

Evidences of the New Birth

By Henry Mahan

Bible Text: 2 Corinthians 5:7

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I received a letter this past week from a minister who has been my friend for many, many years and he is a missionary in the northern part of Canada way up in the coal country. He has been there 14 years. And he has...the Lord has blessed his ministry. There has been some people converted. There has been some young men called to preach, 1500 miles north of Toronto way up in the woods in Canada. And he requested that our church have a part in their school library, their native minister's school library. And I have already ordered and had sent to him Spurgeon's works, his *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, Bishop Ryle's works and a few others that he was interested in.

And he wrote back very grateful and thankful for our part and especially in these...in getting these books that are so vital in the life of a young minister. But in the letter he asked for my thoughts on a few subjects. He wanted me to write to him and tell him what I thought about a few things involved in this thing of a man's relationship with God.

And the first question he asked was this. Would you give me your thoughts on the subject: Evidences of the new birth, evidences of regeneration? And I put a little time in on this and wrote to him and expressed my views, my thoughts. That is what he asked for, on the subject: Evidences of the new birth, evidences that a man knows God or is regenerated, not just religious, but really knows God.

And I feel that this is a very timely subject especially in this day of much religion. And I will confess to you little understanding of the living God.

I don't think we ought to retreat into our orthodox shells and not read and listen to other people. And I make it a practice to at least become acquainted with what preachers are saying today and what people are believing and the things that they are doing in the name of God.

And I will be perfectly frank with you. I am totally disappointed. I was thinking this morning. It may be that we are entering into the longest dry spell, spiritually speaking, that this world has ever encountered of a real visit from God. We may be moving into the day of desertion and judgment. I don't know. But there is not much being said, my dear friends, and there is not much being done by the power of the Holy Spirit. There is a lot of religion. Barnard used to say, "Tin cup religion. Come by and take a swig." But there is not much from God these days. There wasn't anything on my television this morning

that even smelled like it came from God. And there is nothing on my radio this morning that even had any hint or any trace of any power of God's spirit in it.

Now you can get all excited over this religious trend if you want to, but to me it is the broad road to destruction. And this is a timely subject: Evidences of a new birth, not evidences of a religious experience, but evidences of a new birth, not evidences of a religious persuasion, but evidences of a new birth, not evidences of a home in heaven, evidences of a new birth.

Now a subject like this is not without its dangers. There is a lot of danger here and I know it. For when you set forth evidences or characteristics of a new birth or regeneration people are prone to look for that experience and miss the person. If you give a recipe for something, people are prone to start trying to fill the recipe themselves instead of looking to the person who furnishes the ingredients, who is the source of life, the fountain of life. It is like I told your class this morning. You don't try to be humble. If you make humility your goal you will miss it a thousand miles. You will attain to a false humility, a phony humility, a religious humility.

You don't make love your goal. If you make love your goal you will reach a goal without Christ. Christ is your goal, to be like him. Humility comes as we see ourselves in the presence of our Lord. That is the way Isaiah got humility. He saw the Lord and he said, "Woe is me." That is the way Job was humbled. You don't get humility, you are humbled. God humbles you. And that is how Job was humbled. He saw the Lord. That is how Daniel was humbled. He saw the Lord. And when we see the Lord in his glory, see Christ in his glory, in his greater glory, all these things fade. They fade into nothingness.

So when we talk about evidences of the new birth and evidences of regeneration and evidences of salvation there is a danger in someone trying to produce those evidences and miss the person.

This is the danger of biographies. Now we have a church library, a church book store and I encourage you to visit the bookstore and to read these good books. We have tried to put out there on the tables and the shelves the best books, books by the best authors. But there is a danger in making too much of any man's book. Here is the book. "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." Here is the book. Here is the book. All of these are other books. This is the book. This is the infallible book. This is the infallible Word. And there is a danger in making too much of biographies of great Christians and great preachers is that their good points are exaggerated and their bad points are overlooked. And we begin to try to copy another man's experience. We begin to copy another man's lifestyle other than our own. And we become imitators of men and not followers of the Lord. There is a great danger. Our experiences, my friends, are going to differ. God's dealings with us are going to differ. God will work in the life of his child as it pleases him and he will use that child for his glory and for his purpose and he is not going to make all of us John Newtons or all of us Charles Spurgeons or all of us Horatious Bonars. He is going to have his own image stamped on you and going to use you, your personality, your character, your lifestyle for his glory in your place. And that is

one of the dangers of picking up a biography and saying, “Now, this man prayed every morning at four o'clock, that means I will pray every morning at four o'clock. This man did this, therefore I will do this. This man did this and God blessed it so I'll do it.”

You become an imitator of a man. You become a follower of a man.

Now I am sure you are aware of another danger when we talk about evidences of a new birth. I am sure that you are aware of another danger and that is all of God's people do not have the same degree of revelation. That's right. We all don't have the same...we all have the same light, but not the same degree of light. We all have the same person revealed to us, but we have various degrees of revelation. We all...we don't have the same degree of faith. Our Lord even said that. He said, “Great is thy faith, oh ye of little faith.”

Faith may be great. It may be little. It may be much. It may be small. There are degrees of faith. There are people here who have a confidence and an assurance that can't be shaken. There are others here whose faith is in Christ, but they are troubled and they are full of doubts and fears. We all don't have the same degree of growth. The tree that has just been planted is not going to produce the same amount of fruit as a 40 year old tree. Forget it. And this is one of the discouraging marks of young believers. They try to know too much too quick. They...it is impossible...the babe in Christ, the babe in Christ cannot and must not expect to compete with the elder in knowledge, in wisdom in understanding, in growth. He can't do it.

You know, that is the reason you have grades over here at the school. You have first grade and you have 12th grade and you don't expect those first grade children to compete with those 12th grade students. This is...in all areas of life except the church we honor this thing. Even in boxing you have a heavyweight division and a light heavyweight and a lightweight and a bantam weight and a featherweight. You don't put a featherweight in with a heavyweight and tell him to do his best. You don't expect it of him. And you don't put a little first grader in a class with ninth and 10th graders and expect him to compete with them. And neither should the babe in Christ expect to compete with the giant or the elder in Christ Jesus. So we have to face that danger.

You say, “Preacher, you are tearing your message up before you preach it.”

No. I am just laying a foundation. I am saying there are evidences of the new birth. The Bible teaches that.

Listen to these Scriptures. “If any man be in Christ he is a new creature.” That is an evidence. If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his.

Here is another. “He that loveth not, knoweth not God.” “God is love.”

Here is another, “If we say we have no sin why we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.”

Here is another, “If we say we have not sinned we make God a liar and his Word is not in us.”

Here is another, “If any man draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in him.” No, sir.

“We are the household of faith. If we continue in Christ to the end.” That’s an evidence.

What I am saying is this. I am saying this type of message has its dangers in that we begin to present evidences of the new birth and instead of seeking the person, instead of seeking Christ, instead of seeking the fountain, coming to the fountain, people begin to try to produce the evidences and produce a likeness to some great one who has gone before.

Be yourself. God will deal with you in his own way. The Lord Jesus Christ dealt with the woman at the well one way. He dealt with Zacchaeus another way, he dealt with Nicodemus another way, he dealt with Paul another way. He dealt with each one of them his own way in bringing them to faith in him.

And don’t expect and don’t be discouraged when the tree that has just been planted isn’t loaded with fruit. Don’t be disappointed when the babe in Christ cannot answer all the questions put to him by the fierce forces of evil in this world. Here is a babe in Christ, been saved about two years and some demon possessed, devil inspired argumentative liberal attacks him and he can’t answer all his questions and he goes creeping off into the darkness, “Oh, maybe I am not saved. I don’t know all the answers.”

Well, when you have been in the Lord for 50 years you still won’t have all the answers and you will still have to say, “I’m sorry, fellow, I don’t know. I just...”

Like that blind man they said, “How made you...?”

He said, “I don’t know.” He said, “I don’t know whether he is a sinner or what he is. I just know I was blind and he made me see. I do know that. I know I was blind he made me see. I can’t answer your questions,” he said. “I can’t debate with you. I can’t argue with you. But I do know this. I was blind and he made me see and maybe he will make you see.”

But here are my thoughts on this subject as the Holy Spirit gives us wisdom and is pleased to anoint them. I summed it up in five points, evidences of the new birth.

The first one, I believe, is this. A regenerated man has a deep sense of sin, a deep sense of sin. Isn’t this where Paul started? Isn’t this where he started? Turn to Romans chapter seven. Isn’t this where Paul started?

He said in Romans seven, he said in Romans seven, beginning with verse nine, “I was alive, religious. I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came sin

was revealed. It revived and I died. That's where I started. I started this pilgrimage, I started this walk of faith when I died. That's when it started."

A man begins to live when he dies. A grain of corn begins to live when it dies. A seed begins to live when it dies. Paul said, "That is where I started. When the law came and the hands of the Holy Spirit and showed me my sin, I died."

Now read the next verse. "And the commandment which was ordained to life I found to be unto death." That commandment which God gave to Adam, "Do this and live," which was ordained to life, "Do this and live," Paul said, "I found out that it was ordained...it slew me. I found that that commandment which was ordained to life to be my death. It became my instrument of death. I died at the feet of Christ when the law showed me what I was."

Isn't this where Job started? Turn to Job chapter 40, Job chapter 40 and let's...this man Job, you know, people get upset when we say Job was a proud man, but there was a lot of pride in Job. Job kept talking about his righteousness and how he would hold to his righteousness and would not give up his righteousness. And he was a righteous man compared to other men. But God let Job see himself in the light of God's power and holiness. And that is what slew him. And he said in Job chapter 40 verse four, "Behold I am vile. What shall I answer thee?"

Now he wasn't telling these three friends of his that he was vile, these three friends were asking what he had done, how he had sinned. And he said, "I haven't sinned. I hold to my integrity. I will not let go of my integrity."

But now here is God talking to him. And he says, "Lord, I am vile. What shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand on my mouth. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer you, twice, but I will proceed no further."

Look at Job chapter 42. Listen to what he says here, Job 42 verse five. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee wherefore I hate myself." This is what I was saying a while ago. The key to humility is to see the Lord. It is to see the Lord. Job said, "I have seen the Lord. I hate myself I repent in dust and ashes."

Wasn't this the experience of Isaiah? When he saw the Lord he said, "Whoa is me," a sense of sin. The sinfulness...oh the exceeding sinfulness of sin. And this is something from which Paul never departed.

In one of his last epistles he wrote this. "Jesus Christ is come into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief."

Now, let me shock you a little bit. The average religionist thinks that this is the way we start. We come like the publican. God be merciful to me a sinner. Now listen to me. We come like the publican and we feel, oh, the terrible, terrible guilt of sin. We have sinned against God. We are born in sin, conceived in sin, shapen in iniquity by actions and atti-

tudes and imaginations. Now that heavy weight of sin, that burden of sin, when we come to Calvary it is lifted. There is a sense in which that is true and another sense, Cecil, in which that ain't so.

Now listen to me. I wouldn't destroy one of our favorite songs, but the burden of sin to a true believer never gets any lighter, never. In fact, actually, it gets a little heavier.

Now I want you to listen to David. Turn to Psalm 51, Psalm 51. And I will be...I am going to be totally frank with you because I think some of you are mature enough in Christ to understand what I am talking about. The burden of sin is paid for at Calvary. It is removed as far as God is concerned at Calvary. It is lifted as far as condemnation is concerned at Calvary, but I will tell you this, for the true believer, the burden of sin never goes away. Now you listen to David, Psalm 51. "Have mercy on me, oh God, according to thy loving kindness, according to the multitude of thy tender mercy. Blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity. Cleanse me from my sin. I acknowledge my transgression, my sin is ever before me, ever, constantly, never leaves, always before me."

Turn to Romans seven. Let's see what Paul says about this. In Romans chapter seven, now these are the cries of a regenerated soul. This man knows God. Listen to him. Romans 7:18, "I know," he says, "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. Now to will is present with me, how to perform it, that which is good, I find not. The good that I would I do not. The evil I would not..." He is talking about thoughts here and imagination and attitude and motive and so forth. "That I do. Now if I do that I would not it is not I that do it, it is sin that dwells in me, dwells in me, dwelleth, continually, not..." He doesn't say sin that used to dwell in me, but God took it away. He said it dwells in me. "I find then a law that," verse 21, "when I would do good, evil is present with me. I delight in the law of God after the inward man, but I see another law warring in my members, bringing me into captivity. Oh wretched man that I..." What? I was? I am.

Now I am going to give you three reasons why this burden of sinner does not get any lighter as the years go by. The first reason is this. Now listen to me. I am saying a regenerated man has a deep sense of sin not only when he comes to repentance and faith, not only when he comes to Christ, but he has a continual sense of sin and burden of sin that does not get any lighter. And here is the reason it doesn't get any lighter, three reasons.

Number one, the more I understand of God's holiness and God's righteousness, the more I understand my failure and my unrighteousness. Now, the brighter the light the more blemishes you are going to see. The brighter the light. The nearer I get to seeing God in his holiness, God in his righteousness, the more I see of my unrighteousness, my unworthiness... We begin to talk about when we are first converted. We begin to talk about loving one another and there is a certain understanding that the new believer has about love. But I will tell you the more you see of God's love for the unworthy and God's love for the guilty and God's love for the unthankful and God's love for his enemies, the more

you see of just what that love really is, you might think when you first start this journey you have got a little, but the more you see of his total, total complete affection the more sinful you become. His holiness, his holiness.

I tell you the second reason. And that is as we grow, as we come to know more about the spirituality of the law of God, the spirituality of the law, not just deeds. When a person is first saved they quit drinking and quit cursing and quit this, that and the other, you know. And they get feeling pretty good, you know, breathe better and go to bed at night and rest and don't hang out down at the pool hall and don't hang out down at the juke joint and you keep better company and you get feeling pretty good.

Well, let me tell you something. The more you see of the spirituality of God's law, that God's law...God's perfect law reaches not just the deeds of the body, but reaches the thoughts of the mind, the imaginations and why we do things and how we are motivated to do things and our attitudes towards each other and toward him and toward life in general. And these things...the greater work we see needs to be done here.

Christ says, "Cleanse first that which is within and then the outside will be clean." We are starting on the outside and working in. And we begin to understand something of what it really means to love God with all your heart, what it means to love your neighbor as you love yourself, what it really means to worship the living God, what it really means to praise God.

And I tell you, brother, when you begin to understand something of the depths of the spirituality of the law of God that reaches the deepest recess of the thoughts and intents of the heart, oh, good gracious, how wretched a man that I am.

And I will tell you something else, the reason that this burden doesn't get any lighter is your goal is continually readjusted, continually readjusted. Now we start out by wanting to be pardoned, huh? Pardoned from sin that's right. That's where we start. We want to be pardoned from the penalty of sin and when we find that, great, we're saved, we're saved from hell, we're saved from sin, we're saved from his penalty, all condemnation gone.

And then we begin to want to be saved from its power. The penalty of sin doesn't concern us so much anymore. We want to be saved from the continual power of sin. That sin that...that thing that...that besetting sin that stays there. We want to be out from under its power.

And then we have come to this place where we want even to be delivered from sin's practice. I want to think on that which is pure and holy and of good report. I want to not only believe I my orthodoxy and in my creed that a man ought to be holy, but I want to be. I don't want to just say the Bible said we ought to forgive. I want to forgive. I don't want to say the Bible says we ought to give a full measure running over. I want to give the full measure.

You see, we want to be saved from the practice of sin. And I will tell you something else as we grow in grace and our goal is readjusted, we long for the day when we will be saved from the presence of sin, from even the presence of it. That's right. Our goals are readjusted. That is the reason the burden is never lifted. It never goes away.

We see more of his holiness. And when we do the burden gets heavy. We see the spirituality of the law, that the law goes deeper than does and don'ts. It goes down into the heart. And then our goals are readjusted. We want to be saved from hell, but that is pushed aside. And then the power of sin and then the practice of sin and then our goal becomes to be like Christ.

Do you know what I am talking about? We start out with heaven on our minds and our goal is to make that city. And as we progress we long to be like Christ. We start out comparing ourselves with other people and then we begin to see ourselves in the light of God's holiness and we...the burden is never lifted.

The regenerated man has a deep sense of sin. Secondly, the regenerated man has a deep sense of his unworthiness, his unworthiness. Now if you can...if you can find in yourself any reason why God should show mercy to you it may be that you have missed him. If you can find any reason why God should show mercy to you.

Listen to David. "Who is David and what is my house that you have brought me hitherto?"

Listen to Jacob, "Oh, God, I am not worthy of the least of thy mercies."

Listen to Peter, "Oh, Lord, depart from me. I am a sinful man."

Old Mephibosheth who came before David said, "Who am I that you should show mercy to such a dead dog?"

Now I will tell you some questions. Turn to Job nine if you will. Here are some questions that will be weighed by every believer, every regenerated man. In Job nine verse two listen to what Job said, "I know it is so of a truth, but how, how should man be just with God? How?"

In Job 25 verse four he said, "How can he be clean that is born of a woman? Behold the moon. It shineth not. The heavens are not pure in God's sight. How much abominable and filthy is man that drinks iniquity like the water?"

The regenerated man has a sense of sin. He has a sense of unworthiness, unworthiness. He has a sense of inability. How can I be just with God? Now, no way that I can be just with God by walking a church aisle or shaking a preacher's hand. That doesn't make me just with God. That can't do anything about my sins. That can't do anything about my rebellion. That can't do anything about my evil nature. That can't do anything about God Almighty's judgment and wrath against me. I may go into this water and get put beneath

the water and brought up and it may wash my flesh, but it can't do a thing about my record. How am I going to be just with God? By my nature?

That brings me to the third thing. A regenerated man will have a clear view of the person and work of Christ. Our Lord said, "He that seeth the Son and believeth on him hath life." He will have a clear view. Now I know men carry on endless debates and they always have and they always will about church government and church ordinances and church discipline. They will carry on endless debates about the place of the law in a believer's life. They will carry on endless debates about prophecy regarding the last days, the Jews and all the nations and who wrote this book and when he wrote it and why he wrote it and the theology of the reformers and the theology of the puritans and the theology of the contemporaries. But there is one area where all regenerated men meet and where they agree. And that is: Who is Jesus Christ? Who is he? He is very God of very God. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. Jesus Christ who was before all things by whom all things were made, for whom all things were made. He who thought it not robbery to be equal with God made himself of no reputation and came down here into this earth as our Redeemer, as our federal head, as our surety, as our substitute as our sin offering, as our sin bearer as our sacrifice.

He came down here in the flesh and by his obedience gave us a perfect standing and by his death put away our transgressions. The believer has a clear view of Jesus Christ this person and his work, a clear view, an unclouded view, a definite view. It is not Christ plus my faith, it is Christ alone. I am redeemed. I am justified. I am made a child of God not by Christ and faith or Christ and morality or Christ and good deeds or Christ and the church or Christ and a decision, but by Christ, by his passive work of obedience, or by his active work of obedience and by his passive work of death. I am his and he is mine.

He has a clear view of Christ. And nothing else gets between him and the Lord. Nothing between my soul and my savior, not my works or my experience or my feelings or my pastor or my deeds or anything else or even my sins, but my Redeemer.

All right, the fourth thing, quickly. A regenerated man has a continuing faith. Now listen to me and I want to be as kind here as I can. I know people. People get enthused and they join... we start out as kids. We join the boy scouts. And, you know, you start out as a tenderfoot I think. Maybe you have to work to get to be a tenderfoot, but you start out at the bottom. And you can always tell a new scout. He is gung ho. He has got his book with him. He is studying. He is trying to earn his merit badge and after a while it kind of wears thin and they don't all get to be eagles, just one out of a thousand.

Most of them do you know when they drop out? Most of them drop out on second class. That is where they drop out. They are gung ho...or maybe first class. Star, they don't get that far, very few and only one out of a thousand gets to be an eagle.

The same thing is true. You find this true of yourself. You join...you are going to take up golf. You are going to get some exercise. I am going to buy me a \$500 set of clubs and I

am going out, “Honey, I’m going out two times a week. I am getting older. I need to get some of this off. I am going to get some exercise.”

So, boy, he gets read and gets up and got all that equipment and tears out to the golf course and plays nine holes or 18 and gung ho two days later, you know, and maybe, well, I don’t go the next. Two years later they are sitting over in the corner full of dust. He has taken up hunting now. He is going to hunt a while now. And then he hangs his gun up and, well, he is going to try. He is going to try boating. Going by a fellow said the two happiest days of my life was the day I bought my boat and the day I sold it.

We get enthusiastic. And this is the thing about joining churches. A fellow comes out here and hears me preach and I read a few Scriptures and preach a pretty good sermon. Man, I am going to join that outfit. That is where the gospel is preached. That is what I believe.

And down the aisle he comes. He joins up and I baptize him. He puts his name on the role and he is here on Wednesday and here on Sunday and here on Sunday night and he goes home and says, “Honey, we are going to tithe. We are going to start out right. You right that first check there for the Lord’s money, you know.”

And, boy, for about a month he just goes going and all this, you know. And the first thing you know he ain’t around. Do you know what’s wrong? The same thing about joining clubs and taking up sports and getting enthusiastic. It is all of the flesh. That’s all. That is not regeneration, no sir. And I wouldn’t offend you. I wouldn’t wound you, but the Scripture holds no hope, it holds out no hope, no hope for those who do not continue in the faith.

The guy, the fellow, Paul said, that gets crowned is the man that crosses the finish line, not the fellow that runs fast at the first and fades out or even is leading at the half way point or the three quarter pole, but the man that breaks the tape. And that is what Paul is saying in Hebrews chapter three.

Turn over there with me, Hebrews chapter three. In the third chapter of Hebrews reading verse six, “Christ is a son over his own house whose house are we if we hold fast the confident rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.”

Now I will tell you. I may startle you here, but this is no novice preaching. I have preached long enough to win my spurs, actually I am more encouraged by the fellow that is seeking the Lord and he is struggling and he is having conflicts and he is up and down, but he is here. He keeps seeking, he keeps hungering, he keeps asking questions. He doesn’t have all the answers, you know. And maybe that goes on for a while and he has his mountains and his valleys, but there is right...as a medium he is faithful. He loves this book. He never departs from the book. He never departs from the closet of prayer. He never departs from the fellowship of God’s people. He never departs from the enthusiasm of the gospel. He has his high mountains and he has his low valleys.

I would rather have that type of fellow than that fellow is like that blazing rocket. I know his steam is going to run out pretty soon. He is just a blazing rocket. He has no valleys. He has no mountains. He has just a steady climb. He is full of enthusiasm yet he is going to get right up yonder and he is going all the way down. The light is going out. And he will be gone.

But that old boy has been struggling with you and he doesn't have all the answers and he has got his doubts and fears and troubles and conflicts and sins and all these things. He is still with you. He is still seeking the Lord, still seeking the Lord. He is still striving for that prize of the high calling of Christ Jesus the Lord. Reality. That is what I want to see, some human beings and face reality, honesty.

"We are made partakers of Christ," verse 14, "if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end." And that is not my righteousness. That is looking to him, his cross and his blood and his sacrifice and his love and his presence and his fellowship.

John said, "If they had been of us they would have stayed with us. That is 1 John 2:19.

All right last of all and I quit. A regenerated man and you...has a sense of sin. It never grows any lighter. He has a sense of unworthiness and inability. It is real, totally unworthy. He has a sight, a clear view of Christ, his person and his work. It is not anything. It is Christ. He is not ashamed of Christ. He is ashamed of himself, but not of Christ. He continues. He continues in the faith. He continues to seek the Lord. He is not like every wind of doctrine doesn't blow him off course, you know. He is headed the same way. He is headed for Christ and he is not shifting around blowing hot and cold and blowing off course. He has got Christ.

All right, last of all he will grow. Yes, he will. I am confident. "He that growth not," Spurgeon said, "knoweth not God."

Turn to 1 Peter two, chapter two verse one through three. Listen to this. He will grow. He will grow in faith. It may be a slow growth. As I say, they all don't grow at the same speed. There are degrees of growth, degrees of faith. But he will grow in faith and love and in 1 Peter two verse one, "Wherefore laying aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisies and envies and evil speaking, as new born babes desire the sincere milk of the Word that you may grow, grow, if so be you have tasted the Lord is gracious."

Turn to Ephesians four. Let's look at one more here, Ephesians chapter four, along this line of growth. Ephesians four verse 11, "He gave some apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers." Verse 12, Ephesians four, "For the perfecting of the saints, the work of the ministry, the edifying of the body of Christ." Watch this now, "Till we all come in the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect or mature man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." That is what your preacher is for, "That you be no more, that you 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 you, but speaking the truth in love you may grow up into him in all things which is the head, even Christ.”

God’s children are going to grow. They are going to grow on the milk of the Word and the meat of the Word as it is preached to them and taught them by apostles and evangelists and pastors and teachers that they might be mature and not children that are just tossed around by every strange and inviting thing that comes their way.

The Pied Piper comes down the road blowing his flute and the children flock and follow him, but not the adults. They know this excitement is not it. They have got more important things to tend to. And you don’t want...that is the reason we study like we are studying today is that we might grow.

Our Father in heaven, we want to preach thy Word. We want to be faithful to the souls of those who hear us wherever they might be, whoever they might be. We feel we can say with the apostle Peter, “Lord, thou knowest all things. Thou knowest that we love thee. Thou art our hope, our confidence.” Christ is our Redeemer, our foundation. Other foundation can no man lay. He is our refuge. We have fled to him and our sins are ever before us. We have a sense of our unworthiness. And yet you have given us by your Spirit a clear view of Christ. Keep us in the faith. Keep us walking with the Redeemer. Other things come and go, but he is the same, yesterday, today and forever. Give us that persevering faith and grant that we may grow in grace and in the knowledge of him who is our Lord and our master and our pattern and example. In his name we pray. Amen.