happen. Possibly something you never expected. I was struck by, even if the aurora hadn't showed up, we still got an amazing light show.

We saw a moon setting over the mountains. We saw a shooting star. The International Space Station flew overhead. It was pretty amazing. It would have been a great and amazing and

unexpected show, even if the lights never showed up.

And so it is with maturity. Where you position yourself matters. Sometimes things happen you don't expect. BK preached last week about how important maturity is to someone who's a Christian. How important maturity is to any church that you're a part of. Maturity gives us assurance of salvation. It makes us effective witnesses for Christ.

It deepens our relationship with God. Not just as individuals, but together. Maturity, we talked about, is the process of becoming more like Jesus Christ in our character and behavior.

[4 : 42] That's what we mean when we say maturity. It is becoming more like Jesus Christ in our character and behavior. You behold him and you become like him. Now, how do we pursue that?

Well, BK listed several practical ways that we can pursue maturity. He mentioned daily reading of scripture. Commitment to prayer. Active participation in church life.

Accountability and mentorship. Intentionality and discipleship. I'm kind of surprised by how many people seem to be wondering, why is it that I feel so lost and confused in my Christian life?

And when we work through this list, they're doing none of these things. I'm like, well, what? It's like trying to look at the aurora from your floodlit back porch. Not going to happen. Put yourself in the right place.

But what I want to do today is add to that. Get the best, put yourself in the best possible position to mature. To be the kind of person that when you're 30, 40, 50, 60 years old, people, your friends can come to you with the deepest struggles in their hearts.

[5 : 48] You can help them. They know. The kind of people who can endure very difficult, confusing, overwhelming situations, and you know what to do.

You know how to respond. You know how to draw near to God. The things that we're talking about don't automatically make you mature.

There is no automatic maturity machine. There is no conveyor belt process that if we put you on this track, you are guaranteed to mature in exactly the right way, in exactly the right process, at exactly the timeline that we give you.

What these things do is they put you in a place, in the right place, to receive God's blessing of maturity as His Holy Spirit fills you in His way, in His time, according to His agenda.

And today we're going to supplement those practical things that we talked about last week. And we're going to supplement all of this with the kind of mentality that you want to have, because there is a certain kind of mentality that will position you well to gain maturity.

[7 : 00] If you lack the right sort of mentality, you're not in the right position to gain maturity. In addition to things you do, there are ways you think in order to position yourself for God to mature you in His way and in His time.

If you are doing, if you are thinking in these ways, it's like leaving your back deck and driving up to the tanzanite lookout and watching for the aurora from there.

So what ways does a maturing person tend to think? Well, there are five attitudes of a maturing person, which are given by Jesus Christ in Mark chapter 4.

Now, again, obviously this is not an exhaustive. We could go into a lot more attitudes and mentalities, but I like to take one passage of Scripture and say, what does Jesus say here in these verses?

How does He capture what maturity looks like as it develops? These parables in Mark chapter 4, and that's again page 839 of the Bible's or Usher's handout, the series of parables Jesus tells is a series of parables He uses to explain how God's kingdom really works.

[8 : 16] That was very important to the audience Jesus is speaking to. He is speaking to Jewish people who are feverishly expecting and waiting for God to send His anointed King, God to send His Messiah, His Christ, that this Christ will come on earth, and He will give them a military and political victory, and He will give them this new kingdom of God all at once, all the good stuff right now.

And what Jesus is doing in His ministry, and especially with these parables, is He is subverting their expectations. He is challenging them by saying that mindset that you have, this mentality, God's kingdom is coming all at once, and here's how it's going to look.

He's trying to draw them out of an immature mindset. Hard to blame them. Many of us have that same mentality. We want God's kingdom right now all at once, and we have expectations about what that's going to look like.

Jesus is moving us to a mindset of change, of transformation that happens in God's way and in God's time. This is what we expect to happen to people who mature under the rule of God in the kingdom of God.

Here's the first of five attitudes that Jesus gives us. The first one is this, a maturing person expects God to give superabundant grace.

[9 : 56] A maturing person expects God to give superabundant grace. Jesus explains this at the conclusion of one of His most famous parables.

This is the parable of the four soils, and this is the one we read at the start of the service. Now, I've heard a number of sermons, a lot of teaching on this parable, and everybody loves to talk about the first three soils.

That's where a lot of the interesting conversations happen. You know, getting into the integrity, what are the first three soils, where are things going wrong, and doing a big analysis of that. And that's really important, to look at how the message of the gospel is ultimately rejected by people whose mindset is in the wrong place.

And when you read these first three soils and how Jesus interprets them, the longer you spend in a church and you watch what happens in people's lives, the more, when you read those soils, names come to mind, faces come to mind.

You've seen it happen in the people you know. They do not take the word to heart. But the best part of the parable is the part that we talk about the least.

[11 : 06] It's where Jesus talks about what happens with the seed that falls on the good soil of a humble heart. Here's what he says in verse 20.

Those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.

A maturing person hears the word. The seed is this word. The message of the gospel from God. The good news. The teaching. The instruction. He hears this word about the kingdom of God and this person accepts it. And this person begins to bear fruit. What that means is it produces a change in that person's life.

A change in their thinking and speaking and behavior. A change in the consequences. A change in their relationships. What happens is that person changes. That kind of plays out in their relationships.

[12 : 13] It spills over to the people around them. To the church around them. He or she repents of sinful and immature behavior and starts acting and speaking in these new ways. Now, you'll probably agree with me there and you have perhaps seen that in your own life and seen that in the lives of other people as change happens.

You see this change happen and it is grace. What we mean by grace it is the unmerited favor of God. It is a gift from God. You did not earn it. You do not deserve transformation and you don't have to pay God back for it.

It's simply a gift given freely from a good heart. But you may be discouraged because you know how hard it is to change. Change is hard.

You know how hard it is to move from obeying God 5% of the time to doing it 10% of the time when you're in a difficult relationship. And you're discouraged because what you're expecting is the consequences of change will correspond to what you put in.

In other words, if your acceptance and obedience to God's word gets 5% better, what you expect is, okay, my relationships are maybe going to improve by 5%.

[13 : 37] A lot of pain for a 5% improvement. Oof. That's discouraging. That's what we expect.

5% change, 5% results. And because we naturally expect that, that is why Jesus has to tell us we're wrong.

Remember, everything that Jesus speaks, he speaks, the reason he tells it to us is because we don't instinctively think this way. If you're reading the parables and you're like, oh yeah, instinctively, that makes sense to me.

I'm like, well, you're probably not reading it carefully enough. He's challenging the way we naturally think. We naturally think. I put in, there's 5% change, then there's going to be 5% fruit, 5% growth.

That's not what Jesus says. That one-to-one principle, 1% growth leads to 1% more fruitfulness, that's the fairness principle. But God doesn't play fair.

[14 : 37] Usually we utter that as a complaint. Here it's a really good thing. God doesn't play fair. That's the whole point of grace. Grace isn't fair. It's unmerited favor.

Jesus says that he operates on a 30, 60, 100 principle. 30-fold, 60-fold, 100-fold growth. You sow a seed, and it produces this insane bumper crop. This would have been an incredible bumper crop by the standards of, well, by the standards of any day, really. What Jesus is saying is, what does 1% growth produce when God is at work, when his grace is at work? It produces 3,000%, 6,000%, 10,000% more fruitfulness. Is that because we are that great at growing and improving?

No. Not at all. All we can expect is the 1% change. God steps in, and he does big things. 30, 60, to 100 times what's so.

[15 : 47] It's not because we are so good. It's not because we are so powerful. We've got nothing to brag about here. Our only boast is in the kind of God who gives super abundant grace.

He is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think. His heart, God's heart, is to save you from more than you expected.

Sometimes when we look at our lives and we see, well, where is this happening? It feels like God is doing nothing. And typically, as I'm counseling people like that, it's God is doing something. The problem is, we underestimate how much he has to save us from.

He is doing a far deeper work and a far more powerful work in you than you can imagine. His aim is to produce far more fruit than you think possible when you begin to hear and obey him.

That is the first attitude of a maturing person. It is this confidence. A maturing person expects God to give super abundant grace. Now, there's a second attitude that Jesus adds to this.

[16 : 59] It shows up in verses 21 and 22. A maturing person expects God to reveal what is now hidden. A maturing person expects God to reveal what is now hidden.

Here's what Jesus says. Is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket or under a bed and not on a stand? For nothing is hidden except to be made manifest.

Nor is anything secret except to come to light. Now, in other places in Jesus' teaching, he uses this illustration to talk about how God reveals the secrets of men's hearts.

That everything in your heart will one day be brought out into the open exposed. All the things you've done in secret that you thought were covered up well were brought out into the light. That God's judgment penetrates everything.

He sees all things and brings it into account. But here, Jesus is talking about something different. Because the context is he's talking about the word. He's talking about a kingdom that is secret but is meant to be revealed.

[18 : 10] I often find people frustrated that there's so much about Jesus Christ that they don't know. So much of God's word they don't understand. So much of life that they can't seem to work out.

They want maturity. And they want it now. Why can't I have it now? And if that's you, I first want to affirm there is something good in that desire. You know, that's better than just being uncaring, unconcerned.

Which is the first kind of soil. You don't receive the word. It goes in one ear and out the other. It's the same desire that Jesus' disciples had. They want very much to understand who Jesus is, what he had come to do.

And Jesus gives these words to his disciples to assure them that he intends to reveal everything in his timing. All that is hidden will be revealed.

We'll understand it better by and by. It is just as the apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2 when he says, as it is written, what no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him.

[19 : 25] These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. This is what I've found as I have, over the course of many years, slowly matured in my faith.

What I've found is that over time, in fact, many of my questions have become answered. Now, more come up, too, so I'm looking forward to those new questions being answered as well.

But many questions become answered, doubts are addressed, in due time, if I am patient. Many things about God that I did not look for, questions I didn't even think to ask, things that were important but were hidden from me become revealed.

There are things about God that I know now and that are deeply important. They are badly needed in my soul, and 10 years ago, they weren't even on my radar screen. I didn't even have categories of thought.

The heart of man has not imagined these things. Things that make God seem far better than I ever thought. Wisdom for life, wisdom for relationships, that is beyond my grasp.

[20 : 40] A maturing person expects God to reveal what is now hidden. That is the way his kingdom worked in Jesus' day, and that is the way it works now. And then Jesus continues with a third attitude in verses 23 through 25.

This is, the attitude here is that a maturing person expects God to reward only the attentive. A maturing person expects God to reward only the attentive.

Here's how Jesus illustrates this principle. He begins in verse 23 by saying, If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear. And he said to them, Pay attention to what you hear.

With the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you. For to the one who has, more will be given. And from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.

Now verse 23 is the single most common refrain that Jesus uses throughout the four Gospels and in the book of Revelation. You can do, if you doubt that, do a search for that phrase, let him hear.

[21 : 50] If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear. He uses that over and over and over again. It's one of his favorite lines. And if it's one of Jesus' favorite lines, then perhaps it ought to be one of ours as well.

One we ought to take to heart. Jesus is saying that not everyone sitting here this morning has ears to hear.

Not everyone sitting here this morning has ears to hear. And I've discovered this to be true. I've sometimes had conversations with people. I'll preach a sermon, and then a conversation with somebody afterwards and they're like, oh, you know, what do you take away?

What do you learn? And their response is, well, I just learned that God's happy if I'm just a good person. It's like, my sermon had nothing to do with that. What is it? But we hear what we want to hear.

Any of you who's ever worked in customer service knows that. People hear what they want to hear. They don't always have ears to hear what you say, especially if they're in the drive-through, right? I mean, no one has ears to hear the drive-through speaker.

[22 : 49] But so many of us are listening to God through a drive-through speaker. We don't have ears to hear. We don't have the heart that is able to receive what God says. Remember, there are three kinds of bad soil in the parable of the four soils.

There are people who immediately discard the word. There are people who hear it but quickly lose it again. Not everyone is attentive to what God is saying. not everyone takes it in, holds it in their heart, keeps it there, and lives out of it.

The reason Jesus used the word the measure you use is this. Do we come to God's word with a five-gallon bucket wanting to receive as much as we can and hold it?

Or do we come to God's word with a teaspoon? I only expect this much. Oh, that's it. Okay, I'm done. What kind of measure are you using? What kind of measure do you prepare yourself to use on Sunday morning when you come here?

What kind of measure do you use when you open the Bible? What measure do you use when someone else is speaking to you about Jesus Christ and about the church?

[24 : 00] With the measure you use, it will be measured to you. If you are not attentive, Jesus says, even what you have will be taken away. Even what little knowledge you do have, you're going to lose.

And again, I've seen this happen to people who grow up in church, who gain some knowledge, who can recite Bible facts, who can even communicate the gospel, who know truths, but they're not attentive.

What happens over the course of their life is they grow bored and distracted by the sermons. They grow uninterested, dissatisfied with the Bible. It's just, nah, it's just not enough. There's got to be more exciting things out there than the scriptures.

scriptures. Slowly, they forget whatever little knowledge they did have. With each passing year you talk to them, they seem to remember and know less and less, have less and less of mindset

informed by God, less and less of a kingdom mindset and less and less maturity.

From BK, as he's been preaching through Romans chapter one, we see Paul talk about that same sort of corruption when he says, although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their foolish hearts were darkened.

[25 : 19] In time, if you don't have ears to hear, God gives you over to your ignorance. A tablespoon becomes a teaspoon, becomes a quarter teaspoon, becomes nothing at all.

If you measure God's word as unworthy of your attention, whatever worth you used to find it is going to be lost. But for those who are deeply attentive to God, who tremble at his word, who show up at the five-gallon bucket, who say, Lord, I need to know you.

I need wisdom for life. I need help with my relationships. There's so much, I don't know, there's so many things I see that I'm not living the way you've called me to and I want to learn and I want to grow and I'm hungry for more.

And sometimes my heart is dull and hard and I don't like that about myself, Lord God, and I want to come with the big measure. Jesus says, still more will be added to you.

That is a promise. He adds to what, we may have only a little, but if our measure is big, God gives us so much more. He gives us maturity. Jesus says in Mark chapter 4, verse 24 here, that this wisdom and knowledge will be measured to you and still more will be added to you.

[26 : 43] More will be given. And that too is in line with what Paul writes in 1 Corinthians chapter 2. We've received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit who's from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.

God gives freely. God gives generously. If anyone asks for wisdom, he gives generously to all without finding fault. If you have ears to hear.

A maturing person expects God to reward only the attentive. A fourth attitude Jesus has for us in verses 26 through 29.

A maturing person expects God to grow his people with patience. A maturing person expects God to grow his people with patience. Here's the parable Jesus tells.

The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows.

[27 : 51] He knows not how. The earth produces by itself first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle because the harvest has come.

Remember that Jesus is speaking to his disciples whose attitude, Luke in his gospel says, their attitude is that they suppose that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately.

They wanted it right now, right away, on earth as it is in heaven, now. Not a bad desire, but that was their expectation that Jesus was going to overthrow their Roman oppressors, set everything up.

They expected him to make all the Jewish people holy again right away. And Jesus tells them that's not how this is going to play out. The kingdom of God is not going to come like that.

His word, his gospel message, is like a seed that is planted in the ground. And over time, the seed sprouts and grows gradually, bit by bit, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear.

[29 : 05] Now, think about what that's like as a farmer. What if you had the expectation that you put the seed in the ground of the instant you do, giant stock of grain? What's it going to be like to put that seed in the ground and you watch and nothing happens?

After a few hours, you start getting discouraged. So you go home and you go to sleep. And you get up the next morning, it still seems to be there. You go to sleep again and you get up the next morning. He sleeps and rises night and day, but the seed sprouts and grows.

He knows not how. So what does he do? You just go to sleep and you get up the next day and you keep showing up. The seed's in the right place, the soil's in the right place and you rest and you wait and God makes it grow.

Again, Apostle Paul had the same mindset. Someone who knew Jesus well. In 1 Corinthians 3, he says, I planted. Apollo swattered.

Another one of his fellow workers. But God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. This is not something that we have direct and total control over.

[30 : 32] Paul did not have total control over the maturity of the Corinthian church. and if you doubt that, read the letter. 1 Corinthians, 1 Corinthians, he did not have a lot of control over the maturity of

the people that, you know, whatever hair he had in his head, he was pulling them out as he saw the massive amount of immaturity in this church.

Apollos didn't have any control over it either. We want total control. We want growth and change and maturity right now, right away.

Don't you? You want to be mature. And if you aren't sure about yourself, you sure want your spouse to be mature. You want your kids to be mature already.

Come on. You wish the people sitting next to you at church would just grow up already. Maybe you want your pastor to grow up already. You can't make it happen.

You cannot make it happen. Sometimes we try, don't we? We badger ourselves and badger each other into maturity.

[31 : 42] And what we are like is like a farmer who takes that seed and is like, grow up already and just tries to yank a stalk out of there and just squeeze it so that they'll get an ear of grain out of that seed. That's something only God can do.

You are not the Holy Spirit. You are not the Savior. God gives the growth. You may have noticed that God takes longer than you wish He would.

Perhaps in another sermon, I'll talk about that. there actually are reasons sometimes why God does not produce maturity as fast as we wish He would or in the way that He wished He would.

We want that quick, immediate maturity and there are reasons that God doesn't give it that the Bible gives. But perhaps for now it's suffice to say this. God has a lot more patience than you do.

God is more patient with you than you are. God is more patient with your spouse than you are. God is more patient with your children than you are. God is more patient with your fellow churchgoers than you are.

[32 : 57] We serve a God who not only puts up with unfaithfulness in a way that we never would but He loves His people through it year after year after year after year and forgives and shows up and gives chance after chance.

That's something we just can't do. Forgiveness is so much harder for us. God instructs us to be like Him. Be holy as I am holy.

Be like your Father. He instructs us to be patient with one another when we speak even when we correct each other. In 1 Thessalonians 5.14 this is the counselor's verse right here.

Paul writes we urge you brothers admonish the idle encourage the faint hearted help the weak be patient with them all.

We are patient with ourselves and with one another because we are waiting on the Lord who gives growth. sometimes we see His patience and we think it means abandonment.

[34 : 07] God isn't doing anything. God's given up on me. God's given up on the other person. He's not around. He's not here. God has not abandoned us. He's patient. Remember what Jesus says in Mark 4 verse 29 again.

Jesus says this because our temptation is to think that God isn't doing anything. That His patience means God's never going to show up. In verse 29 He says when the grain is ripe that once He puts in the sickle because the harvest has come.

God fully intends to produce a harvest in His time. And when that time comes it will come. God's judgment is coming.

God will set all things right. God's work will be finished in His way, in His time, in you, in our church, in the world. God's judgment is coming.

A fifth and final attitude is found in Mark chapter 4 verses 30 and 32. 30 through 32. It's this, a maturing person expects God to make big things from small beginnings.

[35 : 14] A maturing person expects God to make big things from small beginnings. There is a wonderfully encouraging parable that Jesus tells us in these verses. With what can we compare the kingdom of God?

What parable shall we use for it? It is like a grain of mustard seed which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth.

Yet, when it is sown, it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.

Look, you've been to a grocery store, you know how small a mustard seed is. You know, you've got that little container that has like 5,000 of them inside of it, right?

You'd hate to accidentally spill it all over the floor. You'd never find all of them. They're so small. Funny thing is, you put it in the soil, if it's the right variety of mustard plant and the soil conditions are right, that little seed can grow taller than you.

[36 : 28] It would certainly be the tallest garden plant that Jesus hears would grow in their little gardens. Jesus is envisioning a plant that is so tall that the birds say, you know what?

Good enough. This is basically a tree for us. Let's put our nest here. That's a big plant. That's a big plant doing big things. which tells us Jesus isn't worried that the seed is small.

Jesus is not worried about small beginnings. He's not like us. We look at small beginnings with a bit of contempt. We tend to scorn them. Those little 5%, that little 5% of obedience that wasn't there before, we get so discouraged by when I counsel people, often one of the reasons they get so hopeless and so discouraged is they look at their life and like last week I was obeying God 0% of the time and now it's 5% and they think they're a failure.

And I'm like, are you kidding me? That's amazing. Praise God. What if next week is 10%? That's awesome. How exciting is this? We dismiss that as pathetic and worthless.

But our Savior, a bruised reed he will not break and a smoldering wick he will not quench. Perhaps you have seen immature new believers, you've seen the way they talk and the way they behave and all the stuff they do and you're like, oh, and you roll your eyes at them.

[38 : 02] That's not what the Lord does. He loves small beginnings. It brings him glory to make big things from small beginnings.

The things that are really hard for you and when you fall through and you do the right thing and it was tough and it doesn't seem like much and you think, man, this is so easy for other people.

This is so hard for me to do what God has called me to do. This is just nothing and you lose in despair. The Lord sees that mustard seed and he says, let me grow it.

Let me turn it into a big plant. Let me turn it into the kind of place that birds could put their nests in. It brings the Lord glory to make big things from small beginnings.

That's the way he works. That's the way he likes to work. He has set up this whole world to honor and glorify himself by taking little things and making them big in such a way that we have no way to boast that we were the big ones.

[39 : 10] We gave the growth. We made big powerful things. We built the towers and monuments in our own life by our own strength, by picking ourselves up our own bootstraps.

That's not the way the Lord works. Consider what the Apostle Paul says to the church in Corinth, 1 Corinthians 1. He talks about their small beginnings. This is a church where people are obsessed with status and who's the big man.

He says this, consider your calling, brothers. Consider what you were like when God called you. Not many of you were wise according to worldly standards. Not many were powerful.

Not many were of noble birth. He's kind of roasting them a little bit here. And he says, God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise.

God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. God chose what is low and despised in the world even things that are not.

[40 : 15] Even people who are nothing. To bring to nothing things that are. So that, why does he do that? So that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

And because of him, you are in Christ Jesus who became to us wisdom from God. Righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

So that, as it is written, let the one who boasts boast in the Lord. Boast in the Lord. What else do you have to boast in?

Not yourself. We don't brag about mustard seeds. What you are is a small beginning, but God is looking forward to taking a small beginning and growing it up.

And God is especially looking forward to the resurrection from the dead when God takes you who are small, whose body was weak and falling apart and decaying, and he makes it great.

[41 : 23] In 1 Corinthians chapter 15, Paul writes this, so it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable. What is raised is imperishable.

It is sown in dishonor. It is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness. It is raised in power. That is God's intent for us.

That is God's intent for everyone who believes in Jesus Christ. For whoever believes in him will not perish, but have everlasting life. The fifth and final attitude, a maturing person expects God to

make big things from small beginnings.

I'm bringing you these words from Jesus Christ so that not only will you start doing what we talked about last week, doing the things that put you in the best place to mature, but so that you will have the right mentality that puts you in the best place to mature.

Because this is the mentality and this is the mind of Jesus Christ. If you have not yet believed in him, if you have not yet been saved from your sins, you have a window of opportunity.

[42 : 52] A window of opportunity to be forgiven, to be made new, to have a mustard seed planted, to grow and mature as a child of God.

This opportunity was won for you by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. Do not neglect, do not spurn what has been offered.

Because only those who believe in him and have ears to hear him will be given eternal life. If that is you, if you have received this, hold true to these attitudes just as you have been taught.

And in time, God will give you the maturity that you are longing for. That's why the apostle Paul writes just, I love Paul because he gets Jesus.

He understands the way he thinks. And he says in Philippians chapter three, let those of us who are mature think this way. And if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.

[44 : 05] Only let us hold true to what we have attained. Our God and our Father, I thank you that you are patient with us, you are working in your time and in your way, you know what we need.

It is we, Lord, who have not been attentive to you. it is we who have neglected your word and disregarded your son, Jesus Christ, and dishonored him.

Would you save us from this? Would you make us people who are attentive to you, who become like Jesus Christ as much as any human being can possibly be, who share your patience, who boast in you alone, who wait for you and have confidence in you?

May we be the kind of people where that spills over into the way that we talk with one another, the way we treat one another, the attitudes we have towards one another.

Lord God, we come to you and ask that you may make us mature in your way, in your time, and give us this confidence and hope that we remember this is who you are, this is the way you think, and this is your intent, so that you may receive all the honor and all the glory.

[45 : 37] Amen.