

# 06/11/17 BUCYRUS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

“GROW UP!”

Pastor Mike Corwin

Text: Hebrews 5:11-6:3    God’s Word: Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

## I - FOUR HUSBANDS

I have a short story I want to share with you this morning:

The local news station was interviewing a 90-year-old lady because she had just gotten married for the fourth time. The interviewer asked her questions about her life, about what it felt like to be marrying again at 90, and then about her new husband's occupation.

"He's a funeral director," she answered.

"Interesting," the newsman thought.

He then asked her if she wouldn't mind telling him a little about her first three husbands and what they did for a living. She paused for a few moments, needing time to reflect on all those years. After a short time, a smile came to her face and she answered proudly, explaining that she had first married a banker when she was in her 20's, then a circus ringmaster when in her 40's, and a preacher when in her 60's, and now - in her 90's - a funeral director.

The interviewer looked at her, quite astonished, and asked why she had married four men with such diverse careers.

She smiled and explained, "I married one for the money, two for the show, three to get ready, and four to go."

A cute story. It made you laugh, but I used it to bring today's topic to light. That there are different seasons of life.

## II - SEASONS OF LIFE:

The movie Lion King took this principle of life and made a movie about it. A movie about the seasons of life as you watch a lion cub be born, grow up, and eventually become mature and take his place as the king of the jungle. They even had a song called the "Circle of Life" to lay this all out for us.

The author of Ecclesiastes talks about these seasons of life too as they point out the different times of life. From the time we are born to the time we die, he or she points out that there are all kinds of seasons in between.

How many are familiar with a man by the name of Mike Gottfried? A famous coach and analyst with deep ties to the community of Crestline. He and others from the area started a ministry called "Team Focus" which tries to make a difference in the lives of young men without a father figure in their life. In one of his talks I got to hear he said that there are three seasons of life:

- we learn - we go to school
- we earn - we go to work and get paid a wage
- we return - we put some of our earnings back into the family and the community

I believe that our faith has these same seasons:

- We learn - We go to Sunday School and Bible School. We go to church and confirmation and youth group. We learn the basics of our faith and how Jesus wants us to live.
- We Earn - We put those lessons and beliefs into practice. We go on mission trips, we work at the food and clothing pantry. We take time to help others in various ways. We earn by becoming seasoned and practicing Christians.
- We Return - This isn't all about money. This is about becoming a mature Christian and then helping others learn by teaching and leading them. By working alongside of them to help them be mature too.

### **III - TEXT:**

As a matter of fact I believe to not follow this progression of faith and work through the seasons of your relationship to God through his Son Jesus is not a good thing. It at least borders on the edge of sinfulness. If it isn't an outright sin it's at least a disappointment to God. If you disagree with me, just read the letter to the seven churches at the beginning of Revelation of what Jesus thinks about their lukewarm practice of Christianity.

Here's what the Apostle Paul says about the subject in his letter to the early Christian Jews...

### **HEBREWS 5:11- 6:3 (NLT)**

*<sup>11</sup>There is much more we would like to say about this, but it is difficult to explain, especially since you are spiritually dull and don't seem to listen. <sup>12</sup>You have been believers so long now that you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things about God's word. You are like babies who need milk and cannot eat solid food. <sup>13</sup>For*

*someone who lives on milk is still an infant and doesn't know how to do what is right. <sup>14</sup>Solid food is for those who are mature, who through training have the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong.*

*<sup>1</sup>So let us stop going over the basic teachings about Christ again and again. Let us go on instead and become mature in our understanding. Surely we don't need to start again with the fundamental importance of repenting from evil deeds and placing our faith in God. <sup>2</sup>You don't need further instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. <sup>3</sup>And so, God willing, we will move forward to further understanding.*

In the center of his letter he says that he would like to explain what he had said in the first part but he can't because they are too “spiritually slow” to grasp what he would like them to hear. In other words he is telling them they are so far behind others that there's no way they could understand it, or, at the very least, they don't pay attention!

He points out this shouldn't be the case because they had been deep believers, that they had been taught all the basic beliefs they needed to know and by this time they should have been so deep and mature in their faith they should have been teaching others. But instead they have become lazy/lackadaisical and not continued to mature in the faith. They are in danger of slipping back into their old unbelieving ways. He calls them babies! They are falling backwards instead of moving forward and, instead of being able to feed them meat and potatoes, they are still just drinking formula! Do you feel the sting? Do you think he's being a little in their face? Do you think he's upset?

Instead of studying more, of maturing in their faith, they still need to have the basics taught to them over and over again. They are still in the crib...the playpen of their faith.

Then he says it's time to grow up. It's time to grow and deepen their faith instead of stopping at their Salvation. John the Baptist talked about repenting and finding God, but Jesus brought so much more information for those who would listen. That there is more than just believing in God...you have to put your faith in him and live for him too. He tells them they know the foundation of their faith, now they are supposed to be building on it and they should pray to God for divine assistance in their journey.

Evidently Paul was not fond of laziness when it came to Faith.

#### **IV - CIRCLE OF FAITH:**

Not only is there a circle of life but there is also a circle of faith. Like life that circle, if healthy, is always moving, always changing, and, most importantly, always growing. The circle of faith looks like this:

- **BABY** - Like life we aren't born into the faith as a mature Christian. We are little babies who can only handle the milk. We are fed and nurtured by those in our life who take the time to tell us about the faith, to share the stories of Jesus with us. Those who explain what Christmas and Easter is all about.
- **LEARNER** - Then we grow into being a learner. We get educated about the faith. We go to church, to Sunday School, to Bible School, to Confirmation and we learn new stories and we are taught the basics of our faith. Hopefully somewhere in this process someone introduces us to Jesus in a new and amazing way and we accept him in to our hearts and make him our Savior.
- **DISCIPLE** - The next piece of the circle is to become a disciple. This is when we say that not only will Jesus be our Savior but he will be our Lord too. That we will follow him and his teachings in our life.
- **MATURE** - Then we need to mature. We get off the milk and get to be fed by the whole food of faith. We study the Bible, we increase our prayer life, we dig deeper and deeper into the teachings of Jesus so we can have a mature understanding of what it means to be his disciple and how our lives are to be transformed by him.
- **TEACHER** - Then we are supposed to become a teacher of the information we have been trusted with. We are supposed to take that information, those seeds of faith, and plant them in the lives of others so they can grow too.

In other words we are supposed to do what was done for us. We are supposed to go back to the beginning of the circle and start giving milk to others.

## **V - GROW UP!:**

As I look at the growth this church has enjoyed the last few years and as I look at all the children we have been blessed with by God in this church, I need to tell you what Paul told you...GROW UP! We need to mature in our faith and become the mature Christians who will come along side each and every one of them and help them throw the milk bottle away and start having steak and potatoes with us.

If you learn and live this circle of faith then they will all get to eat solid food and the church will continue to live and grow, not only up, but out as well.

God loves you...Jesus saved you...now go and feed that information to others until they are full.  
AMEN