

Sermon Topic: Growing Deeper in Christ by Rev Naomi Dowdy
Sermon Text: John 4:31-34

Expansion: We are to grow stronger so that we come more Christ-like in everything that we do.

Expansion also means:

- Growth, Development, Enlargement - Each of us should expand spiritually, we should not be stagnant in our relationship with God, Increase

We are to grow to become more Christ-like, to be more like Christ.
We need to look at what Jesus Christ was like in the bible.

John 4:31-34 -> Jesus and disciples were travelling through Samaria, and they met this woman in Samaria.

John 4:31-34 (NIV) 31 Meanwhile his disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat something." 32 But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about." 33 Then his disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?" 34 "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."

What did Jesus mean by food?

Food also means:

- 1) Appetite
- 2) Nourishment
- 3) Satisfaction
- 4) Fulfillment
- 5) Motivation
- 6) Desire

Doing the will of God was Jesus' driving compulsion, His predominant desire. Jesus' focus is not on the natural.

Desire

Question: How is our desire to

- Do the Will of God?
- Do the Work of God?
- Be like Christ?

Because desire, ultimately becomes the driving force that will make a difference in our achievements. We cannot achieve anything we do not desire. Sooner or later, our predominant desire in life will begin to master us. So what is our desire?

Predominant desires:

1. MONEY. Money is something that can become such a predominant force until it begins to possess and drive us. Money should NOT possess us.

2. STATUS. As a prevailing desire, you will battle pride and hurt people as you are driven to achieve a status above others. This is not a Godly desire.

3. POWER. Pursuing it will sacrificing family relationships. Power can become addictive and destructive.

4. POSITION - Some may compromise their principles to the misuse of others, as they feel that the title makes them important.

E.g. Cleaners being renamed Sanitation Engineer

We want title to feel good about ourselves. But this also means we are looking down on some others.

We can get hooked on wrong desires.

These desires can rob us to grow in Christ.

Our desires need to be aligned with God in order to go deeper in Him.

Apart from desire, we also need to be concerned about DETERMINATION (apart from desire)

5 things that Jesus used to Help Him remain strong in the face of adversities:

1. Scripture - Jesus knew and quoted the Word of God and knew how to use it properly
2. Holy Spirit - Infilling and empowerment of the Holy Spirit in His life. This helps us to go through difficulties and still bring honour to God.
3. Prayer - Jesus took time out of his busy schedule to pray. It is important to have a dynamic prayer life.
4. Faith - Without faith it is impossible to please God. Faith to trust God during adversities.
5. Obedience - We can know all about God, but not obey him. Not to just know but also to do. Whatever we have determined in our mind about honouring God will ultimately determine our choices.

When bribery comes what will u do?

How much can I push it without going too far?

- E.g. Rich family offered Reverend Dowdy to pray a specific prayer.

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NIV) 13

No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

Your choice to honour God will cause you to claim the victory God has promised you.

In the midst of difficulties, we sometimes ask God - is there a plan B? Even Jesus asked that in the Garden of Gethsemane. However, God's response centralises around the notion that plan B is the same as plan A. God will take us through adversity, as it strengthen our faith, our resolve and our understanding of God.

The foundation in our life must be built correctly

If the foundation of our lives is built wrongly and if we do not apply and practice the 5 ingredients, then we need to repent and get the right priority of our desires in focus.

Luke 6: 48-49 (NIV) 48

They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. 49 But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete."

Parable of The Two Houses - Jesus addressed the need for us to have a strong foundation in our lives, or the house will be shaken.

The difference between the two houses is not based on ignorance or knowledge. It is choosing the foundation we will build into our lives.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

To grow deeper in Christ requires nothing less than a deep personal relationship with Jesus.

1 Corinthians 11:1 (NIV)

Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

Reverend Dowdy is calling us to not just *imitate* but to *become* like Him.

1. Goal: Christ-likeness

1. God's main desire and plan is for you to become like Christ
2. God is restoring us to His original and intended Purpose and Image.

Romans 8:29 (NIV) 29

For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

The moment we become Christians, we have a responsibility to grow deeper and to resemble the full reflection of God in everyday life.

2. Process: Transformation

2 Corinthians 3:18

(NIV) 18 And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

(KJV) 18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

"Beholding" in Greek is "Mirror". What we are and what is reflected in the mirror should be the same as God's image

Metamorphous means:

Transfigured; Transformed from one degree of glory to another

Being changed from glory to glory is a Growing Process - of Going Deeper

Metamorphous is a Growth Transforming Process

The Holy Spirit is transforming us inwardly so we can demonstrate outwardly a visible Christ-likeness of character.

Christlikeness is moving from:

- A deep inward change of character
- Resulting from a changed nature
- And leading to a radical change of conduct