

"Strengthen our Faith" 1 Peter 2:2-10 & John 14:1-14 (08/17/25)

Last week, we talked about Faith. We shared that Faith is to fully rely on Christ in the matter of our salvation. And we also shared that we believe in God, who is perfect and faithful, Jesus, who is the Christ, and the Holy Spirit, who is always with us.

Those are very simple and very basic ideas of Christianity. And actually, those are the basic doctrines we should know as Christians. However, when I met many Christians, I could see that some of the Christians had very strong faith. In any circumstances, in any situation, they never give up their faith. They never have doubts about God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, some of the Christians had weak faith. I could see that they had many things to be grateful for, but they always complained to God and had many doubts about God's love, Jesus's sacrifice, and the presence of the Holy Spirit.

It is true that there are strong faith and weak faith. Faith is to fully rely on Christ in matters of our salvation. If we can have strong faith just to know this simple sentence, there would be no people with weak faith. Many difficulties, challenges, and sufferings in our lives shake our faith. Therefore, we have to strengthen our faith. We should strengthen our faith so that we are not shaken in any situation. So, this Sunday, I hope to share how we can strengthen our faith.

Firstly, to strengthen our faith, we should build a deeper relationship with God. Let's think about this simply. When we say we trust someone, how do we learn to trust that person? When you first meet someone, can you really trust them right away? Even if their first encounter is positive, most people cannot fully trust someone immediately. But the more time we spend with that person, the more

experiences we have with that person, and the more we learn about that person, the more we come to trust that person.

[Slide 1] When I first met my son, Sooho, I couldn't believe he was really my son. The two evidence, I was in the room with my wife when she gave birth to Sooho, so I saw that this little one was my son, and Sooho's nose was the same as mine; those two things were the only evidence that I knew Sooho was my son.

[Slide 2] On Sooho's birthday, I was really tired. So, I had no idea what I was doing in the hospital with baby Sooho. The only things he could do were crying, eating, pooping, and sleeping. There were no interactions with me. 'Why do I comfort him? Oh, because he is my son.' 'Why am I changing his diaper? Yes, because he is my son.' 'Why am I not sleeping? Because he is my son!' The relationship between my son and me was not very deep at that time.

[Slide 3] However, after I spent more time with my son, I could have more evidence to believe that Sooho is my son. He started to smile at me, and we enjoyed Hawaii's beautiful nature and sea together, and we had a lot of fun in the Chicago area. We experienced joy, happiness, sadness, and sorrow together. After our relationship is deeper, I could have strong faith that Sooho is my son because I know I love him, and he loves me.

I believe our faith in God is the same. If we just hold the church doctrine, what we know about faith, our faith will be very weak. But when we build a deeper relationship with God based on our church doctrine, we will surely have the strong faith that will never shake. In other words, I would say, we should know God to strengthen our faith.

Definitely, I had no doubt about Sooho because I saw my wife give birth

to him. And I realized that I should know about my children. The first step in building a relationship is getting to know each other. To have a deeper relationship with my son, I needed to get to know who my son is. My wife and I learned what Sooho likes, what he does not like, what his character is, what he likes to do, etc. When I knew more about Sooho, our relationship was getting deeper.

So, to strengthen our faith, to build a deeper relationship with God, we should get to know God. Today, I want to share how we can know God not only through knowledge but also through experience.

To know God well, we must grow up. After I became a father, I came to understand much more about my parents' hearts. When my children make things difficult for me, I always think about how I must have made things difficult for my parents when I was young. When I feel happy and joyful because of my children, I also think, "Were my parents happy like this because of me?"

When I was a teenager, I really hated that my mother always called me "baby." But now, I call my son "baby," even though he does not like to be called that. After my son's two-year-old medical checkup, the nurse said, "He is not a baby anymore, now he is a toddler." When I heard that, I was really sad. As I grew up, I came to know my parents both rationally and emotionally. I came to know them more deeply. So, to know God— to know God more and more deeply— Christians must also grow up.

Then what does "growing up" mean for Christians?

In today's Scripture from 1 Peter, Peter also spoke about the growth of Christians. He said in 1 Peter 2:2, "Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation." Peter emphasized that

Christians should desire and long for pure, spiritual milk to grow.

There are some arguments about whether the “pure, spiritual milk” refers to the Word of God. However, here today, I simply want to consider pure, spiritual milk as anything from God that makes us grow. And I want to focus on the phrase “Like newborn infants.”

When Peter wrote this letter, Christians in Asia Minor were facing unbearable persecution. He wrote to remind them who they were and to encourage those who were suffering. In that context, Peter emphasized that Christians should long for pure, spiritual milk like infants, to grow into salvation. Did he say this because the early Christians were not mature? Did he say this because their faith was weak? I don't think so. Many of them had been Christians for more than 30 years, and many chose death rather than denying their faith.

Many scholars argue that “Like newborn infants” means that Christians should long for spiritual milk eagerly and regularly. For infants, milk is a matter of life and death. If they cannot drink milk regularly, they will not be able to survive. And because infants' stomachs are so small, they must drink milk very often to survive and grow.

I believe Peter wanted to say that if Christians under persecution did not receive spiritual food from God, like infants, they could not survive or keep their faith. He may also have meant that the early Christians could grow into salvation if they received spiritual food frequently. That is the growth of Christians: to long for spiritual food from God regularly so that we can spiritually survive and grow into salvation. And the more we grow spiritually, the more we come to know God.

These are the ways Christians can know God. To know God, we must meet Jesus, and we must grow up into salvation. However, because God is divine and holy, it is, in a sense, impossible for humans to fully know God. The only reason we sinners can know God is because of Jesus. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to God except through Jesus. No one can know God except through Jesus.

We meet God when we meet Jesus, and we grow spiritually when we walk with Jesus every day. Then we realize how precious Jesus is. For us who believe, Jesus is precious, but for those who do not believe, He is a rejected stone.

Today, we face many concerns and crises—war, disease, famine, climate change, violence. Every day we hear stressful news. But I believe the most serious crisis is that people do not know God. Many people do not know that Jesus is the Christ and the only way to salvation. Many do not know God’s presence.

I hope our beloved Church family can experience the grace of truly “knowing God.” As Peter said, “Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” God is with us. We can know who God is, and we can share in God’s heart.

So, what kind of Christian do you want to be? A Christian who only knows church doctrine and head knowledge? Or a Christian who knows God through a deep relationship filled with love and grace? I hope our whole church family can live in God’s love and grace through truly “knowing God.” And the more we come to know God deeply, the stronger our faith will become. As we learn to know God through our daily lives, our faith will grow firmer and more steadfast.

No matter what difficulties come, no matter what circumstances we face, the knowledge of God and the experiences of walking with God will strengthen our faith. This week, I hope that through the life of walking with Jesus, we can get to know more about God, and our faith can be strengthened with spiritual growth. Amen.