TITLE: There comes a time to GROW UP!

TEXT: Hebrews 5:7-6:6; 2nd Tim. 2:15

INTRODUCTION: There are certain laws of nature that transcend into our Christianity......

 Growth, the maturing process is a law of nature.... God ordained for it to be that way!

 In any healthy baby that is born, the natural way of things is that, from the moment of birth, that child starts to develop, to mature in the process of life!

 We witness that process going on around us every minute of every day that we exist on this planet.

 God never intended for an infant to stay in infancy all of their life! He created us to be a maturing people.

 This maturing process is a little different for each one of us, but none the less we all experience it.

 We all are going through it.

( Wives here today may be thinking--Pastor, but you don't know my husband!)

 In life in general there are stages of maturity--

 We have infancy--childhood--adolescence, the dreaded teen years--young adulthood--middle age--old age…

 Each stage is a product of the maturing process...

 Each one necessary for our development.

 And if everything goes along as God intended it, all the stages come together, blend together to make up a full life for us here on planet earth.....

 The problem is, sometimes we get stuck in one of the stages of the maturing process...

 And if we do it usually causes problems, not just for ourselves but for those around us as well.....

 Example: I have known men who have went along fine in the early years but ended up getting stuck in adolescence...... You have probably known people who may be 20,30,40 years old but have the maturity of a 14 year old!

 And when this happens it causes problems--Big problems....Especially if you get married and find out that your mate is stuck in perpetual puberty!

 All of us need to be continually moving on to maturity... And not just in the physical and psychological part of our being but even more importantly, within our spiritual lives, our walk with and relationship to the Lord!

 And that is what I want to talk about this morning.

 The importance of our maturing spiritually......

High in the Alps is a monument raised in honor of a faithful guide who perished while ascending a peak to rescue a stranded tourist. Inscribed on that memorial stone are these words: HE DIED CLIMBING. A maturing, growing Christian should have the same kind of attitude, right up to the end of life. HE DIED CLIMBING

 First let us look at a positive example of spiritual maturing----

**Hebr 5:7 (NIV) During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.**

**8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered**

**9 and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him**

**10 and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.**

 Paul starts out here by using Jesus as an example, that as Christians, all of us need to follow.

In the physical, Jesus went through the maturing process! He started out in infancy then matured through childhood, then through adolescence, then into young adulthood... His life was cut short before he reached middle or old age.....

 But spiritually Jesus matured through all the stages of maturity---He matured, Scripture says, to perfection!

**and once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him .**

 We see the spiritual maturity of Jesus in that:

 **He offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.**

**8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered**

 Two key factors in obtaining maturity whether it is in the physical or in the spiritual is submission and obedience!

 Show me a teenager who is not submissive or obedient to their parents and I will show you an immature teen...

 Show me a Christian who is neither submissive nor obedient to God and I will show you an immature Christian!

Notice who it says that Jesus became the source of **eternal salvation** for?

 **He became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him .**

(Pick up on the implications of that statement)

He is evidently not the source of eternal salvation for those who do not obey Him!

 Do you see the importance of obedience in our lives?

 Paul Goes on to say this to those he is talking to:

**11 We have much to say about this,**

(What is the "This" that Paul has much to say about?--about prayers and petitions made with tears that reach the very throne of God--about reverent submission and obedience to God)

 **but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn.**

**12 In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!**

**13 Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness.**

**14 But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.**

What Paul was addressing was, there were Christians within the Church of the day who had been Christians for quite some time..(**In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers**

 They had been Christians long enough that they should be able to teach others!

But they had not matured in their relationship with God.

He says: **you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!**

 They were stuck in "Spiritual infancy" or "Spiritual adolescence", if you will**.**

 God's desire for them, and for us, is to grow in our relationship with Him so that we can handle, not just handle, but absorb and distribute the deeper things of God!

 To move beyond the elementary teaching of Christ and move into maturity in the faith!

 To be able to manifest in our lives things such as a fruitful prayer life.

 To learn the mature things of the faith such as submission to the Lord and obedience to Him.

 He wants for us to learn what the righteousness of God is all about!

 How to attain that Righteousness in our life!

 To, in fact, become Holy just as He is Holy!

 To reach Spiritual adulthood, spiritual maturity and be able to teach others to do the same!

 But he says, you can't handle the real meat of the Gospel! The only thing that you are able to digest is milk, baby food....

and----

**Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness.**

 God’s desire is for us to move on from salvation and to learn how to live righteous lives…

**6:1 Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God,**

**2 instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.**

Therefore, because of these things, let us leave the elementary teaching about Christ and move on to maturity!

 What are the elementary teachings about Christ that we are to move on from?

 First, notice it doesn't say to forget about the elementary teachings about Christ, but it says to move on from them!

 Get them established in our life, make them a part of our life and then move on from there!

 These elementary teaching are described as a foundation! What the Lord has laid for us to build upon!

 Notice what is described as elementary or foundational teachings in our relationship with the Lord---

 **Repentance from acts that lead to death!**

 Simply, our need to turn away from sin. To stop living lives that our controlled by our sin nature and start living being directed and guided by the Holy Spirit!

 **Our Faith in God is foundational!** OK, we believe!

 We have confessed with our mouth that Jesus is Lord and we have believed in our hearts that God has raised Him from the dead--we have become saved through that faith so let’s go on from there and not keep having to go back and go over that same ground again and again!

 **Things such as baptism are foundational!** It is laid and then we build upon it! We don't have to do it over and over!

 **Things such as the laying on of hands**, being used as instruments of Gods power here on earth is a foundational truth for the believer and we need to move on and build upon that foundation that has already been laid... To go out, in faith believing, that God will work His might and power through usas we are submissive and obedient to doing His will!

 **The resurrection is foundational**.... Jesus rose from the dead and because He did, those who are faithful to Him, will one day also! That foundation has been laid! It's truth is established so let us build upon it and move on!

 **Eternal Judgment is a foundation that has already been laid!** We will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ!

 Unrepentant sinners, the disobedient will be cast into hell!

 We who have washed our robes in the blood of Christ and are living sanctified lives through Him will enter into eternity with Him! It is a foundational truth, something that we need to build upon!

 We need to leave these things, they have already been established, or should have already been established! We need to leave them where they are--as a foundation under us, and move on!

 Start Building upon that foundation!

**3 And God permitting, we will do so.**

Then the apostle comes in with a warning!

**4 It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit,**

**5 who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age,**

**6 if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.**

I believe that the reason that these particular verses are placed here is because this is a danger that we may face if we stop maturing, stop moving onward and upward in our relationship with God!

Just who is Scripture referring to here?

**Those who have once been enlightened**

Those who have been illuminated with the saving message of the Gospel.

**Those who have tasted the heavenly gift!**

To taste here means to either perceive the flavor of something or partake of it.

 Those who either have received or at the least perceived the heavenly gift—

 Jesus is the Heavenly Gift!

**Those who have shared in the Holy Spirit.**

3353 metochos {met'-okh-os}

1) sharing in, partaking

2) a partner (in a work, office, dignity)

Those who have actually partaken of the Holy Spirit**!**

**5 who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age.**

Again, those who have either perceived or experienced the goodness of God’s Word and the powers that God has to manifest within the Church through the activity of the Holy Spirit in their lives...

 Who does it sound like this is talking about?

 The believer!!!

 Now listen to the warning!!!

**6 if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.**

**It is impossible----if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance.**

Notice it doesn't say, It is impossible, if they fall away, to be forgiven, or to be saved or anything of the like**!**

It says that if they fall away that it is impossible for them to be brought back to repentance!

The phrase "to fall away"

 **3895 parapipto {par-ap-ip'-to}**

**2) to slip aside**

**2a) to deviate from the right path, turn aside, wander**

**2b) to error**

**2c) to fall away (from the true faith): from worship of Jehovah**

This falling away that is spoken of here is total apostasy! A total turning away from God! Falling away from Christianity!

 To once have personally experience the saving grace of God in one’s life and then totally and completely turn away from it!

 It doesn't say that this has ever happened, it just indicates that it is possible! For if it were not possible then there would be no purpose for the warning being here in the first place!

 But again, it is important that we see that it isn't saying that if someone falls away that they can't be forgiven or can't be saved!

 It just says that it is impossible for them to be brought back to repentance!

 I believe that this is speaking of the kind of repentance that is necessary for such a person to leave the apathetic condition into which they have fallen... He cannot bring "himself" back to repentance!

 But through God all things are possible!

 The warning is simply to stress the importance for us to be moving onward and upward in the faith! To be a spiritually maturing people....

 To lay the foundation of the faith and then build upon that foundation!

 For us to move on from milk and start feeding on meat!

 To move on from having to be fed to being able to feed ourselves!

**2Tim 2:15 (NIV) Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.**

Babies aren't workmen! Only Men of God, Women of God become workmen! Workmen who can go out and build the Kingdom that God has ordained for us to build---His Kingdom!

 If anyone may be worrying this morning.....

Just the fact that you are here this morning says that you haven't fallen away.

 But are you doing what is necessary for that never to be even a remote possibility?

 Are you striving to grow?

 Is it your desire to mature?

 To become a workman? Are you doing your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

 Is it your desire to grow up and be all that God has for you to be?

 Then simply allow God to build upon the foundation that has He has already laid for you to build upon....

 It Simply comes down to spending time with God, diligently seeking Him, living lives of submission of and obedience to His will, living our lives asking ourselves the question WWJD and then doing it!

Don’t allow yourself to get stuck in any of the stages of maturity. In either your physical or spiritual lives.

 But strive to grow up….

To **become a workman** for God **who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.**