

Crossroads Community Church

Sunday November 2nd, 2014,

On this chilly November morning, God welcomed us with open arms. Pastor Don with his warm smile shared announcements; please come celebrate with us next week as we honor the men and women who have served our country. Then blessed us in prayer, ?Dear Father God we thank you for another week of your love and protection, help us continue to trust in you and remain humble to follow your will for our lives, in Jesus name Amen.?

Pastor Don asked, ?What does ?Stepping into Maturity? mean to you?? He defined maturity, ?it is the state of being complete and rightfully developed.? The Apostle Paul in his Letter to the Corinthians addressed them according to their level of maturity, (1 Corinthians 2,3). He recognized three levels, the first is the ?Natural Man?, otherwise known as the Pre-Christian, someone before the knowledge of Jesus. The natural man is not necessarily good or bad, he just does not have the knowledge of Jesus, and to him it is foreign, (1Corinthians 2:14). Paul brought a simple message to Corinth, ?Jesus died for your sins and was raised from the dead.? The destiny of the natural man is destruction and his need is salvation from sin. We have all been there, we all fall short of the glory of God, (Romans 3:23). We naturally think of the big sins like murder, and think ,?Oh I haven't killed anybody?, but so many other things are no less of a sin such as gossip, jealousy, pride, complaining, unforgiveness, etc. Sin is what separates us from Father God and we all need His forgiveness, (Romans 10:9-13). You may have heard the question, ?How do I become a Christian?? And some respond by saying you need to receive salvation, or you need to be born again. To the Pre-Christian these terms can be confusing, so we need to tell them simply; ?You become a Christian when you reach out to God and confess the wrongs you have done, ask Him to forgive you in Jesus name and make the decision to change your way of living by receiving Jesus into your heart to help you do it. The second level is the ?Spiritual Man?; the one who has come to know Jesus and has received Him into His heart. When we are changed from Natural to Spiritual we can now understand spiritual things because Jesus has transformed us, (1 Corinthians 2:15). To the natural man it is foolish and unconceivable to understand why the spiritual man believes in Jesus, someone we cannot see, (John 15:18-20). However a spiritual person lives with faith in their heart because we have been made alive by the Spirit of Christ. All spiritual things become clear because God reveals all things to us through the Holy Spirit living in us. Without God's Holy Spirit we cannot recognize God's voice and satan will use his greatest weapon against us; lies and deception. Although we have been given the mind of Christ through the spirit, we are still in an earthly body therefore cannot fully know what God's thoughts are, (1Corinthians 2:16; Isaiah 55:8, 9). If we want to follow Jesus, we need to do it in humility and obedience. Of ourselves we may want to do it but are unable to in our own strength for we need Jesus' power to do it and He will gladly give it to all who humble themselves to ask. The third level is the ?Carnal Man?, the one who lives only for himself according to his bodily desires. The carnal man is selfish and has no love or regard for others and is slave to his sinful nature and he desperately needs saving but is in denial because he is blinded by what he sees and feels in his body. The flesh of man is imperfect, deceitful and corrupt and needs to be saved by Jesus because only Jesus was perfect even in a body of flesh, (1Corinthians 3:1-4).

When a natural man comes to know Christ he enters the infancy stage of his Christian life and he will have struggles, even Paul had them as we read in Romans 7. He knows what is right and wants to do it, but finds that he ends up doing the opposite. He is learning more and more to rely on Jesus' help but still struggles with earthly menial things for example how a worship service ought to be, over time he grows and gains more maturity and realizes that although the details of a service need to honor God the main focus of gathering together on the Lord's day of rest is to praise Jesus and glorify God.

Beloved when we become a Christian it doesn't remove all sinful ways instantly, it removes the penalty our sins deserve. We are born again in a moment and the journey to Christlikeness takes a lifetime. Just like a baby grows from infancy to toddlerhood, to pre-school age up to teenage years before reaching adulthood; our Christian walk needs to grow from infant stage to maturity in Christ. If a child's growth stops it is usually a sign that there is some affliction impeding proper development and the child needs adequate help to keep growing, it is the same in our Christian life; we need perfect help to grow beyond the born again stage, we need to let Jesus in and spend time with him and learn from Him. Do we want to fellowship with Him and let him share of himself with each and one of us? Then this week my friends, when we hear Him knock, Let us respond and let Him in to see how good life with Jesus truly is. Until we meet again, May God richly bless you, Asherey Shalom.

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