Pentecost 12 Hebrews 5:11-6:3
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Grow Up, Christian!
I. A solid foundation is very important.
II. Build on that foundation!

Dear Christian friends,

GROW UP! ACT your age! QUIT BEING a baby!" Did you ever hear that **from your parents** – maybe even MORE than once?

"GROW UP!" is a rebuke often tinged with some **frustration**. As we grow older we MATURE – **at least** we're supposed to. There are things we did as babies JUST BECAUSE we were babies. But as we grew up we STOPPED doing them **because** we weren't babies anymore. Our parents loved us AS BABIES but they didn't want us to STAY babies forever!

The writer to these Hebrew Christians was somewhat frustrated with them. He expected MORE from them. They were still living and acting LIKE BABY Christians. So he basically tells them, "GROW UP, CHRISTIAN!"

Are you stuck in a RUT in your **Christian life** – CONTENT with the way things are? We certainly wouldn't claim to KNOW IT ALL when it **comes to God's Word** but do you feel that you KNOW ENOUGH of it? Do you see daily devotions as a CHORE – church as BORING – Bible class and Sunday School as a WASTE of time? **If so**, then "GROW UP, CHRISTIAN!" These verses show us that 1)a solid foundation is **very important** and 2)we are to build on that foundation.

**I. A solid foundation is very important.**

This writer uses TWO DIFFERENT **pictures** to make his point. **One** is that of a baby growing up. Babies don't eat steak and potatoes. They start with **milk**. That's all they can HANDLE. Then slowly but SURELY they progress to **baby food** – strained peas – mashed potatoes from mom's plate. OVER TIME they keep growing and move on to MORE SOLID food. By the time they're teenagers they can EAT YOU OUT of house and home!

**That picture** is not hard to understand. **In God's Word** there is milk – ***"the beginning discussion of Christ."*** Then there's the ***"solid food"*** – the MORE MEATY **truths** – think of the epistles. Meat takes more chewing **than pudding** but it's SO NOURISHING. That **solid meat** of God's Word helps us grow into strong, HEALTHY – MATURE – RESPONSIBLE Christians.

The writer wanted to talk to these Hebrew Christians about some "MEATIER" truths but they weren't up to it. They were still stuck on **baby food**. Now that's NOT SLAMMING baby food as being **unimportant**. Those basic truths of our Christian faith are VERY IMPORTANT but they're not all **God has for us**. God wants us GROWING in our faith – going from milk to **meat**. Would you like some **strained squash** or a nice steak with some **fresh sweet corn**? Do you need more time to **think about** that? GROW UP, Christian, and enjoy the steak God **has for you** in His Word!

The other picture the **writer uses** is a BUILDING PROJECT. You don't build a house FROM THE TOP DOWN – start with the **attic** and finish with the **basement**. FIRST it's the foundation – a SOLID one that can bear the weight of the building and weather the **storms**. You can't afford to CUT CORNERS with the foundation. Do I use concrete blocks OR **bales of straw**? A solid foundation is SO IMPORTANT.

So there's ***"the foundation of repentance from dead works, of faith in God."*** At THE HEART of our Christian faith is repenting of our sins and trusting in the **triune God** as our Savior God. Before God made us Christians we were ***"dead in sin."*** Physically we were **alive** – spiritually we were **dead**. Ignoring and **defying** God our lives were heading to the DEAD END of hell. So many think a LIFE

WITHOUT GOD is **just fine**. They don't see HOW EMPTY and DEAD it really is or where it's really leading them. God calls us to ***"repent"*** of our sins NOT wallow in them or make excuses for them.

Then God entered our lives with the **good news** of the gospel. Here the basics are SO VERY important. Jesus is not just a GREAT GUY but the very Son of God born a man. Jesus doesn't just give us a HELPING HAND or a second chance. Jesus did everything to save us. Jesus took the place of NOT JUST SOME people but all people **under God's law**. Jesus lived for us that life of **perfect love** and **obedience** that we all owed God. Jesus took the blame for the sins of the whole world and was punished in our place. Jesus sacrificed His innocent life – shed His precious blood – all to pay for **all** our sins **in full**. Jesus rose from the dead – He came out of His grave alive and victorious that first Easter morning. **For Jesus' sake** God has forgiven all our sins. Trusting in Jesus we have eternal life in heaven. There's NO CHRISTIANITY without those **basic** truths!

There's more to the **foundation**. There's Holy Baptism – SO SIMPLE yet so powerful. Through that ***"washing of water and the Word"*** God made us alive in Christ – He washed away all our sins – clothed us with Jesus' holy life – brought us to faith in Jesus – made us His dear children – promised us eternal life.

There's the ***"the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment."*** Trusting in Jesus our souls are going **straight** to heaven when we die. God promises us that **on the Last Day** He will raise our dead bodies back to life and glorified body and soul we will **live forever** with Him. **All** who don't trust in Jesus as their Savior will be condemned to hell's **eternal punishment**. Trusting in Jesus we eagerly look forward to life in that ***"new heaven and new earth."***

We need to be strong in those BASIC truths. **As parents** and as a congregation we recognize that. We have our children baptized. We have Sunday School – our own Christian grade school and high schools so our children **can learn God's Word** every day. We can NEVER outgrow those **basics**!

A solid foundation is **so important** but it's THE START and not the **end**. Can you imagine laying the **foundation** but not finishing the **building**? Can you imagine eating only baby food your whole life? GROW UP, Christian and…

**II. Build on that foundation!**

Picture a **note in the bulletin** reading, "This year in Bible class we will study Jesus – our great high priest ***'in the order of Melchizedek."*** Would that get you coming to Bible class? Would you be thinking, "Can **anything** be MORE BORING than that? Pastor, do something relevant to our **life now** as Christians!"? Would you be thinking, "NO MATTER **how much** Pastor begs – pleads – preaches there's NO WAY **I'm going** to **that** Bible class! Breakfast, here I come!"

When the writer wrote, ***"We have much to say about this"*** he was talking about Jesus as our High Priest ***"in the order of Melchizedek."*** He saw that not as BORING and **irrelevant** but VERY HELPFUL in better understanding Jesus – **helpful** in living and sharing their Christian faith. He might have needed a BETTER TITLE for that class but not a BETTER TOPIC!

The writer was ALL EXCITED. He had a great message to SHARE with them. The PROBLEM was the people! They were CONTENT to stay babies **in their faith**. ***"You have become too lazy to listen."*** IN LOVE he bluntly tells them, "GROW UP!" ***"Let us press on toward matters that require greater maturity."*** They HAD a solid foundation – **now** they needed to BUILD on it.

God wants EACH one of us GROWING ***"in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus"*** – growing for our OWN BENEFIT. Reading and **studying** God's Word we grow stronger in our **faith** – we grow clearer about **God's will** for our lives – grow more confident of **eternal life** in heaven – grow more comforted by God's **promises**. That growth comes ONLY BY USING God's Word not just **on Sundays** but EVERY DAY. "GROW UP, Christian!" means comes to church **every week** – come

to Bible class – **have** those daily devotions at home. CHEW on that "meat" of God's Word – it's GOOD for you!

***"Solid food is for mature people, who have their senses trained by practice to distinguish between good and evil."*** A baby will put **anything** into its mouth. It doesn't know **any better**. A **baby** might think Drano would **taste good**. **Good parents** make sure harmful stuff is **out of reach**. As we grow up we learn to ***"distinguish"*** between food and **poison**.

We live in a world with **so much** JUNK and POISON lying around for us to **"put into our mouths."** GROW UP, Christian! Don't put anything and **everything** into your mind and **soul**. Grow – LEARN God's Word – so you can ***"distinguish between good and evil"*** – truths from lies – right from wrong. JUST BECAUSE you see it on TV or everybody else thinks it's OK **doesn't make** it right. Our culture may say, "YOU DECIDE what's **right for you**" but that's just not true. GOD DECIDES right and wrong – for all people! If I don't know something **is a sin** that doesn't make it OK or LESS DANGEROUS. **If** I think a gun is **unloaded** when it's really loaded that **doesn't make** it SAFE TO PLAY with.

***"By this time you ought to be teachers."*** God wants us growing in His Word also **for the benefit** OF OTHERS. PARENTS, you need to know God's Word so you can teach your children. WHOSE MORALS and **values** and **example** are your children going to follow? Look what our young people are UP AGAINST – drugs, drinking, sexual immorality, gangs, the internet, etc. HOW – WHAT are you going to teach your children if **you yourself** don't know God's Word? Our children need to know their Savior's LOVE and HIS WILL for their lives. They also need to see US LIVING our faith in **our daily lives**.

It's not just **our children** who need to hear God's Word from us. It can be our neighbors – friends – relatives – co-workers, etc. They **may be** worried about their **jobs** and **making ends** meet. They **may be** facing major surgery or a DIAGNOSIS of cancer. They may be thinking about committing suicide – or they're afraid to die – or they're angry at God. DO YOU keep your mouth shut or do you share what **you've learned** from God's Word? We never know when we'll have a GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY to **share Jesus** with someone. We need to be ready. BUILD on that solid foundation **already laid**! KEEP GROWING in God's Word!

***"Therefore, leaving the beginning discussion of Christ, let us press on toward matters that require greater maturity."*** In other words, "GROW UP, Christian!"

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