

1 Peter 2:2

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[0 : 00] Boys and girls, I'm going to tell you a story of my own life. When I was a young boy, I was very, very fond of football.

And the great day when I was young was when Scotland played England. And in these days, Scotland was about better than they are nowadays. And they were beating England. The great thing was this international. Every year in the beginning of the break, well, Scotland played England. And there was this special day. I was listening to it on the radio. Television had just been invented, but only the very wealthy people could afford one.

So we had to listen to it on the radio. And I remember Scotland were running, but they were only quite a lot. But they were... All of a sudden, there was one favourite player.

His name was Dennis Law. And he had the ball inside the penalty area. And all of a sudden, he fell flat on the ground. And the commentator said, oh, I think that's a penalty.

[1 : 02] And the other commentator was helping them, saying, I don't know. I think he died. I'm not sure. I'm not sure. Anyway, it was a penalty.

And to be honest, I can't remember if they scored or not. But I always remembered after that. I wonder, was that a penalty? Or did Dennis Law die?

Was he checked that genuinely? Or what did he die? Well, the years passed. And the years passed. And one day, I was walking through a big department store in Glasgow.

And there was big news. It was very flat screen televisions came out. It was 25 years since that incident. And I was walking up the aisle.

And there was showing on the screen old football matches. And I couldn't believe it. As I walked up the aisle and came to this screen here, here was the very incident I was speaking about.

[2 : 08] Dennis Law fell down in the penalty area. Some said it was a penalty. Some said he died. But I'll never forget. It was just as I passed split second timing, the camera zoomed in onto Dennis Law lying on the ground.

It formed him on his face. And just as the referee blew this whistle, Dennis Law turned up his face and looked. That is strange.

25 years afterwards. You know, there's a version of the Bible that says, Be sure your sin will find you out.

Even 25 years afterwards. Now, I don't know if Dennis Law is a Christian or not. I don't know if he confessed his sin to God or not.

If he did, it would be forgiven. But do you know the difference about a Christian? We sometimes sin to our disgrace, to our shame.

[3 : 22] We Christians still sin. But whenever we do something wrong, However serious it is, We're to expose it to God.

We're to tell God. We're to confess it to God. We're to ask for forgiveness. You know, the natural thing that comes to us when we do something wrong is cover it up.

Hide it. Pretend we didn't do it. That's not how a Christian lives. A Christian should sin as little as possible.

But when he does, we shouldn't cut it out. We should expose it. We should tell God about it. And you know, he will forgive us the moment we do.

If we genuinely confess our sins, God is faithful to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

[4 : 20] So the next time you see a penalty, you're going to run the most away. And you ask yourself, Have I confessed all my sins to God?

And if not, you make a wee prayer to God. Father, forgive me for all my sins. For Jesus' sake. Okay? Right.

Well now, let's turn to the chapter of God's word which we read. 1 Peter, chapter 2.

And if God would help me, I'd like to concentrate on verse 2. 1 Peter, chapter 2, verse 2. But we'll read the first three verses.

Therefore, laying aside all malice, all guile, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if, indeed, you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

[5 : 42] What an important word, the small two-letter word, if, is.

If, indeed, you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. If you have tasted that the Lord is gracious, we have a command before us this morning.

We are to desire the pure milk of the word that we will grow. That's the command.

That's the duty for us. If you have not tasted that the Lord is gracious, you're the different command. You're the different duty before us. You have to taste and see that God is good. If you have not tasted that the Lord is gracious, you don't know God.

[6 : 52] However much about God, you don't know God. However much you may know about him, if you don't know he's good and he's gracious.

That's why I sang Psalm 130, verse 4. It's the sound there.

But yet with thee forgiveness is that field thou mayest be. If you don't know God's forgiveness, you don't know God.

However much about him, you know, you need to taste taste is goodness. Taste is forgiveness. But so many people think once they're converted, once they're forgiven, they think, that's it all.

My friend, that's it all beginning. That's it all starting. That's not it all Lord. But he was one of the commands for giving. If indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious, would it grow in grace?

[8 : 17] Would it grow in faith? Last Lord's Day we looked at the testing of faith and the origin of faith.

Now we're going to look at the growth of faith. Growth of grace. How do you know if something is alive?

If it grows? Even though it might be growing older, it's still alive. growth is a sign of life.

But it can be very complex in studying this growth when the subject is abstract or theoretical. So we have what is growth in grace?

What is growth in grace? We're commanded here to grow. What's been looked for? well, the moment of our regeneration when we put our faith in Christ, the general seed of every grace is implanted within us.

[9 : 41] And it's your duty and my duty from then on to ensure that seed grows, develops. the development of existing graces which the Holy Spirit implanted within us at the moment of our regeneration.

And we have to ensure we grow in these things. forgiveness. If we've tasted the Lord's grace, if we've tasted his forgiveness, then the grace of forgiveness has been planted within us.

And like Father, like Son, we have to know how to forgive. We have to learn how to grow in forgiving others. Christ. If Christ is our Saviour, we will want to grow in the knowledge of Christ.

We want more thirst for Christ. If we've been convicted of our sin, we will become more sensitive to sin.

Why do we go to Christ? Why does Christ all of a sudden become attractive? It's because with the star, he alone can pardon sin.

[11 : 12] He alone can keep us from sin. He alone can heal our wounds of sin. So we're to grow in sensitivity to sin.

We're to grow in thirst for Christ. We're to grow in love for Christ. How can you be forgiven and not love Christ?

But isn't it amazing? The complaint God's people often have is, I don't love him enough. But that very complaint is a mark of grace, a sign of life.

If you want more, you know, someone has said humorously that money is like grace. There's one way when money is like grace.

The more you get, the more you want. You want more of Christ. You want more love. You want to love your brothers and sisters in Christ.

[12 : 24] You want to love the lost more. We need to grow as Christians in good works. Well, verse 12 says that, doesn't it?

How you, they may buy you good works, which they observe. Titus 3 and 8 is a very salutary chapter.

You might say, well, what are you talking about growing in good works for? Well, Titus chapter 3 verse 8 says this, this is a faithful sign, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works.

These things are good and profitable to me. That's Paul, telling Titus, what to preach, what to emphasize, that they maintain good works.

Verse 15, I think, you can refer to it as well. For this is the world, God, that by doing good, you may put to silence the ignorance of the wicked.

[13 : 47] Our Bible tells us we've been created, created anew, recreated in Christ Jesus for good works.

So, how do we grow in faith? How do we grow in the graces that God the Spirit has implanted? within us? Well, we have to remember Jesus himself says, from me is your fruit found.

As you abide in me, therefore we bear forth fruit. As you abide in Christ, you cannot grow apart from being close to Christ.

How do we get closer to Christ? By getting closer to his word and his spirit. Verse 22 in the previous chapter tells us our souls are purified by obeying the truth through the spirit.

[15 : 05] We are told that we cannot grow apart from food and exercise. You want plants to grow?

Feed them. You want children to grow? Feed them. Exercise them. Now, verse 2 tells us and actually this is what the chapter concentrates on.

Digesting the word for food and exercising the fruits of the spirit from verse 11 onwards. Our text, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word in order to grow thereby.

We digest the word so that we learn about Christ. We're told to grow in grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Now, every child of God is predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ. How can you and I develop and grow in Christ likeness if we don't know what Christ is like?

[16 : 31] Where are we going to get information about what Christ is like? If you want to be like Christ and you want to grow like Christ, where are you going to get information about how Christ is like?

From a dream? From what you think? from what someone tells you? The agent God has given us, the instrument God has given us that we might grow thereby is the word of God.

By digesting the word, we get a knowledge of Christ, what he is learning and acting. He is the word made flesh, in flesh, in human nature.

You see, there's such a gulf between God in heaven and you and I on earth that we need something in between to identify with. Christ is the one mediator between God and me.

If you want to know what God is like, long look at Jesus. without the word, we can never be a strong Christian.

[17 : 46] We will always be weak, we'll always be subject to temptation, prone to being misguided. Without the word, you'll never be a strong Christian.

You'll never grow strong. Without the word, you'll never grow wise. you'll always be prone to error. You'll always be vulnerable to sin if you don't know the word.

Without the word, you can never be home. That's verse 22 of the previous chapter. Through the word, we're purified through the word, by obeying the word, through the word, how is it possible to grow, how is it possible to have close communion with Christ apart from the word?

You can't grow apart from me is your fruit found. How do you gain to know more about Christ about through the word?

Now we've just only by close communion with Christ will we grow. But communion is much more than simple communication.

[19 : 17] Communication is speaking to God and listening to God. We speak to God by prayer.

How do we hear God through the word? So if we're not familiar with the word, it's one way communication. We have to hear from Christ.

That's how we will grow. Well, as we look at verse 11, it's not only feeding, digesting the word that we grow Christ-like, but it's by exercising these gerund seeds planted within us.

Do you note, you would have noted from verse 11 onwards, the number of verbs. abstain from, submit yourselves to, do good, honour, love, fear.

These are all things to do with the gerund seeds that have been planted with us. You see, some people say, well, all you've got to do to be sacrificed to grow this is just pray.

[20 : 36] Not according to the Bible. There are things to do. Do you remember the disciples in Luke chapter 17 came to Christ on one occasion and said, Lord, increase our faith.

Do you remember what he said? Do you remember what he said? He said, if you have faith as a grain of the seed, you were, the apostle said to the Lord, increase our faith.

So the Lord said, if your faith as a mustard seed, which is a seed to this mulberry tree, be pulled out by the roots and be planted in the seed, and it would rain.

So that was it. That was his reply. what do you think of that? I was almost confused about it. He just said, if he's got faith as a mustard seed, you'll say to this tree, be done.

What was he saying in effect? And he asked the Lord, give us more faith. What was he saying?

Was he not actually saying, look, you don't need more faith.

[21 : 57] You need to exercise. You need to use the little bit you have. Even though it's a grain of mustard seed, which he said elsewhere was the smallest of all seeds.

You see, the lesson is, faith is not like building blocks. You go to build a wall, you've got some bricks, you say, oh, I'll build a wall, and then you discover what happened, but enough bricks.

Oh, I need to send for more bricks. Faith is not like a concrete block or a brick. Faith is a seed which develops and grows.

And it grows when it develops by exercise, by using it. Peter tells us in the next letter something similar.

Add to your faith a virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness. Don't just do that, use what you have. And isn't it interesting what he said after that?

[23 : 06] What was the promise he gave? If you add to your faith, what's the promise? 2 Peter 1 8 is the promise. If you do these things, you'll be neither bound nor unfruitful.

What do you make of that promise? Are you complaining about being bad and unfruitful? Use a promise.

If you do these things, you'll never be bad or unfruitful. love. In short, I suppose we could say what the message is, what the message is, how to grow is practice what doesn't come naturally.

Practice the fruit of the spirit. Not the works of the flesh, but the fruit of the spirit. somebody double crosses you.

Somebody does the dirtier you. What's a natural thing to do? Well, what comes to me naturally is I'll give him a taste of his own medicine.

[24 : 28] Pit for tot. That's what growing in grace. That's what doing what the spirit is teaching us to do. The Bible teaches us overcome evil, not with the same thing, but overcome evil with good.

Do what does not come naturally. Practice exercising the fruits of the spirit, love, overcome evil with good.

The world will laugh. You won't think it works, but they're growing in Christ likeness when you do what doesn't come naturally.

Overcome evil with good. Another thing, practicing what the spirit is implanted in Jersey for. There's someone you don't like, he acknowledges you.

Practice loving him. Oh, you say, how can you love that guy? Look, look, look, look, how can you love him? You can love him by doing something nice to them.

[25 : 43] We're not asked to love our neighbour or love our brothers. We're not asked to think they're nice people, because quite frankly some of us haven't. That's just a basic truth.

We're not taught to think they're nice. We're taught to love them. Do something kind to them, especially if you don't like them, especially if they annoy you.

The lacks of the spirit of the spirit. Not what come naturally. we grow by practising these things that the spirit is implanted with us and doesn't come naturally.

We're trying to talk about what's spiritual, not what's natural. One more, you've been let down. You've been let down.

Someone has disappointment, you've got a disappointment, generally disappointment, that's life, that's life. can you have joy, can you have joy when you dissipate it?

[26 : 51] We've to practise that. We're on our way to glory. Everything that happens to us, we're told, is going to work out for our financial good.

Don't you believe it? Practise it. Practise having joy when things go round. I often think of Paul and Silas.

How high they must have been on when they got that message. Remember they were rebuked by the Holy Spirit in Acts chapter 16. They went to go to Asia. and the spirits and the spirits and the spirit said, wrong place.

The spirit forbade us. Oh, they must have been quite down that day. And then, the vision. The man from Macedonia, come over to Macedonia and help us.

They must have been on a high that night. Oh, there must be wonderful fruit there. And then they called Macedonia. What's the first thing happens?

[27 : 59] They're like prison. How did they react? Oh, we've grown. Trust us to draw the short straws. What's that what he's going to say?

We read at midnight Paul and Silas sang praises to God. Practice doing what doesn't come naturally.

Practice exercise the fruits of the Spirit. Rejoice in the Lord of Annas. That's what we get five times in that letter to the Philippians where they were in Macedonia.

Rejoice! And again I say rejoice. We know or do we know all things really do work for God to those who love God.

Well, just two or three things as it goes. The general message is about growth. Growth takes time.

[29 : 09] Blessed be God. We can be converted in one moment. Blessed be God with one look, one act of trust in Christ.

We can be instantly born again and have the fruits of the Spirit with us. But we cannot grow overnight. It takes time.

In fact, it will take us the rest of our life. It will take us much prayer. Not one wee quick to grow my graces.

It's a lifelong process. Three things begin to talk to you about growth. It takes time. Secondly, it takes toil.

toil. My friend, the Christian life is wonderful. It's great, but it isn't. It is not easy.

[30 : 05] It's wonderful. It's glorious. There's very great hands, but there's also lows. There's toil. It doesn't come naturally.

It takes time. It takes toil. And the third thing is it takes tears. Don't be sad, less.

Very well. Sorrowing, yet always rejoicing. Time toil.

Tears. And our sad tears are a sign of life. Tears are a sign of life. They're not nice. But that's a sign of life.

You're still growing. Couple of things. Growth is imperceptible. You can be growing and not realise it.

[31 : 08] You must not. Your grandchildren come. And you say, man, have you grown in the last year? And the parents say, really?

You think so? You have noticed. But you have seen you for a year. And it's grown. It's imperceptible. Growth by definition is imperceptible.

And it's silent. Unseen and silent. And finally, growth requires rest.

growth. That's why Jesus said, come to me and rest. From me is your fruit found.

Now, don't rest in growth. Don't rest in how poor you're doing or how well you're doing. Rest in Christ who says, I am like the Jew to Israel and he shall grow as the man.

[32 : 13] He shall grow to rest in Christ. He is the source of all these things. Time, toil, tears, imperceptible.

Christ gives rest. In Christ. You grow by resting apparently. Rest in Christ. Well, however, I end as I began.

If you have not tasted that the Lord is gracious, forget about growth. Get the seed. Get Christ.

Get the state. Get forgiveness. Get life. And then we can talk about growth. If you are not a Christian, forget about growth.

Concentrate on getting forgiveness from Christ. Concentrate on him. He is our life. Well, as we are born weaves, desire the sincere milk of the bark that you may grow thereby.

[33 : 33] May God, the holy state make his bread to accept you to every one of us for this thing.