

Faith, Hope, and Love

Introduction

Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 13

1. This morning I'm going to be discussing the importance of growing up in our faith, hope, and love.
2. What does it mean to grow up; to be mature?
 - A. In today's world, it seems that "growing up" is a dreadful thing. The aging process is normal but people want to avoid it. When one reaches 50, they may say "50 is the new 30."
 - B. Immaturity leads to weakness in adult life – and it will become noticeable in all areas of our life.
 - C. We must not lose our zeal for our life's desire, but we also must "grow up" and strive for maturity.
3. In the first Corinthian letter, Paul speaks of the necessity of the maturity of the church at the end of the thirteenth chapter.
 - A. Paul was teaching about the end of temporary things in the church-spiritual gifts (vs. 8-12)-and the necessity of the permanent things (v. 13).
 - 1) In our individual lives we also have temporary things-immaturity, and we are supposed to grow toward permanent things.
 - 2) Coincidentally, the things that Paul speaks of in regard to the church are also marks of maturity in our personal lives.

Growing in Faith

1. **Faith begins small but grows to full strength over time, with determination. The beginning of faith is knowledge-very basic understandings.**
2. **No one starts out knowing everything about God's will or being a Christian. We discover we are sinners.**

Romans 3:23

- A. **Because of our own sins, we are separated from God.**

Isaiah 59:1-2 Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. But **your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you,** So that He will not hear.

- B. **We begin to understand that we need rescue, and it is available for us.**

Romans 6:23 For **the wages of sin is death,** but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- 1) **The reason to use the word "rescue" is because we cannot find our way, without help the help that only God can offer us.**

Romans 5:6-8

3. **We learn that our hope is found in Jesus.**

1 Peter 1:18-19 knowing that you were not **redeemed** with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but **with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.**

4. **God sent His Son to be our sacrifice (Hebrews 9:22-28).**
5. **We soon understand the undeniable scriptural conclusion that “we must be baptized in Jesus.”**
 - A. **We then conform our lives to the pathway of righteousness.**
Matthew 7:13-14
Romans 12:1-2
6. **We keep on working through the growing pains of our new life and we grow, and these primary understandings grow stronger in our life.**
7. **So, what does it mean to transition from first faith to a mature level of faith?**
 - A. **We increase our knowledge of “right” and “wrong.”**
Hebrews 5:12-14
 - 1) **This includes a diligence of study, seeking to know more and more.**
Romans 10:17
 - B. **We walk in God’s help, with daily purpose. Acknowledging God’s help more every day.**
Romans 10:5-10
 - C. **We seek to live up to our calling, knowing better the price of our redemption**
Romans 5:6-11
 - D. **We have a better grasp on the big picture of sin’s cost and redemption’s price. We conduct ourselves in careful steps of righteousness daily.**
Ephesians 5:6-10, 15-16

Growing in Hope

1. **Our level of hope is an indication of maturity. In the youth of our faith we may hope for things like feeling better about our life**

Matthew 19:16 Now behold, one came and said to Him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"

- A. **Like the rich young ruler, who was looking for validation; perhaps more than direction, he hoped to feel better about his life.**
2. **For some it is being relieved from guilt.**
Acts 2:37
 - A. **The Jews were confronted with wrongdoing and were cut to the heart, their primary goal was relief from the burden of guilt.**
 3. **These basic hopes are to be temporary and they are to be replaced with far greater and deeper hope. We grow and take on a true desire for a better life in Heaven.**
2 Peter 3:10-13
 - A. **It is often difficult for a mature Christian to be satisfied with earthly life.**
 - B. **We look ahead and long for our welcome home.**
Philippians 3:12-15
 4. **We grow beyond the simple need of relief from guilt. We come to understand the beauty of God's will and His direction**
Ephesians 5:8-10
Philippians 4:4-9

Growing in Love

1. There are also elemental principles and mature understandings of love. Love for God can be much like any other love in this life.

A. We can start to love God first like the rocky soil that enthusiastically received the word.

Matthew 13:20-21 But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who **hears the word and immediately receives it with joy**; yet he has no root in himself, **but endures only for a while**. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.

1) If this is our love's only depth, it will fail. We can love God, with only a desire for what He can do for us Like those who had been given food, and they were only seeking more (John 6:25-40).

2) If this is the only motivation for our love, it will fail. If we remain immature, our love for God will be easily extinguished.

a. The winds of doctrine will unsettle us and take us away, as will the pressures of life distract us
Ephesians 4:14
John 6:66

2. Mature love has a more proper understanding. We love God and keep His commandments (John 14:15). He has done so much for us.

3. We choose to love God no matter what we have to go through
1 Peter 1:6-9

4. True love is a choice and it is a commitment (Revelation 2:10).

Conclusion

1. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13:13:

1 Corinthians 13:13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

2. After faith is sight, and hope is realized, love will continue throughout eternity.

A. Also, without love there is no faith and no hope.

1) By combining these two, we will begin to realize the significance of Paul's inspired words.

3. The time to be more grown-up is now-as the world trends away from growing up we need to:

Ephesians 4:15grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—

4. From the beginning principles to a grounded understanding, we can mature and become the servants that God desires.

5. One sign of maturity is accepting responsibility for one's own soul.

A. We must know that we are lost without God and we need to be mature enough to do something about our salvation.

B. We need to seek God in faith. We need to pursue His offer of hope. We need to embrace what His love affords us.

1) We will then be in the right place to grow in faith, hope, and love, as we should.

Invitation

Place

Date

Handwriting practice lines for the 'Place' column, consisting of 20 horizontal lines.

Handwriting practice lines for the 'Date' column, consisting of 20 horizontal lines.

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Richie Thetford, October 2024 (Based on a lesson by T. Sean Sullivan)