Growing to Maturity.

Text: (Hebrews 5:12-14)

Introduction:

1- My goal for the ministry is to; **"Present every man complete in Christ"**
  a- It is the exact same goal that Paul had for his ministry in the past, (Col 1:27-29).
  b- It is, as I have preached in the past, Christ in every man. To this end I must labour, there is no other goal, focus for a preacher of the word of God.

2- Immaturity, in-completeness is something we must deal with. Why?
  a- Because immature Christians who refuse to grow up cause problems.
  b- In their personal lives
  c- In their homes and even in the Church family.

3- The preacher exhorts from Gods word, the instruction manual, that as Gods people we must continue to progress from milk to maturity. In fact, failure to move forward makes one a victim rather than victorious.

Transition:

Where are you on the spiritual growth spectrum? The Christian life is one of spiritual growth and progress. – That is the message that Paul gives us in our text.

Discuss:

I- **God demands Growth. Are you up for it?**

A- The spiritual blessings enjoyed in the Christ are not only about spiritual renewal through baptism.
  1- Yes, in baptism you undergo a 'washing of regeneration/and renewal, (Tit 3:5).
  2- In fact the old man is crucified with Christ, (Rom 6:6). From this immersion into Christ we are to walk a new life, (Rom 6:4).
  3- We have become a transformed people therefore the Christian, no matter how old or young in the faith, must grow, progress forward, and mature.

B- In the epistles of the N.T we see this clearly set forth and explicitly commanded.
  1- **II Peter1:5-7.** (For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love).
  2- **II Pet 3:18.** (But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and forever! Amen).
  3- Those who refused to grow were sternly rebuked. Note the text (Hebrews 5:12, 6:1).
  4- Think on this: Whether just a new Christian or one older in the faith, spiritual growth is not an option. Not reserved for a chosen few; but is commanded to all who would desire to see Jesus Christ face to face.

C- Yes you have the choice. We do choose the path that we travel

1- We either choose the wide gate or the narrow gate and both have entrances, one into destruction the other to eternal life. Which are you choosing to walk through?

2- In **Phil 2** Paul encouraged the brethren to,'Work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. To leave behind, forget the behind things and stretch, reach, to press forward to those things ahead. If you and I are to claim the crown of life we must continue to grow and walk faithfully in Christ.

3- What choice are you making as a Christ owned one right now?

II- **Signs of Spiritual Growth.** Are these signs in your life?

A- Lets list a few of the signs mentioned in the New Testament.

1- The first is to be,"Dull of hearing."

a- Brethren, growth requires, demands a whole hearted love for God and His word. This is where the Hebrew Christians failed was it not? They failed to progress in the faith and began to fall behind because they began to lack in a knowledge of the word.

b- (**Acts 17:11**) This shows us the Bereans state of mind with regard to the Word. The Hebrew folks must have had that same attitude at some time but along the way they began to lose it. They regressed into a state of immaturity.

2- The immature have turned back to a diet of milk. (Heb 5.)

a- When the basics of faith and Christianity are understood we must move on to a greater maturity and understanding of Christ. It is imperative to our survival.

b- Must move from the milk bottle to the meat sandwich, .the solid food.

c- So many in the Church work only in the milk of the word and never fully mature and remain as babes when they should be full grown.

3- The immature are unable to discern.

a- Discernment begins with a crucifixion of the flesh and walking in the Spirit. (Gal 5:16-25).

b- Note this term, "By reason of use." We must grow up to be able to discern between good and evil and to do that we must dig deep into Gods word, we must go beyond the first principles so that growth will continue as God expects it to.

4- Then there is the inability to teach others.

a- The natural result of spiritual growth is 'fruit bearing.' One way to bear fruit is in the teaching of the gospel truth to those who are without.

b- We do not have to be a gospel preacher or some great teacher here, but we are obligated to teach it and to make a defence for the hope that is within us, for the faith that we profess.

c- If we are not, through our life and knowledge of Gods word proclaiming, then we are not moving forward unto spiritual maturity.

d- Acts 8:4 ("Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went").

e- (I Pet 3:15-Col 4:3-6). These are the keys to your spiritual growth. Need I ay more?

III- <u>Time for self examination.</u>

A- Are you dull of hearing? How are my study habits? Do I act on Matt 5:6 and "Hunger and thirst after righteousness?" Are you growing in the grace and knowledge of the Christ?

1-Has the word of God lost its appeal to the point that you have fallen back and become spiritually immature as the Hebrew Christians.

B- What is my spiritual diet like lately? Is it milk or meat?

C- What about my ability to discern. Am I dependant upon others to spoon feed me. To tell me what is right and wrong, what is truth and what is error. Or have I grown to the point of being able to discern.

D- Am I able to proclaim my faith and to teach others? Can I share my faith with a lost and dying world? Am I involved in this congregations outreach programme and work, am I attending every worship service and giving my best or am I distracted by involvement in the world.

<u>Conclusion:</u>

1- Brethren, may God give us the grace and commitment needed to continue to grow as we should and must so that we may enjoy His fullest blessings as we move from milk to maturity. Amen.

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