

Sunday Morning Message

November 8, 2015

*Building Upon the Basics*

Topic – Christian Maturity

Text – Hebrews 5:12 – 14; 6:1 - 3

Congregational Reading – Hebrews 6:1 - 3

## **Introduction**

The theme for our church for this year has been “Back to the Basics”, and our theme verses are Revelation 2:4 & 5:

*"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."*

(Revelation 2:4-5)

I believe that God directed our church through this theme to get back to doing the things that are the basic things or **foundational practices** of the Christian life.

Things like:

1 Being faithful to the church services:

*"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." (Hebrews 10:23-25)*

2 Obeying the Great Commission:

*"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."*

(Matthew 28:18-20)

*"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."*

(Mark 16:15)

*"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)*

These verses emphasize the importance of winning souls, baptizing converts, and discipling believers.

### 3 Daily Walking with God:

This year we emphasized the need to be in our Bibles every day, and to daily spend time in prayer.

### 4 Serving God

This year we stressed that each believer needs to find their specific place of service within the Body of Christ, which for us right now is this local church.

We also spend a lot of time emphasizing the basic, **foundational doctrines** of the Christian faith: what we sometimes call "the fundamentals", which include things like:

#### 1 Salvation through faith in Christ alone, apart from any good works:

*"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9)*

#### 2 Eternal Security:

*"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:" (Philippians 1:6)*

*"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." (John 10:28-29)*

#### 3 Inspiration and Inerrancy of Scripture:

*"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Timothy 3:16-17)*

These are just a few of the fundamental doctrines that we hold dear and must continue to emphasize as we grow.

## Transition

Today, we will learn that God wants us to take these basic, foundational truths and practices, and build upon them. He doesn't want us to forget about them altogether, but he wants us to take them with us as we grow up, or mature, in Christ.

Note – The Book of Hebrews was written to Hebrew believers in the first century who probably lived in or nearby the city of Jerusalem, which was the very center of Judaism. These Jewish Christians had converted to Christ but were constantly under the pressure and temptation to go back to their old religion of sacrifices and ceremonies.

Paul was stressing to these baby Christians that what they had in Christianity was superior, or *better*, to what the unsaved Jew had.

In chapter five, Paul is explaining to these Jewish Christians that their great High Priest, Christ, was better than the Old Testament, Levitical priest. Christ was sinless and pure, and His sacrifice on the cross of Calvary provided an eternal salvation for all those who placed their faith in Him. By contrast, the Old Testament priest down at the temple was a mere sinful man whose many sacrifices of bulls and goats and lambs could never take away sin; they merely point to and pictured Christ.

In the middle of this discussion, Paul explains that Christ was in fact their true High Priest, but not from the family of Aaron or from the tribe of Levi. Notice verse 10. He was after a special order of priests that preceded the order of priests that were currently serving in Judaism – the order of Melchisedec.

Paul wants to explain who this mysterious priest was who the Old Testament scriptures tell so little about, but the problem was, he knew that his readers were not mature enough to understand the discussion. They were babes.

Read Hebrews 5:12 – 14; 6:1 – 3

There are six foundational truths mentioned in this passage:

- 1 Repentance from dead works
- 2 Faith toward God
- 3 Baptism
- 4 Laying on of hands (probably a reference to receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:15 – 17))

5 Resurrection

6 Eternal judgment

The Bible sometimes refers to the basic, foundational doctrines of the Christian faith as “the milk of the word”.

Babies need milk to survive. Their physical systems are not mature enough to handle anything else.

*“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:”* (1 Peter 2:2)

As babies grow, however, their diets will have to change. Milk alone will not be enough for them to continue to grow and be healthy.

In the same way, baby Christians, need to move beyond the spiritual milk of the basic, foundational truths. I may like a cold, glass of milk every now and then, but I can’t survive on milk.

Paul rebuked the church at Corinth for being spiritual babies:

*“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?”* (1 Corinthians 3:1-3)

In our text in Hebrews 5 and 6, Paul also is admonishing these Hebrew believers to grow up and mature in their faith.

Note – He doesn’t want them to forsake the foundational truths; just build upon them.

Illustration – In mathematics, we learn very early that  $2 + 2 = 4$ . Addition is basic. As we advance in math, we never leave  $2 + 2 = 4$ , we take it with us and build upon it. In Algebra and Geometry we are still using the basics, but we have built upon them.

In the same way, God wants us to take the basic, foundational truths and practices of the Christian faith, and build upon them.

How are we going to do this? How are we going to build upon the basics of our Bible doctrine?

We need to mature. We need to advance. We need to grow up.

Peter warned immature believers that would not be able to stand strong when temptations, trials and persecutions came:

*"Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen."* (2 Peter 3:17-18)

We need to start taking in a healthy diet of Bible doctrine so that we will have the strength that we need to stand strong in these last days.

## **Conclusion**

Practical Steps to Christian Maturity:

### **1 Initiate and Enroll** in Discipleship

Our discipleship program will ground you in the basic truths. Discipleship will teach you the fundamentals if you haven't already learned them, but it will also refresh and re-emphasize them if you have gotten away from them.

Illustrate – In Bible college, they wanted us to learn advance English grammar and composition, but many of us needed a refresher course in the basics.

### **2 Increase and Intensify** - Continue Studying the Scriptures Beyond Discipleship

*"Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more."* (1 Thessalonians 4:1)

*"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."* (2 Timothy 2:15)

Become a student of the Bible.

Be faithful to all of the church services. We study the Bible in an in-depth, yet practical way.

God has convicted me and convinced me that my role in His kingdom is to be a Bible teacher. I am committing the rest of my life to teaching the Bible. My Sunday School class will be study of a verse – by – verse study of a book of the Bible. Sunday evenings and Wednesday nights, we will be studying a Book of the Bible.

You need to come to all of these services in addition to studying the Bible on your own.

3 **Insert and Ingrain** - Put into practice what you learn.

“God will never educate you above your level of obedience.”

We learn the Bible so that we can use it to be a blessing to others. We also learn the Bible so that we can be a source of strength to others who are weak.

Illustrate – Pastor and Mrs. Wedemeyer – with all of the health issues that he has dealt with in these past years: a debilitating stroke; a spider bite that became infected and almost resulted in the amputation of his leg; within the last month he discovered that he had a mass behind his stomach, which was confirmed to be a type of lymphoma; and in the last week, incredibly, he learned that he had a heart attack and had to have 3 stents put in one of his arteries. Through all of this he and his wife Kim have been like the Rock of Gibraltar: solid and strong. They have done nothing but praise God through it all, and their strength has been a source of strength to many others.

4 **Instruct and Invest** - Teach Others what you learn

*"Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (2 Timothy 2:1-2)*

The best way for you to grow, besides just putting into practice what you learn, is to teach what you learn to others. You will learn more in the process, and you will also grow stronger as you invest your energy into other people.

Illustrate - Moms and Dads (and Grandparents) need to teach their children; Older men and women need to mentor the younger men and women. Sunday School, Bus Ministry, Kid's Club, Discipleship, Soul Winning, Christian Academy – these are all great opportunities to invest in others by instructing them from the Word of God.

Paul told these immature Hebrew believers that needed to grow up; they needed to mature in the Lord. The Lord wants to mature each of us as well. The Christian life is a life of continuous growth. Don't stay in your spiritual diapers. Grow up into your "big boy" pants, and use what you learn for the Lord.