

God Causes Growth When We Are Connected To The Head, Jesus

by Ian Robson

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being connected to Jesus through the Holy Spirit, focusing on the need for personal growth, nourishment from God's Word, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It calls for repentance, seeking the Holy Spirit's empowerment, and being saved from the perversity of the world by staying connected to Jesus.

Scripture: Acts 2:38, Ephesians 4:11, 1 Corinthians 3:6, Colossians 2:18, John 5:39, Matthew 11:28

Topics: "Connection to Jesus", "Empowerment of the Holy Spirit"

Description

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Transcript

As we announced in the last couple of weeks that we want to celebrate this month as we complete 43 years as a church, 43 years ago the church was born, not planted or established, it was born through the Holy Spirit and that's been our testimony and that's how the Lord has led us on through His Spirit and we give Him thanks and praise for all His mercies to us and all that we have received, particularly for revealing Himself to us. The Holy Spirit reveals Jesus to us and I hope that has been your experience since you have come into this church, become part of this church. And as we announce that today, as we come to the last Sunday of this anniversary month, we had a good time, particularly last week was a tremendous time and Selvam and his team did such a tremendous job, gave us such a blessed time that all that happened and all that we did was so connected with the church.

I'm sure you were blessed and thank you very much brothers and sisters for all that you did last week. Today we said we want to give time to testify, not testify how we came to Christ, not that it can be some other time, and how I got saved and how I repented and how I was born again and all that. And like I mentioned, we want to exclusively hear testimonies of those who have, after coming to this church, have found a connection with Jesus and be connected with Jesus, not to CFC, not to Brother Zag, not to the elders, but to Jesus.

I can testify to that. 43 years ago I found my connection, 50 years ago I think I can say I found my connection with Jesus, but 43 years ago when the Lord immersed us in the Holy Spirit, those bonds were strengthened and established and both Brother Zag and me found our connection with the Lord Jesus stronger and our fellowship with each other, the bonds became stronger. So that's what we want to hear from those who are going to testify, that when you came here and you knew the Lord, I'm sure many of you, and after coming here a lot of things that you never heard before became so real and that really revealed Jesus to you and you found a connection with him, strengthened those bonds.

There are others who came and who didn't know Jesus and I trust that you got connected to Jesus, not to CFC and not to all the good things that we have in the church through the years. So that's, I'm just giving a start and just sharing a few things as to how that can happen, that I don't get connected to most Christians today get connected either to a preacher or to an establishment or to an institution, the church, whatever label that you can put on it, but if we read the Bible we see that what God wants is that we have a connection with the head and that's what I wanted to share a few things with you this morning, that when we are connected to the head, God causes growth. That's the only way that I can grow, not just coming to meetings, that's a good thing, not just reading the Bible, that's a good thing, not just praying and fasting and all these things which are good.

A lot of people do all these things and they don't get connected to Jesus and they have, can end up with what Paul speaks about a form of godliness without the power. That's the danger and we're living in those days, my brothers and sisters, when we can have a form of godliness without the power. So I trust that what we hear this morning, not just what I share with you, but from one another, many brothers and sisters to share their relationship with Jesus after joining this church.

So I want to share with you three important truths that every child of God must know and I trust that many of us know these things, but I just want to refresh. These are things we have heard in the church. I'm not sharing anything new with you and these three things have come to my heart that is so important and the first thing is what I just said, God causes growth.

Not CFC, not a doctrine, you can have the best doctrines, you can have all the truth and thank God that God has given us the truth here. Many things that we never heard before, we have heard here. We thank God for brother Zach for giving a brother like him to us.

God had anointed and given the gift of teaching and many, many truths. I know my own life has been blessed, not just by what he has spoken, but by his life and example and I trust that we have found many others here who through their life and example have connected you to Jesus. I hope that's been your experience and that's what you could testify to.

1 Corinthians chapter 3, 1 Corinthians chapter 3 and I want to read a few verses there in the beginning, right from the beginning. It says, and I brethren, a lot of things we can learn from this church here. We can avoid the pitfalls, the mistakes that they made and learn many things from just this one church and a lot of others also, but I think in regarding to growth and regarding to being connected to the head, we can hear, we can see it from this letter that Paul writes, two letters that he writes to the Corinthian church and he says here in verse 1 of 1 Corinthians 3, and I brethren could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ.

I gave you milk to drink, not solid food, for you were not able to receive it. Indeed, even now you're not yet able, for you're still fleshly. For since there's jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly and are

you not walking like mere men? For when one says, I'm of Paul and another says, I'm of Apollos, are you not mere men? What then is Apollos and what is Paul? Servants through whom you believe, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one.

Now listen to this, verse 6, I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. Now he who plants and he who waters are one, but each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.

For we are God's fellow workers, you are God's field, God's building. Now that's what Paul said to this church, and you read there, you read all that he wrote there to this church, and there were cliques, there were groups there. Some said, I'm of Paul, I'm of Apollos.

Some said, I'm of Cephas, he's the apostle. And there were super spiritual ones who said, I'm of Christ, I have a connection with Christ. I'm sure they're the most carnal of the lot, the people who said, I'm of Christ, I'm not connected to Paul or Apollos or Peter, I'm connected to Christ.

But their lives didn't manifest that. So that's how it was there. And Paul says, you know, who are Paul and Apollos? They are servants.

We are servants. God has given us servants in the church. And unfortunately, people get connected to the servants instead of getting connected to Christ.

It's like a servant who serves you some beautiful meals, and you fall in love with the servant instead of falling in love with the master. And that's unfortunately how it is in Christendom today. Far worse than it was in Paul's time when he wrote to the Corinthian church.

And I trust that we would take care of these things. The first thing that we need to know, my brothers and sisters, God causes growth. You can come to all the meetings of this church, you can believe all the truths, you can hear all the messages, and yet not have grown in all these years.

Ask yourself this morning, have I grown? All that I've heard in this church, and all the truths that I have received, and all the messages I keep listening to, has it connected me to Jesus? Or do I just say that's a good message? I hear a pep talk, but it doesn't help me to get closer to Jesus. I don't enter into a higher dimension of life than I have ever known before. That's what it should be.

Paul wrote to Timothy, he says the goal of all our instruction is love from a pure heart, and all that you hear, if it is not filling your heart with the love of God, love for God, and for the Lord Jesus, and love for one another, then you're just hearing a lot of words. It's better to sit in a classroom and listen to a lot of lessons about various subjects. I'm afraid it can be like that with many of us.

God causes growth, and you need to see whether there has been that growth in your life. Another word I wanted to look at in Colossians chapter 2. Colossians, many times my attention has been, through the years, my attention has been drawn to this word, Colossians chapter 2, and verse 18. Let no one keep defrauding you of your price.

I've got the wrong book here. Yeah, Colossians 2. Let no one keep defrauding you of your price, by delighting in self-abasement, and the worship of angels, and the angels as messengers. Whenever you come across that word, Jesus wrote to the angels of the church, the messengers of the church.

He says, let no one keep defrauding of your price, by delighting in self-abasement, and worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God. If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as do not handle, do not taste, do not touch, which all refer to things destined to perish with us, in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men. These are matters which have to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion, self-made religion, and self-abasement, and severe treatment of the body, but of no value against fleshly indulgence.

And the Holy Spirit says here, let no one defraud you of your price. And what is that price? That I have a connection with Jesus, I have a connection with the head. He says, let no one defraud you of that price and delight in other things.

A lot of people, we find that in Christendom, they delight in many other things, in baptism, in the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and you know, how they have it in their church, and in this preacher, and that preacher. A lot of Christians, a lot of believers today, you know, are guilty of that. They are defrauded of their price, they don't have that connection with Jesus.

The Living Bible, I want to read on, verse 19, it says, they are not connected to Christ, the head to which all of us who are his body are joined, for we are joined together by his strong sinews, and we grow only as we get our nourishment and strength from God. Verse 20, since you died, as it were, with Christ, and this has set you free from following the world's ideas of how to be saved by doing good and obeying various rules, why do you keep right on following them anyway, still bound by such rules? And we can have our own set of rules, we can have rules, CFC rules, and we try to live by that. That doesn't connect us to Jesus.

That doesn't give us nourishment. That gives us a lot of knowledge. And he says, why do you keep right on following them anyway, still bound by such rules? These rules may seem good, for the rules seem good, for rules of this kind require strong devotion and are humiliating and hard on the body, but they have no effect when it comes to conquering a person's evil thoughts and desires.

They only make him proud of no use, you know, in the version we all have, no use against fleshly indulgence. We can have our own set of rules in which we live, and that doesn't give us nourishment. That doesn't cause growth.

It's as we are connected with Jesus. That's what Paul writes to this church. He says, let no one defraud you of your price, to be connected with the head, so that you grow, that you get nourishment from God.

Has that been your experience since you joined this church? That all that you have heard, you don't have a set of rules for yourself and for your family and then try and impose that on others. It doesn't help you to get a lot of knowledge. You become a Pharisee, you become a legalist.

And I'm afraid there's some of us are in that danger, become legalists, Pharisees, always trying to find fault, always looking at the speck, brother's eye or sister's eye. But if we are connected with Jesus, it would be different. And that's what Paul says to this church, let no one defraud you of your price.

We have to be connected with the head, just as all the members of our physical body are connected to the head, so also it must be in our spiritual life. If any one of the members of my body are not connected to the head, they will wither away. There's life in every member in the smallest part of our physical bodies because it's connected to the head.

That's how it is spiritually, my brothers and sisters. Remember this, growth comes from God. If I'm connected with the head, I will grow.

And God has given, the second thing that God has given in the church, His servants who nourish us. Servants, like I said, just like somebody who serves you a good meal. It's to nourish us, not to get us connected to the servant, to connect us to Jesus.

And I trust that that has been your testimony since you've come to this church. And I know that in my 43 years that I have been part of this church and worked together with Brother Zach, I can say before God, my connection is with Jesus. My connection with Brother Zach is through Jesus.

Because there's life. I found a connection in the head and there's life then and life that connects us together, not a doctrine. We may have all the doctrines perfect and correct, that doesn't connect us to each other.

And I thank God that we have, God has unfolded many truths to us, but that has not connected me to Brother Zach, it's connected me to Jesus. That's been my testimony. I can say that before God.

How many of us can say that? That I've been connected to Jesus. I thank God for brothers in the church. I thank God for Brother Zach.

I thank God for the elders. I thank God for many brothers and sisters who are servants of Christ, who nourish me and connect me not to themselves, but connect me to their head. I hope that that would be your testimony this morning.

God has given us in the church his servants who nourish us. So how can we say I'm of Paul, I'm of Paulus, I'm of Peter, or like I said the super spiritual ones, I am of Christ. And so the result of that, there was a lot of divisions, there was cliques, there was strife and jealousy.

And if there's strife and jealousy in our hearts, be assured we're not connected to Jesus. How can it be? If there's strife and jealousy, if I get into competition with somebody else, when I see that God gives grace to somebody who was coming to the church much after me, when I see a younger brother with grace upon his life, I rejoice. He's my brother, she's my sister.

Is that your attitude? Or do you get into competition? There's strife and jealousy. And Paul says, this is your babes, your babies, you still need milk. I can't give you meat to drink, I can't give you strong, solid food.

How is that? Are there many babies in CFC? They still need milk, they can't take solid food in one place. Paul said you should be teachers by now, you should be fathers. And some of us who've been in the church for many years, have we become fathers? Have we become mothers that we can become servants and help nourish others, not leave it to the elders? Impossible for the elders to nourish 400 plus brothers and sisters.

We need many shepherds, we need many fathers in the church. And oh, that's been my prayer, God, raise up shepherds, raise up fathers, young brothers and sisters to be gripped, that you can become one, become a servant that you can nourish others. What I'm just saying to you is in Ephesians 4, if you like, you can turn to it, Ephesians 4, 11 to 16.

It says he gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, Sunday school teachers, youth teams, youth leaders. God has given such in the church. Why, for what purpose? To get into cliques of their own? No, it says for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.

And it's not just few elders who can do that. We need many servants, we need many brothers and sisters who can give themselves, who can be equipped for the work of service, coming to this church and receiving and being part of all the activities and all the ministries in the church. Has it connected you to Jesus? Have you become a servant that you are now able to nourish others? And it goes on to read there, for the equipping of the saints, for the work of service, for the building up of the body of Christ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

As a result, we are no longer to be children tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness and deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up, there's that word again, we are to grow up in all aspects into him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. There it is so plain, my brothers and sisters.

Is that our experience? Can we testify to that this morning, that I'm growing, I'm growing in love? It says, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. That is the characteristic of the body of Christ. That's how it was in the early church.

They said, no, they didn't speak about all the, you know, the wonderful truths they had and what God revealed to them. They said, behold how these Christians love one another. But somebody says that today, they said, behold how these Christians hate one another.

Can we as CFC be different, my brothers and sisters? Can we really seek God for a restoration of what was said in the first century, behold how these Christians love one another. Behold how these people in CFC love one another. That should be the testimony.

I hope you're on that path. I hope you don't have your own little clique of those who speak your language, those who have your culture, those who are, you know, intelligently, educationally on your level. I hope that's not so.

But I'm afraid that spirit is creeping in. And in the second generation that we have already entered into, and by the time of the third generation, we see many, many movements of God have just gone down the drain. God forbid that it should have ever happened.

I hope God will raise up servants in this church, servants, those who are willing to clean the toilets. Like we said, to be an elder, to be a shepherd, you don't have to be an elder. You know, we just need to know those who have responsibility.

But you can be an elder without even being part of the elders here. You can be a shepherd. What is an elder? Shepherd.

You can shepherd others. You can nourish others. You can help them to be connected to Jesus.

Oh, I really say this is a burden on my heart that God would raise up in CFC Bangalore shepherds, servants, those who are willing to clean the toilets. Join us in cleaning up the mess in many people's lives. We need so much.

The work is so much sometimes, like it says in Nehemiah's time, that the burden bearers lose. They get tired out. And so may God really raise up shepherds and servants to nourish the brothers and sisters.

Finally, the third thing I wanted to see, that not only God causes growth, and not only that we get that growth to be connected to Jesus, but he gives us the Holy Spirit to be upon us, to be in us. Why? To distinguish us from all the other people. Not that we think we are the perfect church, that we are the bride.

God forbid that we ever think so. We want to be part of the bride. And God has given us the Holy Spirit to make us part of his bride.

And that has been what we have emphasized through the years. This church, like I said in the beginning, was born of the Holy Spirit, not Brother Zach's bright idea. I can testify to that.

We never sat down together and said, let's start another church. We didn't know what to do. We threw up our hands and said, Lord, we're out of the denomination.

Thank God that we got flushed out from there. But then we were cast on the Lord and we sought God. We said, when others came to us, we said, no, you don't have to leave.

Just go back there. They said, how can we go back there? And we said, okay, we're going to meet for prayer. For many weeks, we met together and sought the Lord.

And the church that was born in 16 Dacosta Square 43 years ago was born of the Holy Spirit. We didn't plan to be a church, but that's how it was. And God gave us an encouraging word.

Behold, I put before you a wide open door which no man can shut. And we can see the result of that 43 years later. But as we get older, we need those who are younger to have the same zeal, to have the same fire in their hearts.

And the only way, my dear brothers and sisters, you can have that is to have the Holy Spirit, to be immersed in the Holy Spirit. I'm so sad that many people I talk to and ask them, I never fail to ask them, have you received the baptism in the Holy Spirit? Very few have that assurance that, yes, I know I have been baptized. I've been immersed in the Holy Spirit.

Many others say, I've asked, nothing happened. Others say, well, and I ask them, they say five years there in the church, 12 years. I said, you've never asked Jesus to baptize you? Don't you believe the promise? Don't you believe what Peter said? We have heard that and read that many times.

Peter said, look at it in Acts chapter 2. Acts chapter 2. I want to finish with this so that we can hear others. Acts chapter 2, reading from verse 38. You know, when they said, what shall we do? Brethren, what shall we do? They were pierced in the heart.

What shall we do? And he said, repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Each of you. It's not a general baptism.

Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. And if we take that further also, repent means I have to repent for myself. I can't repent for my wife.

I can't repent for my children. I must repent. Each of you repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

There is God's promise, my brothers and sisters. Why don't we believe it? If I have repented, if I have asked Jesus to forgive me my sins, and I know he has forgiven me, I have a birthright. Have you asked for your birthright? Have you gone to him and said, Lord, this is my birthright.

You promised I will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Give me the gift of the Holy Spirit. That's how I sought God.

Even though I closed earlier in my early days of my Christian life, I was baptized in the Holy Spirit because I went to a church that didn't preach against it. They had preached against it. I closed up in unbelief until seven years later.

It was a year of jubilee for me, and then I repented of unbelief. I said, Lord, forgive me for doubting what you did for me, and the dam broke. There was a river that flowed from my life that was 43 years ago and never looked back.

I never doubted that like I did earlier, but I thank God. I want to know, my brothers and sisters, do you realize this is your birthright? I'm afraid many people who are committed to this church do not recognize that this is their birthright, and they don't ask God for it. I want to say to you this morning, all of you here, casually you've been asking, Lord, baptize me in the Holy Spirit.

Nothing happens. Nothing will happen because you don't believe anything will happen. God brought us to need there.

I think of those times when we would seek God, and we would just cry out to the Lord, and people would be baptized in the Holy Spirit. Oh, I pray for such times to be restored among us, particularly in this second generation that we have entered into. He says you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, and it doesn't stop there.

He says the promise, listen to this, the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off. As many as the Lord our God will call to himself, and with many other words, he solemnly testified, listen to this. This is the word that God has impressed on my heart these days.

With many other words, he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, be saved from this perverse generation that was 2,000 years ago. Do you think things have changed in 2,000 years? It's become less perverse, my brothers and sisters. I see the perversity, that perversity that sadly enters many homes, even in CFC, because the parents don't see their birthright and seek God for the power and the baptism in the Holy Spirit so that they can lead their children and help them to be saved from this perverse generation.

That is the time we are living in. Be saved from this perverse generation. 2,000 years ago, you can multiply that thousands of times.

It's more perverse today. We don't have to look very far. You open the newspapers, you listen to the news, you see how perverse it is.

The sad thing is that perversity enters into the church. There are not enough who can stand against that. Oh, that God would raise up among us.

There was not this glory in CFC and glory in all that we have heard and glory in Brother Zach. We will move on. But what is the future of this church? Decline has set in.

Be saved, my brothers and sisters. The only way that we can be saved from this perverse generation is to be immersed in the Holy Spirit. Don't think of a day and a date.

I'm not thinking of 43. Every day, I ask God, fill me with the Holy Spirit. How is it with you? My dear brothers and sisters, I'm speaking particularly to those who say they are committed to this church.

You come here regularly. This is your birthright. You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

This promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off. And it says with many other words, Peter went on, he solemnly testified, kept on exhorting them. And I will keep on exhorting you, my brothers and sisters, be saved from this perverse generation.

So then those who received his word, listen to this, were baptized. And that day, they were added about 3,000 souls. It doesn't stop there.

They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. And that's how it must be in our lives, that we would give ourselves to the apostles' teaching, that we allow what we have heard to bear fruit in our lives. And Jesus comes looking for fruit.

You think of that parable of the gardener when the master came and said, he came looking for fruit three years, no fruit. Second year, no fruit. You know that tree out there, the jackfruit tree? John told me there's no fruit on it.

We have been here four years. I said, John, cut it down. There is a living testimony, living reality of what we read in the Bible.

I said, it's an occupying place, so cut it down. But he said, no. He called me, uncle, we'll wait one more year.

It brought forth the sweetest, I don't know if some of you have eaten that, sweetest jackfruit in this compound. Much sweeter than the other tree there. God comes looking for fruit.

We are occupying place, my brothers and sisters. He's given us the Holy Spirit to bring forth that the sweetest fruit in our lives that we have never tasted ourselves before. Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good, it says.

But I cannot produce that fruit by coming to meetings. I cannot produce that fruit by being connected to CFC. I cannot produce that fruit by just appreciating Brother Zach and listening to all the messages.

I can be like those people in John chapter five, it says there, you search the scriptures and you think that in them you have eternal life. It is these that testify of me. The living Bible says you, the message Bible says you soak your head in your Bibles and you think that in them you have eternal life.

Yet here I am standing before you and you will not come to me that you may have life. And that is what you have heard from us all these years. That's what you've heard from Brother Zach.

You won't get life by just listening to his messages and listening to the messages of many other godly brothers in our midst. You get life by coming to Jesus. And that's what we have labored for.

We can testify before God. We want to see brothers and sisters connected to Jesus. We don't want you to be connected to us.

We want you to receive the Holy Spirit. We're so jealous that you cannot bear to see you connect, be connected to somebody else. James says that the spirit that he has made to dwell in us is a jealous spirit.

He wants to connect us to Jesus. And I want to say to you this morning, as you hear many testimonies, I pray to God that in this 43rd year, that some of us at least will say, Lord, I repent. I repent.

I've sat here in occupied place and received and received and received and grown spiritually fat and even suffer with indigestion. I soak my head in messages. But the messages testify of the one who can give us life.

And he came to give life and to give it abundantly. I want to ask you, my dear brothers and sisters, have you received life since you've come to CFC? Can we bow our heads for a moment? Before we go on, we want to take a few moments just to ask ourselves, have I received life? Like Jesus said to those religious people, here am I standing before you and you will not come to me that you may have life. You think you have life in the messages? You think you have life reading your Bible? You think you have life in praying and fasting? It's me, Jesus says.

Will you not come to me? Come to me. He said, all you who work yourselves to exhaustion, trying, trying, trying to live a godly life, it's me. The answer lies in Christ.

To live a godly life is not an easy matter, the Bible says in 1 Timothy 3.16. But the answer lies in Christ. And the Holy Spirit seeks to reveal what flesh and blood cannot reveal to us, my brothers and sisters. Jesus said to Peter, flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, Peter.

It's my Father in heaven. And I pray to God this morning, right now as we bow our heads, what flesh and blood could not reveal to us all these years, the Holy Spirit will take the things that we have heard and reveal Jesus to us and connect us to him. It will be a different story.

Lord, we pray you will do what needs to be done in our lives. Raise up a generation that will know you, Lord, will stand for you in these last days. Fight against the perversity of this generation.

Fill us with your Holy Spirit. We pray for an outpouring of your Holy Spirit. Those of us who are backslidden, revive us, Lord.

Send your Holy Spirit upon us. Let the fire fall into our own hearts first, Lord Jesus. Let the fire fall into my own heart, Lord.

Revive me, Lord Jesus, that I may rejoice in you. Pour out your Spirit. Lord, we are a needy people.

We seek you. You have come to give us life and to give it abundantly. And we humble ourselves and come to you that we may receive this life.

And for those of us who have received it, receive it more abundantly. Make it so, Lord. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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