

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST

Message Three

Her Early Growth

Mat 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

*Mat 11:28-30 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.
30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

Col 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

Let us begin our study of the early church growth by briefly noting the early movements of Jesus Christ as he began to reveal himself to the world. He obviously left his childhood home of Nazareth *John 1:45* and presented himself to John the Baptist for public baptism in the river Jordan. *Matt. 3:3* From Jordan, he went into the wilderness to undergo Satanic testing. *Mk. 1:12-13* He returned from the wilderness to the river Jordan. *John 1:28-29* He leaves Jordan for the region of Galilee, there attending the wedding of Cana. *John 2:1-2* He is then found preaching in different synagogues in the region of Galilee *Luke 4:4* and returning to his hometown of Nazareth. *Luke 4:16* From there, he seems to make a permanent move to Capernaum which becomes his new home. *Matt. 4:12-13* From this location, he launches out to all the surrounding regions. Capernaum, and the region of Galilee, was a major crossroad of highways north and south, and east and west. No doubt, this is an indication of the worldwide intention Jesus had for his church while he reached out, for the present, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. *Matt. 15:24, Matt. 28:18-20*

FIRST Growth was realized by a direct personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Notice the direct personal relationship implication of the words of Jesus in our text verses. *Mat. 16:18 "I will build my church", Matt. 11:28-30 "Come unto me" "I will give you rest", "Take my yoke upon you", "learn of me", "I am meek and lowly in heart", "ye shall find rest unto your souls", "my yoke is easy", "my burden is light" Col. 1:27 "Christ in you"* It is still the same today. Before growth can be realized, there must be a direct personal relationship. *Joh 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

SECOND Growth was realized by some when he called them into full time service with him and for him

*Mat 4:18-22 And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.
19 And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.
20 And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.
21 And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.
22 And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.*

At this point in his earthly ministry, Jesus began to organize the church structure. These grew personally and as a result, the entire church began to realize spiritual growth.

THIRD The church grew as they heard his words

Joh 7:46 The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.

Joh 8:38 I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.

ONE: Jesus spoke the very words of the Father. These wonderful teachings are the expression of the very heart of God. They were spoken under the full influence of God the Holy Spirit, therefore, they were powerful living words which went into the heart of his hearers. Because they were living words that went into people's hearts, they created spiritual growth.

TWO: *1Pe 2:1-2 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,*

2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

Today, we also grow as we partake of the word of God. This principle underscores the importance of God's children to study his word. God's word is spiritual food to our lives and without it we will starve spiritually.

THREE: We, as preachers and teachers of God's word, must realize that without the power of the Holy Spirit controlling our speaking we are nothing.

Joh 15:5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

2Co 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

1Co 2:1-5 And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

FOURTH They grew as they saw and were encouraged by his compassion.

Mat 9:36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

Mar 1:40-42 And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

41 And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.

42 And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed.

Jud 1:22 And of some have compassion, making a difference:

We Live in a dog eat dog world. But we should not be that way. Our hearts should be tender toward this sin broken world. Jesus reacted with great compassion toward the broken needs of those around him. This is the way God is and if we are under his control, we too will be filled with compassion.

Mat 5:7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Lam 3:22-23 It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.

23 They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.

FIFTH They grew as they saw him exercise his power.

Luk 4:14-15 And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

Mar 4:35-41 And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side.

36 And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships.

37 And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.

38 And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?

39 And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

40 And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?

41 And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

Luk 5:4-11 Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

5 And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

6 And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.

7 And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

9 For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken:

10 And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

11 And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

Today, we desperately need to realize that God's power has not diminished, not even a little.

Act 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Act 4:33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

2Co 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

Joh 7:37-39 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

We will continue to be successful only as his power flows in us and through us.

Eph 1:15-23 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

SIXTH They grew as they lived in daily fellowship with Jesus Christ.

1Jo 1:1-10 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

The rules of Jesus Christ have not changed. We must walk in daily fellowship with him or we will not succeed.

Joh 15:1-8 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

SEVENTH They grew as Jesus Christ added structural strength to the church.

Luk 6:12-19 And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

13 And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles;

14 Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew,

15 Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes,

16 And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor.

17 And he came down with them, and stood in the plain, and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judaea and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases;

18 And they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed.

19 And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all.

Eph 4:11-16 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; healed them all.

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

The same is true today. A church must have structural strength.

EIGHT They grew as they discovered they could be successful as they obeyed his word

Mat 10:1-7 And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;

3 Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus;

4 Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:

6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Luk 10:17-20 And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.

18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

There is no substitute for obedience. We too will be successful as we obey him.

1Sa 15:22-23 And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

NINTH They grew to the point that Jesus Christ was satisfied that he could rest his work on earth with them and return to heaven.

Mat 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Since Jesus Christ has not yet returned for us, his work on this earth still rests with us. We must be faithful to carry out his work.

Luk 19:13 And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

Amen and amen!