

Process of Growth to Maturity

by John Follette

The sermon emphasizes the importance of progressive growth and development in Christian life, where we continually grow and mature in our spiritual journey.

Duration: 2:57:50

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Romans 5:5, 1 Corinthians 10:24, Philippians 2:4, Revelation 19:7-8, Revelation 22:17

Topics: "Spiritual Growth"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of not becoming complacent or spiritually stagnant. He uses the analogy of a man who is impressed by his own mental death, highlighting the danger of being thrilled by worldly things instead of focusing on spiritual growth. The preacher encourages listeners to walk in their faith and not try to fly before they are ready. He also discusses the significance of different postures in worship and the need for self-judgment and maturity in the Christian journey. The sermon references various Bible verses to support these teachings.

Transcript

We're singing this hymn. There are a couple of suggestions even in the hymn that touched on this thought that we've had during these meetings so far. I think it was almost the first night, or first day, that we discussed these things of God.

We were speaking of this whole matter of Christian life and development, and even the programs of the Lord are all progressive. There's nothing static, there's never the standstill. There's nothing, it's always a simple completion, partial for a greater completion, on and off.

There's nothing static. Now, here it says, change from glory unto glory. I suggested it the other day.

Most people think the only change that comes to us in our lifespan is the great, tremendous change when we are changed from the bondage to the spiritual life. Well, that is a magnificent change, but that doesn't cover the whole ground. And it's perfectly right for us to say, I am saved.

But you see, we can also say, I am being saved, continually coming under, new, ever like this. We are changed, now he has it right. We're not just changed from sinners to saints.

We are changed from glory to glory to glory because we are continually growing. What we are growing out of, I enjoy what I had five and ten years ago, it's a brand new creation that seeks to become adjusted to

this spiritual life and this spiritual realm into which we have been birthed. I said the other night, when we are born of the spirit, we don't get born into heaven.

We haven't entered that. People enter paradise. But we are born into the kingdom.

All of it is growing. We are under the power of it. Take the tape off, since they can't.

All he said, and I knew right away, not to expect more, nor to judge him. And yet he would listen to what I had. And they were right in saying, I am eating the fruit of the womb.

It's too exhausting when it has to come from the hand of the one who is really eating somebody else. The idea is real. It's real.

Very bad. I want to finish. And then I want to go on with the, remember? No man sees the visions.

And that's what I'm saying. They're not pronounced to you. Neutralizing.

How do you criticize him? How do you know so much? Well, I can't be hypocritical. Well, I think it's only true. In your spiritual apprehension, in your perspective, you know the possibility of power.

Well, that means the possibility. Now, don't pray and almost die for me. Paul, it's in your own creation.

Now lest you, to keep you balanced, well, to give you a thorn, carry you through this. Well, it's in the accomplishments. There was given to me.

No. Well then, this messenger of Satan. Thorn in the flesh.

A new Bible. A thorn in the flesh, that's the thing. How many of you know, I suppose, that this is very good English.

Now, what was that? Last week. Well, what was it? Oh, a mess that the car got into and all of that. How many of you see something now together? I'm interpreting what my headache is.

I had a headache last week. Oh, I had a disastrous time with the car and I had an awful headache. There was given to me.

Now, why under the sun and earth? They've been two thousand years. There was given to me. All those special demons that I'm going to allow to work on you.

An angel is a... They use the same word in reference to the enemy. One of those things from the enemy is a demon. A messenger of Satan.

But listen, Paul. I'm not going to leave you forlorn and helpless. But I'm not going to answer your prayer your way.

And this is the only method. So don't be afraid. Just as soon as you are conscious of his attack.

Just as soon as you are conscious that this thing is bothering you, whatever form it is. My grace will throw a tabernacle of my grace over you. So instead of the answer here, I will give you grace.

But I'm going to leave that situation. But I'll give you something greater than that. I will give you my grace.

Let me get the philosophy. There was given to me. And glory in... When this attack comes, I will not... The spirit can be managed.

When Paul sees it, he says, Now, instead of complaining, Now, he says, Now, instead of complaining and praying, Now, I'm in. I glory in these things. What were they? Five.

Why? That this grace of God may tabernacle upon me. And you'll find there are five different things that he says. The burdens and the... All sorts of things.

Do you get it? I want you to get that. And not be running around. Oh, I think Paul had a thorn in his flesh.

Yes, we saw it. There are many times when it will be enough... Instead of jumping, you'll have the grace of God. You know, if God's almighty and he's able to rejoice in... Well, why? And that very... And I glory in grace.

Lord, I'm getting under the tent. Did I get on to this? Well, there's judgment. All right, move it.

Now, unifying of your whole personality... Get that objective straight. Now, we found out yesterday that so many Christians... Now, why not acknowledge... Matured in many things... Well, now, many of us can't tell that. I don't know when I... I would fall down... I don't want to... Years old... All these... He's old.

I want my way. And he will yell and scream and holler. It's the most... Why? He has no reactions to that.

It doesn't minister. It doesn't mean anything. All he knows is what's ministering to... I want a lollipop.

And he's going to fairly raise the dead. And he is perfectly oblivious to all of these surroundings because he... But when he gets bigger... What do you find? He has found... Emotions. But he has found an art of... I could have howled.

Control. All right. He'll deal with the emotions.

Control that will become... Still has the emotions. Who's baby is you? Nobody wants to be told that. Therefore, since it is an extension of you, here you are with his child.

And you see the child, therefore, inside of... But a person who is not in that realm standing here, he will see and discern... One resents anything. Like the devil. Or he's doing that.

All those things are... And old. And money. And wealth.

They will bring the things that really count. All things are possible. Let's get somewhere.

All things that are possible. But still... The old man. The old age isn't the time for greed.

Everyone is splendid. There's no order to it. This place is good.

I say that. I'm old enough to know. I don't know in spirit how old... So, while they're hidden on earth and misunderstood and not recognized, in the heavens they have one of the highest places because they have to stand with him as the bride of the Lord Jesus himself.

But you see, in the heavens she's going to be so glorious in her appearing. It says... I can't open this part to you in verse 12 concerning the daughters of Tyre and all of that. Those are Gentile nations and one

group particularly the Jews who are mentioned in this who will come in this great bridal concept.

The bride. She's now called a queen. And then she has the virgins who do follow her.

And she has also a royal court. There are many involved. And then there's the visitation of these others who come to her.

So it's a great big picture. This is a composite thing. But if you pull it all apart you'll see it carries many people.

Different groups. And all of them are mentioned this way because they suggest spiritual degrees of life and spiritual degrees of understanding. The virgins who do follow her are in the royal company.

They are in the bridal company. But they're not the bride. The bride as these are the attendants.

That's all right. That's very splendid. But it didn't say she was the bride.

It says they are her attendants. These virgins who do follow her and these other people who are spoken of in the bridal party. All of that to me suggests a gradation in this question of bridehood.

The bride. As you move up in the scale with spiritual life I would call them overcomers. They are those who have overcome.

They've come over, come out of, and come through all the things which might have hindered. Not always bad things but the things which were good and even better but you have a superlative, the best. The good and perfect will of God.

The will of God. The good will of God. The good and perfect will of God.

Gradation. Some things are the will of God purely by permission. The permissive will of God.

But he will work through that. He will work through any one of the grades that he can get a hold of and so it is. They are grades.

It's a gradation in here of the company. Now it speaks of her as the king's daughter as the queen's. Then the gold of Ophir.

There is an old, I think it's a translation which gives it that the gold of Ophir is gold of reduction. That is, it is refined and refined and refined and refined until all the dross has been taken from it because of its reduction and the heat to which it was subjected and it comes out to be the peculiar type of gold. The gold of Ophir.

Gold is the divine. The divine. Partakers of the divine nature.

Well, we are already partakers of that. Already partakers of that divine nature. Well, all of this has to be developed in us by a reducing process.

He takes a hold of us as we are and he begins a terrific work of reduction. The first things of which we are conscious are all the offensive things. Sin and the offensive things.

Those are externalities. He deals with that. Get that out of the way.

Then he starts with all the things in us by nature which would usurp a place or take a place of the thing which he wants like that in spirit. And so he just comes and he says I can't use this. It is a good thing but it savors of the natural and it can't take the place of the spirit and I want the spirit to have.

And he strips me. By and by we have very little. He strips us of our work, of our ministry, of any last thing that we could cling to and think that it's a part of us.

He strips them all. Make us dependent. He has to strip us so that we don't have one thing and I mean one thing.

I remember one dear soul with whom the Lord was dealing. You would know the name if I mentioned it. Very famous.

She's gone on. A very famous woman preacher, evangelist, preacher and she's toured the world. She's known in every country and she came under the light of this deeper teaching and as far as she was able she was rather too old to teach much and to get any new patterns formed for her because she had walked so long in the old pattern that was like second nature.

That's why I like to deal with a young person who happens to live to be 60, 70, 80 before you can get anywhere with her. She hadn't had much but when she did begin to get life, when she did begin to get life, she was willing to accept it. But she knew that if she ever got into God she would have to surrender and she would have to die out.

She knew that. She knew it. Knew it very well.

That she couldn't sail any longer under that old form, that old flag. And so God began to deal with her. And I just talked to her one time and in the room where we were talking was this very beautiful photograph of her in her glory.

Of course she looked very fine, rather spectacular. Is that who I was? Well, why? Well, God had stripped her so that when we wanted her to take family prayers or to speak to the group she was so depleted that she said, I don't know that I have anything even to say to a Sunday school class. How many think that's a pretty good reduction? I thought it was splendid.

That's out of me. It's like it's washed out. I have lived in that.

Lived by it. We had a real frank talk. I had to see her two times.

And she says, you pray with me and pray for me. I said, you know, I was frank with her. I was honest with her.

You have to become like that. Known all over the world for that characteristic pose. You know, the gold of old.

The gold of reduction. And to get ahold of the real creature who was living in there all this externality had to be stripped off. Now, it doesn't mean it kills you.

It doesn't mean you don't have any more of an acceptance. And I shall never do another prayer. It doesn't mean that at all.

You will. But it'll be in quite a different tenor, quite a different tone. In the gold of over, the fire of reduction and burning.

Now when it says here, a little word, the 10th verse, hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear, forget also thine own people and thy father's house. So, when that all takes place, so, how that graces, so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty, for he is thy Lord. Now, not certain, there is worship.

Don't get that all mixed in there now, go out and search. But this is the place where your worship comes in. Hearken, O daughter.

Three things that she is to do in this admonition, this admonition concerning her welfare. So shall the king greatly desire. To hearken there is to give intelligent obedience.

In your Hebrew, it's a little stronger. It means obedience based upon intelligence, having discerned or known the thing that you are obeying and why. Hearken.

Now the same idea is brought over into the New Testament in Revelation, where it says, he stands at the door and knocks. Behold, I stand at your door and knock. He that will what? Hear and open the door.

Well, it doesn't mean that you just hear him knocking, but the word hear is the same as this. Hear in the sense of heeding. He that heareth my voice.

Hearing in the sense of heeding, which is carrying out what the knocking meant when you heard it. It doesn't mean just everyone that hears me is thus and so, but hearing in the sense of obedience which follows. The good word.

They are both the same. One is in your Hebrew and one is in your Greek. The one in Greek is in Revelation, where it says, behold, it says, whosoever he that heareth my voice and doth so and so.

Heareth means who is obedient to this instruction. This is the same too. Now he says, O daughter, hearken.

Surrender yourself now to this truth or this teaching and hearken in the sense, now be obedient to it. Let it possess you in the sense of obedience. It says, consider.

That's another good word. It means to see because it has been criticized. You have in yourself criticized the situation.

Then you see. With that understanding, based on that. Sometimes we have that word in our New Testament too.

Unless such and such a thing happens, he shall not see the kingdom. Didn't mean he won't go to heaven. He wasn't talking about heaven anyway.

He was talking about this life in the spirit, the kingdom of spiritual reality. And he says, unless so, until he cannot see. Well, when you look up that word, it means to understand.

Not to look at all. It has nothing to do with vision. It's a mental word.

A mental process. Just the same as we use it today. If there's a difficulty that you're working on, bind by saying, Oh, I see.

When you say, what do you see? Are you looking with your eyes at anything? No. You're looking at it in a mental process. So when you solve the thing, you say, Oh, that's easy as pie.

I see now. Well, it doesn't mean you're looking at anything. It means your understanding has been opened.

Now, the third one. Incline thine ear. The word incline there means to stretch out thine ears.

All those three things are requisites. They are required of this daughter. They are requisites.

He requires them. Heart, so on. Three of them.

Now, then he says, that is, if this is, if this really takes place, it will make the basis for him to have his joy and his pleasure. Soul, this being done, soul shall he greatly rejoice in thy beauty. You display it and he rejoices in it.

All says, I have nothing to give. I have no beauty to offer. Now, the next thing he says to this, leave what happened here, let it here.

Of course. That's your revelation picture. Same thing.

Eight times he says it in the book. Eight times. Now, the next thing is a rather difficult thing.

He says, you have to start in a process in order to press forward, to attain. He says, forgetting the thing press forward. But the pressing forward doesn't move until there's something done within.

If it's forgotten, it loses its power. So he turns to them and this bride-to-be, she's in the process of becoming, and he says, forget thy people and thy father's house. People is your first initial um, lines of demarcation and separation because they are very near.

They are the local thing. Don't destroy it. Don't throw it away.

Don't belittle it. Don't put it out the window. Leave it intact just as it is.

Don't try to fix it. Forgetting my people. That's the environment.

That's the, that's the life in which I was cast. Forget that for you have another one. Now your word forget there is interesting too.

I made a little study of that word and dug it out to see what he was really getting at. Let me tell you what that is. It means to mislay because of a lack of using anything.

It's as though you've been used to certain things and you lay it down and it becomes mislaid forget for a lack of Well if we continue to go without use there are a lot of things right into your own interior that which is natural which you are familiar in which you are born. He does the fourth chapter of Genesis. When you do that you see the picture intelligently she goes you remember after the last this call the damn they call Rebecca she made her intelligently concerning the dare that it would take and the pace that it would take to run forget her own people and to leave her father's house.

Those were actual literal pictures but the type is very true in spirit and she had to make that decision intelligently powers same teaching I gave you the other day about discipleship no one dares to venture in

that unless he will sit down and consider a man ruling a power he sits down and considers it the man going to war he considers and counts and puts an evaluation on the thing and in the light of those two things he makes his decision now rest like it is with these things God hallelujah praise the Lord my God save soul and spirit let's all go to heaven it's all a very serious thing it means the whole radical changing sometimes of your life pattern your father's house is to he doesn't destroy the Adamic setup and pull things out of it and push the region of darkness into the kingdom

of he has translated it out of the realm of darkness in 1, 2, 3 bang before we go so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty that means all the beauty courses now in connection with that read revelation 19 6, 7 and 8 revelation 19 6, 7 and 8 they must always be hooked up with this psalm especially the portion of the declaration of the bride read that with it and not by your head and I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude and as the voice of many waters and as the voice of mighty thundering saying hallelujah for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to him for the marriage of the lamb is come and his wife hath made herself ready for to her or and to her was granted it was a privilege granted to her it was granted to her to do it was granted

to her that she should array be arrayed in fine linen clean and white for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saint now I've covered most of that ground in the excuse me in the chapter that I put over there Christian character qualification there's a bit of truth there that I want you to have I guess most of you had to make a little study of and read them that might have some because if you can't get this thing straightened out from your forty-fifth psalm and this nineteenth chapter of Revelation and and find out what God is doing don't try to live poking around doing a lot of things and fussing around about a lot of holy things if you have no objective that you can focus toward don't be doing that it doesn't get you anywhere it just doesn't get you anywhere here for instance he

gives us some very direct teaching about the apparel of this bride and what does it say it says it was given to her a privilege was given to her that she might clothe herself be arrayed in this fine linen and what is the fine linen the fine linen wasn't the blood of Jesus that saved her her garment of salvation was that and she has the garment of salvation which has been wrought by Jesus and woven on the calvary cross that was the loom upon which he wove the garment of salvation and he puts it upon the person now he's talking about something else now he's talking about this one who has been brought into salvation becomes a subject for bridehood he doesn't talk about bridehood to a sinner he talks about salvation to the sinner but when he gets the sinner into this circle adopted and

brought into the family then he begins to speak of the privileges that are for her and he says listen I've brought you into salvation it is possible for you to so order your life and steps and let me work in you that you can find the highest expression in this place of redemption which is association with the son of God as the bride the one that's nearest his heart who shares in the things that are in his heart and in his life but to do that your gift to salvation doesn't qualify you it brings you into the place of privilege it gives you a right to your inheritance and it gives you a right to your heritage but it does not impart nor give to you the qualifications for that that has to be wrought by intelligence living understanding cooperation yielding to the power of the spirit then he

will be revealed so every one of us tonight we are all wearing the garment of salvation he's put it upon us for it we couldn't make it we cannot redeem ourselves none of us can do that we have to stand helpers before the cross puts upon us a garment we call it the garment of salvation which hides and covers the life recognition which is woven with the life of the one who will surrender for the fine linen is the righteous

conduct the righteous conduct of the saint well if fine linen is the righteous conduct of the saint it can't be my garment of salvation because I never worked for it I never did the thing that would earn it I couldn't make a garment of salvation but he says it's possible here for the bride to be clothed in fine linen and the righteousness of the saint is that linen well

then I gotta look at it and let it spoil a lot of teaching and singing books and a lot of sermons how many times that text which has nothing to do with use over and over by an evangelist to try to get the person to come to the altar and get all heavenly things heard all these voices winding up with the sun rings saying hallelujah let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to him for the marriage of the lamb has come and all signs of the times the one impending evil things have to happen what is this thing back to a body that has no characteristics a body pleasing you can't do that it says the bride hath made her the new testament says it again be ye also ready well I'd say that isn't that isn't the point you wouldn't start getting ready if you weren't saved he's talking to Christians get

ready be ready watch and pray he didn't say that about you sinners watch and pray that you may have spiritual vigor that's the overcoming to escape well and then if there's something to be escaped and there's something to be prepared I can't sit back in a rocking chair and say I wish the lord would come hallelujah I'm saved Paul says if by any means I may attain salvation is a gift life is a gift that all of this depends upon intelligence surrender cooperation erode enshroud and increase now what does it say in this psalm just before that with gladness and rejoicing shall be she be brought they shall enter the king's palace she shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework that's psalm 45 same thing as revelations all one in the raiment of needlework the virgins her companions

that follow her shall be brought unto thee now that's the good bringing of the solomon draw thee the shorn bitterness that she had gone down to this now you can connect with that no man come John 6 and 44 no man can come to thee except the father which hath sent thee draw him and I will raise him up at the last day well what what are we having out here a concert huh are they owls do you think they're owls it might possibly be we have little owls like that home up in the trees well they won't hurt us anyway it isn't a a bomb I was going to say it isn't a bomb dropping let me tell you a little about that I think it's so so good because it is exactly as it happens God will purposely withdraw his conscious presence so that we won't live under the emotional power that's why often he will

withdraw all of that and make us barren and dry arid he has to do that it isn't that you're backslidden don't go to the altar trying to recapture that old emotion that thrilled you over there he's through with that he has a lot of more emotional things leave that he may want you barren, dry arid for a time don't let anyone spoil it now there are two pictures of the bride in the Old Testament one is given in the Song of Solomon which is very good because it is more yeah Hosea 2.14 the ones that say God will do with Israel in order to bring her back to her confidence with Israel he says I will allure her into the wilderness where I may speak comfort and then he speaks of giving her the vineyard back and restoring her and reinstating her for Israel is the wife of Jehovah while the church is

the bride of Christ each have the companion part you see Israel is always the wife of Jehovah but the bride is always spoken of as the bride of Christ always the bride of Christ is that true? yes now in the Old Testament when he deals with uh with Israel it's spoken of as though it were a wilderness that was necessary to get her attention so he can deal with her so it says I will allure her that I may speak the word to speak comfortably is in now your next picture is the one that's given in songs of Solomon 8 and 5 the picture of the church the bride of which we are conscious what is it? well it says who is this that cometh up

from the wilderness leaning upon her beloved she comes well the way that most people would like to have it they they think that she is entering heaven on a

bandwagon popular idea well of course get through come on well I'll tell you something the bride never enters the heavenlies on a bandwagon the quicker you get off of that terrifying thing and walk humbly on the side of the road the more apt you are to receive spiritual illusions on the bandwagon tight what she finds is the gaze of that lord to get her eyes illuminated they don't look there isn't a thing with which she was familiar before that she placed now when she went into that heart you see having come into that relationship and into that wilderness he works to go to hope so I gave him all all these visions having known this back she leaves the family and in silhouette against that western sky and in the real meaning of that word she is over leaning isn't running and his feet ran

swift now that's all I'm going to give you about this this drawing if ever we get anywhere near the things of the drawing it is the means which he he provides for it I call it the urge of the urge of this holy brings all all creation back again is like a tremendous breath of God that moves down through the breath of God is the spirit out breathing that's the out breathing the out breathing of God is breath and this holy drive I gave it to me in the sense that it was an urge that he released and carrying everything back to its creator all

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