

"Growth of our Faith" Ephesians 4:14-16 (08/24/25)

Over the past weeks, we have continued to talk about faith. We have learned that faith means "Fully Rely on Christ for the matter of our salvation." We also shared together that Christians believe that God is perfect and faithful, Jesus is the Christ, and the Holy Spirit is with us all the time. We also talked about how to make our faith stronger and firmer; we need to know God more deeply. And to know and understand God better, we ourselves must grow.

Today, I would like to share with us what growth means for a Christian and to understand more deeply the growth of faith through today's Scripture.

To understand growth well, it helps to think about how children grow. As a young father, I have not yet experienced every stage of children's growth, but I have already learned that one of the most energy-consuming stages of children's growth is when children start saying, "I'll do it myself."

Before this stage of growth, raising children also required time and effort, but once they say, "I'll do it," things often become twice as hard. Before, they said, "I will do it myself," it was enough just to provide what they needed. But when they started saying "I will do it," I had to wait, show them how, clean up when they failed, and encourage them when they tried. This was difficult, but I knew that saying "I'll do it" was a normal and important part of growth.

Recently, my daughter Sua began saying "I'll do it" quite often. Most of the time, it is something she cannot yet do, but she wants to do by herself, pouring milk into a cup, getting things out by herself, turning on the light switch, and so on. At first, she usually failed.

[Slide 1] But one day, when we were eating spaghetti, she shouted with

joy. After watching mom and dad rolling spaghetti with a fork, she tried it herself—and succeeded! With a proud face I had never seen before, she shouted, “I rolled my spaghetti! I did it!” Something very simple for adults became a great joy for her when she succeeded by herself.

Growth always involves many failures. But those failures are what make growth possible. And when a person finally succeeds after many failures, the joy is greater. Sua had failed many times to roll spaghetti with folk. She was always covered with spaghetti when she tried. When the first time she succeeded to roll the spaghetti, she was really happy.

[Slide2] Now, let us look at this picture. What do you think when you see it? Am I cute or lovely like Sua? In the picture, I also rolled spaghetti and looked excited, but if an adult were doing this, it would look silly. My wife also took the picture with a face that said, “What is this guy doing?” My children laughed at me as well.

Even though I succeeded in rolling spaghetti, if a grown adult sits in a child’s chair and gets excited about it, we cannot really say this person has grown. Instead, people would say that he is doing things that do not fit his stage of growth.

As I looked at Sua and then at my own picture, I thought, ‘Isn’t this like many Christians and churches today?’ I have been doing church ministry in the U.S. for a little over a year now, and one thing that makes me sad is how often people measure whether a church is alive or dying by budget or attendance numbers. Instead of asking whether the church is maturely doing God’s work, people first look at outward measures.

That is why we must ask ourselves: Is our church truly growing in faith,

or are we just satisfied with something like “rolling spaghetti”?

So, how should Christians and churches grow? What does a mature church or Christians look like? Let us think about it together through three questions.

Firstly, are we Christians who are not shaken by temptations and every wind of teaching? Paul said to the Ephesian church: “Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.”

When I go shopping with my children, I see how easily they are tempted. If we pass the candy or toy section, they completely forget everything else and only focus on candy and toys. Paul told the Ephesians not to remain as children, but to grow so they would not be shaken by such temptations.

Ephesus was a big trading and port city. Ephesus was full of many religions and idols. Christians there were always tempted by idol worship and idol cultures. Paul pointed to growth as the way to overcome such temptations.

In the same way, we also face temptations. Even though each person’s weakness is different, the growth in Faith is the common way to overcome any temptation.

Secondly, in every respect, are we pursuing growth to become the mature body of Christ? Do we have the desire to be like Jesus? God came to us in a human body not only to save us by becoming the sacrifice but also to show us how to live and how to love God and neighbors. Therefore, it is possible to have the desire to be like Jesus, to follow how Jesus lived. Every Christians’ final goal of growth is to become like Jesus, to love God as Jesus did, to love neighbors as

Jesus did.

I am thankful that I can often talk with my wife about our faith, about becoming better Christians who please God. Through these conversations, even when we disagree, we both realize our immaturity and encourage one another to grow in faith.

Recently, my wife told me a lot, “Paul, you really look like your father!” I am also surprised when I see a mirror and my behavior. I did not want, but I look like my father. A child becomes like their parents when they grow up. It is very natural. So, if we are growing up in Christ, it is very natural for us to become like Jesus.

Thirdly, are we Christians who support the growth of others? As a church, do we help one another grow in love? Recently, I often tell my son Sooho to take care of Sua. Even though he is still young and cannot always do it, I tell him to take care of Sua well because he is her older brother.

It would be strange if an adult did not care for children. Likewise, a growing Christian should naturally desire to help others grow in faith.

If I were to fight with my children over sitting in the child’s chair or rolling spaghetti myself, that would be childish. As an adult, I should help my children eat well and grow well. I should help them know how to roll the spaghetti. In the same way, growing Christians should want to help others grow spiritually.

Today, we shared about growth through three questions: Are we Christians who are not shaken by temptation? Do we desire to become like Christ? Do we help others grow in faith? I hope our answers to these questions shape how we see ourselves and our church. Let us not be Christians who are only satisfied with

“rolling spaghetti” on our own. Instead, may we grow into mature Christians who love God and love our neighbors with strong and firm faith. By God’s grace and love, I hope that this week we will take one more step in growing our faith. Amen.