

# Time to Grow Up!

Hebrews 5:11-14

In the first message we preached as we began the study of Hebrews, I pointed out that it seems the unknown writer of Hebrews had primarily three groups of people in mind. (1) Jews who were true believers in Jesus Christ (2) Jews who had knowledge of Christ and were convinced Jesus was the Son of God only in their minds but not committed followers of Christ in their hearts (3) Jews who did not believe in Christ and in no way were they convinced of the claims of Jesus to be the Messiah and the Son of God.

The bottom line is this...Really, there are only two groups – Believers and Unbelievers. The same is true today. People are either saved or unsaved. They are either IN Christ, or OUTSIDE of the Body of Christ.

We need to be reminded of something else.... That's the main theme of the Book of Hebrews. The writer of Hebrews is showing the difference, the contrast between Judaism and Christianity. Judaism is the belief of Jews holding on to the Old Testament teachings, the law, ten commandments, and all the practices of the Old Covenant. Christianity is the belief for Christians who are identified as both Jews and Gentiles. They also believe in the Old Testament, but all the symbolism, rituals, ceremonies and types presented in the Old Covenant has been fulfilled in Christ under the New Covenant. All the promises given to Abraham in the Old Testament find its fulfillment in Christ in the New Testament. In Christ we have better promises. In fact everything is better with the Lord Jesus Christ. In Christ we have a better covenant, a better sacrifice because His sacrifice was a ONE TIME Sacrifice, sufficient to cover all our sins and satisfy the justice and holiness of God. In Christ we have a better hope, a better priesthood, a better resurrection because Jesus rose from the dead becoming the firstfruits for all who died in Christ. LIFE IS BETTER WITH CHRIST.

As we come to our study in Hebrews 5:11 **we come to the subject of spiritual maturity.** It starts 5:11 going all the way to 6:12. The Hebrew writer is addressing both believers and unbelievers. I believe the target audience in 5:11 is primarily unbelieving Jews. But also the application of the text can be given for Christians.

An unbelieving Jew has a background of knowledge about God. If they were raised in an orthodox Jewish home, they were taught the Scriptures. But here's the thing – unless they are born again by the Spirit of God, they lack understanding and wisdom of spiritual matters. There is spiritual immaturity preventing them from knowing the truth about Christ.

Paul said this to Timothy....

**2Timothy 3:15** and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

You can be acquainted with the sacred writings....the Scriptures...the Old Testament stories...able to make you wise for salvation...having knowledge doesn't MAKE you SAVED...but it can help point you in the right direction.

That's the case for the Unbelieving Jew....they were still childlike in their understanding.....they lacked spiritual understanding that comes from knowing Christ as Lord and Savior.

In vv.11-14 we'll look first at the Spiritual Immature – focusing on the Unbelieving Jew who has some knowledge about Christ...applies to anyone today who has been exposed to the gospel message, but has NOT committed themselves to accept Christ and follow Christ as Lord and Savior.

2<sup>nd</sup> point—we'll look at the Spiritual Mature... the person who has come to commit their life to Christ.

## **I. Spiritually Immature vv.11-13**

### **LOOK at v.11**

**About this** -- refers back to prev. verse "Melchisedek" .....much to say... (chpts. 7-10) the subject of Melchisedek is lengthy and deep) The priesthood of Melchisedek is some heavy stuff. It takes a believer who is indwelt by the holy Spirit to handle this.

To the Spiritually Immature, Bible Truth is HARD to EXPLAIN.... Especially to those who are not believers.

#### **1. Hard to explain --**

**there are some things in God's Word that is "hard to explain" to Christians, but it is REALLY HARD TO EXPLAIN the deep things of God to an UNBELIEVER.**

Let me give you an example – Ben Shapiro is a Jew. He is very smart. He is an American lawyer, a conservative political commentary...he regularly debates with liberals...A brilliant mind.... I saw him interact with one of the best Christian teachers on the planet....John MacArthur. MacArthur took him through Isaiah 53, a text an orthodox Jew would know....as far as I could see.... There was not even a "dent" made into the unbelief of Ben Shapiro...He does not accept Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

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| <p><b>1Cor. 2:14</b> The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.</p> |
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It seems the Writer of Hebrews had come to a stopping place. **Hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.**

**It is very difficult to explain Bible truths to a person who is DULL OF HEARING....**

#### **2. Dull of Hearing**

The word literally means "no push". "No push of hearing". slow, sluggish, "numbed" in mind as well as in the ears. Dullness of Hearing means they are intellectually lazy, And the longer they hear the gospel, and don't take it in...they become sluggish, and harden of heart.

They become so use to the things of God, that they take it for granted. Their spiritual appetite becomes dull. There were some small kids who had visiting friends from across town. They wanted their friends to see the train that was coming. They ran to the fence to see the train that came by their house. The train tracks were about 100 feet from the fence in yard. Fascinating for little children

to see such a sight. But what about the older people like teenagers and adults in the neighborhood? They had no interest in the trains. They've gotten use to it a long time ago. In fact, they no longer heard the train...gotten so dull in hearing the sound.

When we no longer pay attention to God's Word, we become dull in our hearing. Look at **Hebrews 2:1** Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, let us drift away from it.

**Hebrews 2:3** how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? The SOUND of the GOSPEL is coming our way...it's coming down the tracks, but we neglect this great salvation...we neglect to TREASURE IT, and APPRECIATE IT....it something that's really boring, uninteresting to us.

### **Colossians 3:1-2**

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

Even though I believe the text is pointing to UNBELIEVING JEWS....there is an application to a Believer who becomes DULL of HEARING the Gospel....

Are there other distractions that pull us away from hearing the Word of God? Has television, social media, internet, computers and our favorite hobbies replaced time reading and listening to God's Word? Is our affections truly for Christ and for things above more so than for things on the earth?

Have we been deceived by some sin? Look in **Hebrews 3:13** But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

We are living in a day when it's not popular to preach against sin. It's not popular to say certain things are wrong according to the Bible. Sin has a way of dulling ones' heart toward the gospel. It hardens the heart so as to not hear the clear teachings of God's Word.

<sup>12</sup> For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food,

### **3. The Waste of Time** v.12

For though by **this time** you ought to be.... (key word is "time")

Time has passed to the point you have neglected to learn and apply God's Word to your own life. You should be a teacher for others to learn and follow. Time has come you need to be re-taught again the basic principles of the oracles of God. What are the oracles of God? That's the Scriptures.

Those are basic teachings from the scriptures. When there is neglect to hear God's word for a great length of time, you forget even the very basics, or the ABC's of the Scriptures.

In the Old Testament we have the ABC's....the starting point to learn about the gospel of Christ. We start in Genesis...we learn about Adam and Eve....we learn about Noah...the flood...the Tower of Babel....we learn about Abraham....Moses....the building of the Tabernacle.... We learn about the 10 commandments....These are the ABC's or the **basic principles of the oracles of God. Before a child can read words, sentences, paragraphs....they are given PICTURES.** We have a picture of a dog....then letters are given to spell d-o-g.

I remember in elementary school how disappointed I was when the books given to read no longer had pictures. I would take a library book as a kid....look at all the pictures....but then the teacher had us to start reading books with no pictures.....

The spiritual immature is still on the ABC's of Bible instruction..... they STAY in that immature state because TIME passes and nothing is done to reach toward maturity.....stay on MILK rather than SOLID FOOD.

It's TIME to get on Solid Food.....Time to start learning Bible doctrine... Time to take hold of the heavy stuff in the Word of God.... The unbelieving Jew must take the time to see how Christ fulfills all the old testament pictures, symbols and types. It's time to DROP the Pictures and Embrace the Person of Christ.

Although this has implications for both Believers and Unbelievers, Paul made this statement regarding TIME.

**Ephesians 5:16** making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.

#### **Romans 13:11-14**

<sup>11</sup> Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. <sup>12</sup> The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. <sup>13</sup> Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. <sup>14</sup> But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

To the spiritually immature there is truth that is Hard to Explain, there is the dullness of hearing, there is the neglectful waste of precious time. There's something else....

#### **4. Ignorance about the message of righteousness v.13**

**For everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child**

...**unskilled** (not accustomed to the word of righteousness) (inexperienced with the message about righteousness)

The message of righteousness is this--- There's only one way to be accepted by God..you must be righteous. The righteousness that God accepts is not from SELF. You can't EARN it. You can't become righteous by your own power or strength. BIBLE says - "there is none righteous, no, not one."

Our acceptance with God....our ticket to get into heaven.... Is by the righteousness of someone else...

We received the righteousness of Jesus Christ. It is credited to us. Spiritually we are bankrupt of righteousness. So we are given a legal righteousness from Christ. We are justified by faith in Christ.

1Cor. 1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

2Cor. 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

That's our standing with God.... we stand in the righteousness of Christ...

**Here's the problem with the UNBELIEVING JEW.... They believed they could establish their own Righteousness.....**

**Romans 10:1-4** Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them (JEW) is that they may be saved. <sup>2</sup> For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. <sup>3</sup> For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. <sup>4</sup> For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

The writer of Hebrews wants to move on to the teaching about Melchizedek. He's that mysterious character who appears in Genesis 14. He is the King of Salem (ancient name for Jerusalem). His name means King of Righteousness.

To the Unbelieving Jew it's hard to explain the great truths about Melchizedek...the King of Righteousness. Melchizedek is the type and foreshadowing of Christ who is our KING...and truly the KING of Righteousness. Christ is our righteousness.

To the unbelieving...it's hard to explain about righteousness.

## **II. The Spiritually Mature** v.14

**A. Takes on Solid Food - solid food is for the mature -** The writer of Hebrews will return to the subject about Melchizedek in chapter 7. It seems he wants his readers to get

prepared for what's coming up. The way to be prepared is to be convinced of their need for Christ, and to move on to maturity by believing in Christ. They must lay down the ABC's....lay down the PICTURES and start embracing the PERSON the pictures represent....and that's the Lord Jesus.

It would be something terribly wrong if a child stays on the bottle...a teenager or adult has not graduated from drinking milk.... If mom sets the table and puts in everyone's plate a portion of Gerber food...baby food...not good....

The spiritually mature has come to know Christ personally...and has an appreciation for the WORD or MESSAGE of RIGHTEOUSNESS.

**B. HAS DISCERNMENT** - THE SPIRITUALLY MATURE has come to discern what's good and what's bad, or evil.... The immature baby will put anything in her mouth. She, or He will climb up on dangerous objects in the house. They will go places in the yard they shouldn't go. They lack discernment.

The spiritually mature....**have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.**

There is a progression of spiritual growth in a believer. In one sense...spiritual maturity comes instantly to a new believer. Once you have come to believe in Christ you are given the Holy Spirit.

### **C. Keeps Working Out**

The Holy Spirit gives you instantly a measure of spiritual maturity you've never possessed. To the Believer there is an ongoing spiritual growth that takes place. NOTICE **"trained by constant practice"**. They tell us the word "trained" in the Greek is the word for gym. You go to the gym to work out, to practice, to exercise and get stronger.

To grow stronger in our relationship with Christ, there is this WORKING OUT.... We pray, We study, we seek God's face...we obey the scriptures...we grow in our affections for Christ...

There is this WORKING OUT.

It's true God has WORKED IN US....we have that "imputed righteousness" of Christ. We stand in Christ complete. We are justified by faith in Christ alone....Nothing you can add to our legal status of justification..... We don't stay dormant and not work out what God has put in us...**we obey...put into practice what we have come to believe.**

**There is this PROGRESSIVE Righteousness.... The growth of sanctification....**

#### **Philippians 1:6**

**And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.**

## **Philippians 2:12-13**

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.