

### **Hebrews 5:11 – 6:3**

**We have much to say about this, and it is difficult to explain, because you have become too lazy to listen. <sup>12</sup> In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the beginning principles of God’s word all over again. You have become people who need milk, not solid food. <sup>13</sup> For everyone who lives on milk is not acquainted with the word of righteousness, because he is still an infant. <sup>14</sup> But solid food is for mature people, who have their senses trained by practice to distinguish between good and evil.**

**Therefore, leaving the beginning discussion of Christ, let us press on toward matters that require greater maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, of faith in God, <sup>2</sup> of the teaching about baptisms, of the laying on of hands, of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. <sup>3</sup> And we will do this, if God permits.**

Dear children of God who have the gift of faith and seek to grow in our faith,

I think everyone would agree that growing up is hard to do. Every person thinks that the time they grew up in was the hardest time ever. We hear the stories from our grandparents, “When I was your age, I walked to school uphill both ways in snow this high.” We have my generation that complains that school was harder when we went. There were books and research, pencil and paper and we didn’t have computers and smartphones that did everything for us. We have today’s generation that complains that parents don’t understand the pressure of balancing work, school and sports. They complain that technology has made everything so much more difficult than the simpler old days.

Growing up is hard to do, but it is something that we all have to do. No matter how much you might want to, there is no way that you can skip growing up and remain a child forever. Sooner or later we are forced to face the reality that we have to grow up no matter how hard it is to do. Today the writer to the Hebrews is talking about growing up in our faith or spiritual lives. There are a lot of parallels between growing up from a child to an adult and growing up in our faith. The writer of our text says that just like a person first learns the basics in life and then grows up to more advanced things, we also should:

#### **Sermon Theme: Grow in God’s Word**

- 1. By learning the basics of God’s Word**
- 2. By regularly moving into deeper parts of God’s Word**

Hebrews is a unique book among the New Testament. Unlike the other books, we aren’t positive who wrote it. There are many ideas and theories, but we usually come back to the same basic statement, the writer to the Hebrews wrote Hebrews. The word Hebrew itself is also a unique word. It is not the name of a city or a specific group of people like many other books. It is more of a description of the heritage of the Jewish people. The word Hebrew means wanderer or traveler. The Jewish people used this word to describe themselves and their past at the same time. The word Hebrew pointed back to the time when God brought them out of Egypt and they wandered in the wilderness. Hebrew was also the way that the Jews might refer to themselves in a world ruled by Romans. With Roman domination had come Christian persecution,

especially in Jerusalem. The people became wanderers, fleeing Jerusalem and other cities to other lands to escape persecution.

The book of Hebrews is written to Jewish converts who know their Old Testament very well. This writer has a vast knowledge of those Old Testament writings and he has also been blessed by the Holy Spirit with the understanding of how those Old Testament Scriptures and Jesus go together. This book of Hebrews is an explanation of who Jesus is as the Savior using the Old Testament prophecies and promises that the people knew so well. It weaves those Old Testament laws and promises together with the way that Jesus fulfilled them all and brought forgiveness and everlasting life to us.

There was only one problem for the writer. He had so much more to say, so much more to explain to the people, but he could not. He saw that these people had a problem. Their growth in God's Word had stopped. They would not understand the deeper things about Jesus. These people are certainly believers, but the writer rebukes them for failing to grow up in faith. **“We have much to say about this, and it is difficult to explain, because you have become too lazy to listen. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the beginning principles of God's word all over again. You have become people who need milk, not solid food.”**

Learning your ABC's and 123's is very important. If you don't get those basic building blocks of education, the rest of your education and the rest of your life is going to be a challenge. But after we learn those basics in Kindergarten or 1st grade, what happens next? We move on to more challenging material. We learn to read, we learn to add and subtract, multiply and divide. We learn to write papers and do advanced math. All of this is because we learned those basic building blocks. What would happen if year after year we would forego any more learning? We wouldn't have to take those hard classes and just stick with the basics? Sooner or later we would lose out on a lot because our learning would not have gotten any deeper.

The writer is not saying that the basics of God's Word are bad or that those who are new in faith are bad. There is a learning curve that the Holy Spirit leads us on as we come to faith in Jesus. You can't expect someone who is new in the faith to know everything the Bible says. We realize as we are doing our instruction classes that we may be dealing with some people who need the milk, the basics of God's teachings. It is important to know those Bible basics as the foundation for further discussion and growth in his Word. The writer is talking about the attitude of our heart.

We should not be happy with just the basics of faith. As Christian people, our attitude seeks to grow in the Word our whole life. We should want to grow past those basics of faith because we want to know more about our God who has done so much for us in Jesus, and we want to learn to live this life to thank Jesus for what he has done. Our prayer should always be that the Holy Spirit does his work and we grow up in faith as we hear and study the Word of God.

These words are a rebuke to people who have the wrong attitude about growing in God's Word. They had stopped growing in the Word of God and they didn't care to grow up past the basics. We see the same attitude all around us today. People want to be spiritual and they want to appear religious and have that feeling of religion, but they don't want to have the burden of actually looking at what the Bible says. Jesus quotes Isaiah, **“These people honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.” (Matthew 15:8)** We see hearts that are far from God when people who call themselves Christians, but they might not even believe in the basics of the Bible or even know the basics of God's Word.

For instance, Why is the Bible's account of creation a problem for people? Isn't it a Bible basic that our God is powerful enough to create the world? Why should there be a conversation about marriage,

whether marriage is needed or not and whether it should be between a man and a woman, or a man and a man? Isn't it a Bible basic that God created man and woman to become one, to be married and to raise a family? Why do so many people believe or think that all religions are equal or good? Isn't it a Bible basic that there is only one true God and salvation is only through Jesus?

When we stop growing in the Word of God, when we stop studying and learning the Word, the devil has an opportunity to lead us into error. The devil is very good at making things sound religious, when they are really leading us away from Jesus. Paul warns of these dangers in Colossians, **“I say this so that no one deceives you with persuasive speech that sounds reasonable.” (Colossians 2:4)**

How about us, are we growing in God's Word, are we moving from the basics to the deeper truths of the Bible? What were your thoughts when you saw the announcement that we will be very soon starting up our Sunday morning Adult Bible Study and Sunday School? Did that go on the calendar? What about our Sunday morning habits? Is it really the pandemic or any other reasons we can come up really the problem why we aren't in Church more or studying God's Word more, or is our sinful nature trying to keep us from the Lord's house and from growing in his Word? Are we looking forward to that extra time digging into God's Word, or is it just too much time to spend at church? Would we rather be at home?

Just as he did for these Jewish converts, the writer says to us. Grow in your knowledge of Christ. Seek out times for worship and Bible Study, take advantage of them and demand more. It is the Holy Spirit who brings us to faith in Jesus. However, after we are in the faith, the Bible tells us that the way we nurture that faith will help us grow up in faith, or it will not. Listen to the promise that is also in these words. **“But solid food is for mature people, who have their senses trained by practice to distinguish between good and evil. Therefore, leaving the beginning discussion of Christ, let us press on toward matters that require greater maturity.”** Searching the Scriptures is not in worthless, As we dig into God's Word, the Holy Spirit will help our faith grow and reveal more to us. We will grow up and be mature in our faith.

If you are a gardener you know your plants need a few things to live. They need sunshine, water and proper nutrients from the ground. You know as a gardener that the more consistent you can make all of these things the better your plants will turn out. You can't water every day for a week then take two weeks off. You can't put the plant in the sunlight for a week and then put it in a dark room for a week. We know the more consistently we can take care of our plants the better those plants will turn out.

It is the same when it comes to our faith. The Holy Spirit can even work on a weak heart like mine that doesn't always want to hear his Word. He can bring the “sunlight” of the Word, the “water” of the Means of Grace and the “nutrients” of the Gospel in Worship and Bible Study to build us up firmly in that Word. He can take that heart and make faith grow so that even an immature sinner like me can grow up in faith. He can make my faith solid so that I can even take a stand on that faith in this world. Paul says, **“The goal is that we would no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, when people use tricks and invent clever ways to lead us astray.” (Ephesians 4:14)**

But we can't stop there. Just like a plant can't grow without regular, sun, water and nutrients, our faith can't grow without regular hearing of God's Word and parking of the Means of Grace. So also the ABC's and 123's are important to know, but we realize that we can't stop there. We need to be lifetime learners. Our faith life is a life-long process as well. When we come to faith, or are confirmed into the faith, these are only the beginning of many steppingstones as we hear and study God's Word. A Christian will want to thank their Savior for his grace and mercy by doing exactly what the writer to the Hebrew says. They will want to grow up in their faith and knowledge of God by learning the basics, but also studying the Scriptures for the deeper things that lead us to see more and more of God's grace and love. Amen.