

Hebrews 205 | Grow Up! Moving From Milk to Meat

Bro. Kory Cunningham
Hebrews 5:11-6:3

If you have your Bibles go to Hebrews chapter 5 and as you go there I want to tell you a little bit about my weekend. We got to travel up to Louisville because my father-in-law- who I call Pappy- is known as Judge Alan Stouts to most people. He is a federal bankruptcy judge in Louisville. He has his how chambers there. It's crazy when we get to there. It's a pretty big deal and he retired this Friday after 14 years of serving as a federal judge. It was a very big deal. There were Senators and other judges there. The whole thing was fantastic. There were a lot of speeches given and other things there to honor him.

After that we got to go to Malone's for our reception dinner and let me tell you, I love dinners that I don't have to pay for. Those are great. So we got to go and it was one of those really grand, fancy, awesome dinners. Malone's is a really, really great steakhouse in Louisville. We went in, we sat down, and the first thing that came out was the appetizers. They brought around artichoke dip and these wontons that you dipped into the dip. Then they brought around a variety of different sushi. I was having all these appetizers and then came the salad. After the salad we got to pick from a menu what we wanted. I got the filet mignon, medium rare, and when it came it was so good! I had a steak and potatoes and they were passing around all kinds of sides. About the time I thought, man, I'm absolutely stuff, I can't have anymore, they brought out a cheesecake. Yes, now we get dessert! It was awesome. Sometimes special occasions end with a really great meal. You've had those moments where you've had a really good meal and you can remember it, you can taste it, and you can think about it. There is just something about food, right? It's just really, really good.

Now, can you imagine if in that scenario where there are probably 100 people, the Kentucky game is on, and everybody is eating and feasting, if

when the waitress came over to me and I said, "Ma'am, could you just bring me out milk all night because I only eat milk?" That would be a little odd, right? Imagine if I told her, "And actually, I don't like drinking from the glass. Could you just put it in a bottle? Then I won't spill it and I'll just chill in the back and drink this milk from a bottle." How many of you would think I was a really weird guy in the corner when all of this meal is coming forth, the appetizers, salad, steak, and cheesecake, and I have a bottle drinking milk? It would be really strange. We can all say that.

Now, it wouldn't be odd if a mom had a newborn and was giving this newborn milk from a bottle. Everybody would think it was so cute. But, me on the other hand, that is creepy. That seems odd. Something would be wrong with that picture. Well, the preacher in the sermon is going to kind of hit pause on his sermon, take a little detour, and rebuke the crowd he's talking to. He's going to rebuke this little church and basically say... *hey, it's time to grow up. You guys need to grow up because you need to move from milk to meat...* So that is going to be the title of the sermon- "Grow Up! Moving From Milk to Meat"- and that is what we're going to cover today.

Guys, let's be honest. Milk is good. It's the foundation of the gospel. They are the core. They are the foundation. They are so, so good but also we're supposed to move on to other things. We are supposed to move on to things that are meat from God's Word so that we can grow and mature in Christ. So the preacher is going to take a little detour and say... *hey, we need to take a time out. We need to talk because you need to grow up. Some of you are still on milk and you need to move to meat...* Maybe some of us in this room need that same word. Maybe you're still a baby Christian and you've been a baby Christian for a long, long time so it's time to start growing.

Let's go to Hebrews chapter 5 and get a little bit of a rebuke this morning.

Scripture:

Hebrews 5:11-14 About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. 12 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, 13 for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. 14 But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

Hebrews 6:1-3 Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. 3 And this we will do if God permits.

You might see over the text that we just read that there is a warning against apostasy. It's sort of a strange detour that the preacher takes here and what we're going to do today while studying this detour is hear the rebuke but next week there is going to be a warning- hey, some of you here might actually fall away. I know that really scares us as Baptists so we're going to talk about what that means. What is apostasy? Is it falling away? Can you do that? Is that biblical? What does that mean and what does it look like? We're going to talk about all of that and then we're going to come back the following Sunday and he's going to bring some comfort. He's going to say... *Hey, I don't think any of you are going to fall away and here is the reason- you have the anchor of Christ...* But, we're going to hear the rebuke, the warning, and then the comfort. So just know we are on a little detour.

If you notice, the first thing he does is tell us to listen up. Notice what it says in verse 11, "About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing." So he's saying he has a lot to tell them. He has a sermon that he's been rolling through and when he says, "we have much to say" I think he's talking about this priesthood of Melchizedek. He's been talking about Jesus who is the high priest after the order of Melchizedek and now he's like... *Ok, I can tell not all of you are listening. I can tell we need a little detour...*

So he sorts of stops the car so to speak. Have you ever been driving and the kids are just going crazy and won't listen? They won't do what you're telling them to do so you have to take a little detour. Mommy is pulling

over the car or daddy is stopping until they stop it all, right? You detour. You pull over and you have to give the kids a little pep talk about what they need to do or else you'll have to turn the car around and go back home, right? Have you ever had to do that? Am I the only parent who has to detour some? That is what he's doing! He's detouring this church and saying... *Umm, we need to pull the car over and we need to have a talk because I can't move forward unless you lock in...* He says "we have much to say." There is a lot to be said but the truth is it's hard to explain. Now, the question is this- is what he's about to say about Melchizedek hard to explain because it's so lofty that we can't understand it? In other words, is the content too difficult for Christians to grasp? That's not what he says. It's not hard to explain because the content is so above us. It's hard to explain because of this- "since you have become dull of hearing." You have lazy hearing. You're not listening. You're not applying. You're not growing.

The reason it's hard for the preacher to explain this is not because the content is overly complicated. It's because they are not listening and paying attention. They're not hearing what he's saying and actually practicing it, growing from it, and building upon it so he has to keep going over the same things because they're not growing. This is a rebuke. They have become dull of hearing. To become dull of hearing means to be lazy in your hearing and that is what they're doing. They are a church that has become lazy in hearing. They're coming in and they're hearing the apostles but they're just tuning it out. They're just there. They go home and they come back and they're never able to truly learn and truly grow. They have become dull in their hearing.

So, I think for us, a question for us to ask is this- how is my hearing? Jesus would say let him who has ears hear. That is kind of an odd phrase, right? How many of you have ears in this room? Yeah, everybody! So what does he mean by saying he who has ears let him hear? You can have ears and not actually hear. You can have ears and not listen. Have you ever tried to tell your kids something and you say the same thing over and over again? What is the kid's response? "You never said that. You never told me that." When your kids say that over and over again do you know what the problem probably is? It's not the parent saying things. It's the kids not listening to things! If you're an employee and your employer is constantly telling you something but your response is, "you didn't tell me that... you

didn't tell me that... you didn't tell me that" then it might not be the instruction. It might be your listening. It might be that you're not paying attention. You're not listening well.

The problem here is not that they're not getting instruction. The problem is that they're not listening. They're not soaking it in. They're not doing anything with it. They have become dull of hearing. So, I just want to ask you. How is your hearing this morning? We're pulling the car over. Again, when you get rebuked there are two responses. You can get mad or you can get motivated. You can get mad and be like... *what do you mean I'm lazy in hearing? I'm not a baby Christian!...* You can throw a fit and sort of prove the point, right? Or... *Oh, wait! I'm not hearing. I'm not going to get mad about this but I'm going to get motivated to start hearing.* What does that look like? How do I hear from the Word of God?... which is one of the things that we're going to get into in just a moment.

So notice this idea of hearing. We need to listen up and then we need to move from milk to meat. Notice what it says in verse 12, "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." Notice the phrase, "for by this time you ought to be teachers." What is he implying there? He's not scolding the baby Christians for only being on milk. He's not scolding those who are new to the faith who are still trying to learn the basic gospel of repentance and faith. He is not scolding those people. If you're a new believer you should be on milk. Peter would say you need the milk of the gospel. You need the pure word of God to grow. We all need milk! We all started with milk but if you've been in Christ for a while at some point you don't need milk ONLY. At some point you need vegetables. At some point you need food. When you're a baby you drink milk only, right? Then at some point you get the kid's menu. The kid's menu is always fun. I'm always a little jealous of the kid's menu because I see my kids with it and there is always colors and crossword puzzles. The kid's menu is colorful and it's a little bit handed to you but we're trying to get some food. You can order the grilled cheese in the midst of the play, right? Then it goes to the adult table and at the adult table you don't need any colors. You get a steak. That is what the progression of being a believer looks like. We move from milk to the kid's menu and from the kid's

menu to enjoying a steak. That is exactly what I love- the deep things of the Lord. It's these things that I'm studying and thinking through.

So he's saying by this time there should be enough knowledge where you ought to be teachers. I don't think he's meaning everyone should be a preacher or everyone should be a Sunday School teacher but I think he is saying that every Christian should be able to teach someone else about the things of God. All of us are supposed to give a defense for the things that we believe. All of us should be able to articulate to our friends, our family, our coworkers, the people we are fishing with, or the people we are golfing with what the Bible says about certain things when they ask a question. We should be able to teach others what we know about God and about the scriptures. He's saying you should be teachers but we have to keep teaching you what those basic principles of the Oracles of God are. They're having to go back to the ABCs over and over again.

Now, if you think about the ABCs, the ABCs are not bad. They're actually good, right? If you're teaching a kid how do you start? One of the first things we teach a kid who is learning how to get knowledge, learning in school, is the ABCs. Why? Because if you don't know the ABCs you can't go any further. You can't read and write and explore knowledge and all of those things. You need to know the ABCs to learn everything else. You don't abandon the ABCs at some point. No, you build upon the ABCs to all the other knowledge you're gaining throughout your life and that is what it looks like in Christianity. We're talking about those basic principles, the basic gospel, that is the ABCs. We don't ever leave them and we don't go away from them but we build upon them. We take the gospel and we build upon it so that we can mature in our faith and grow in our faith and become someone who actually gets solid foot not someone who only gets milk.

See, milk is perfect in the right context. I don't want any of you to hear rebuke and think... *man, I'm brand new to this and I haven't really explored that...* That's ok! Being a brand new Christian and drinking milk is great. A lot of the Sundays that I don't preach I usually always visit the nursery because there is a cute girl who works in the nursery. Her name is Katie and she is my wife. I go in there and just check on things and when I do they are always rocking babies and doing the thing. I only stay in there

for about three minutes because after that they're going to start asking me to help and I'm like... *Ok, I have to go check on other things...* but I just love to go in there for a few moments to say hi to her and I can look across from the nursery and see the baby babies. You will always see at least one who is taking a bottle and that is a great thing in context. It's great for a baby to take the bottle and the bottle only.

Another thing I do on Wednesday nights is go around and check on all of our small groups. That is one of my pastoral duties so I just go around and check on all of the small groups. Now, one thing most of our small groups do is potlucks. They bring food. So for me, Wednesday night is like a progressive dinner. Now, I don't ever ask to eat. I've never asked to eat but they're always like, "Hey, why don't you try this!" And, you know, I don't want to be rude. It's like when your grandma asks you if you want some pie. You say yes! So I'll start with appetizer one then move on to appetizer two. Then an entrée. In every small group I get a little bit more of the progressive dinner and it's great! I end up with like four desserts! It's so awesome! I love Wednesday nights! But, could you imagine if I walked into a small group and everybody in the small group is around the table drinking milk from a bottle?... *Hey, do you want a bottle?... No, I'm good...* It's good in one way but it's awkward in the other because yes, babies can only handle milk. They should be given milk but adults, yes they can still drink milk, but they should be eating other things. There should be solid food that they're digesting and that is what the preacher is trying to say... *Hey, it's time to grow. It's time to take those ABCs and now build upon them. It's time to take the milk and also introduce vegetables, meat, and other solid foods so that you can grow into the person that Christ wants you to be...* He's saying it's time to grow up. It's time to continue in that faith that you have believed. Now it's time to continue to grow in that.

So what are the signs that you are still a baby Christian? What are the signs of immaturity? I think he's going to say there are two signs. Number one is being unskilled and the other is being undiscerning. Those are the two signs that he's going to give to say you might still be a baby Christian if those two things are still happening. Again, if you've been in Christ for a year it's ok to be a baby Christian. We're not scolding babies for not being skilled and discerning but if you've been in Christ for 10 years and you're still unskilled in the Word of God and you're still not able to discern

anything that God would say then there is a problem. And again, don't get mad. Get motivated... *Oh, this is where I am. I need to move forward. I need to continue in my faith and learn to grow...*

So let's ready it. Verse 13 says this, "for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child." The word "child" here can mean infant. One who can't speak yet. They're a baby. They're still a baby Christian. Verse 14, "But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil." The one who is only on milk and doesn't have solid food is a child. They're still a baby and they're unskilled in the Word of God and they're unable to discern or distinguish between good and evil.

So let's deal with the first one. The first one is being unskilled. It's this idea of not being skilled in the Word of righteousness which I think is just another way to say the word of God. In other words, this person who is a baby Christian is unskilled meaning they just don't know the Word of God. They're not able to handle it. They don't know the big story of it. If you were to ask them a question about the Bible they wouldn't be able to tell you what the Bible says about that. They don't have any knowledge or skills in the Word of God. That someone is only drinking milk and they haven't moved on to solid food. They haven't begun to dive into Scripture for themselves. They haven't begun to learn and study for themselves. Again, it's ok for a baby but at some point you should be growing from baby to toddler to walking to having some language and getting ready to run. Then, all of a sudden, you're a wise adult who is skilled in the Word of God and from that skill you can discern what is good and bad and distinguish what is right from what is wrong.

I think for us, one of the reasons it's so important to be skilled in the Word of God is because of the world that we inhabit right now. Now, I think it was also important for them back then in this Hebrews church that is in Roman culture to be skilled in the Word of God. Do you know why that is? Because they live in a culture that doesn't promote a Christian worldview. They couldn't walk into Rome- in the Roman Forum or the Coliseum- and read all of Plato and say... *Oh, this what Christianity is about. If I just follow these philosophers and If I just go to these festivals, this is what*

Christianity is. If I go to these bathhouses with these people, this is what Christianity is... It wasn't assumed in the culture. It wasn't taught in the culture. So, what did you do? You had to know the Word of God to know... *Oh, this is the kingdom of Christ and this is the kingdom of the world and I want to go here and not there...* You had to develop a skill. You had to actually learn the Word of God to know the difference.

I think we, right now, live in a similar time. There might have been a time in American history where the culture at large promoted a Christian worldview in some ways but that isn't necessarily the case now. If you were to try and figure out what Christ would want you to do so you just binge watched all of Netflix are you going to learn what Christ would want you to do? Are you going to learn what Christ would want you to do if you just scanned all of social media or watched all of cable news? No, because you're not going to just walk into the world that you inhabit and assume a Christian worldview. You're going to assume a very worldly worldview. So how do we learn what Christ would have us do? Well, we can't be babies anymore. We have to start feasting on the word of God so that we can know the word of God and the word of God can get in us and we can know what Christ would have us do and what Christ would not have us do.

See, we have to be very skilled because we live in a world where people are asking big questions. I mean big, biblical questions like what does it mean to be human, that is what people are asking. We have major questions being asked to us and if we're not skilled and rooted in what the Bible says about humanity, God, sin, salvation, government and politics, marriage and kids, or family and work, if we're not skilled in those then we're not going to know how to live in the kingdom of God. The preacher is trying to say... *Hey, listen up. Grow up and one of the things that you need to do is be skilled in the Word of God...*

So, are you skilled? Do you know what I think about being skilled in the Word of God? One thing about the moment we live in is that we have every advantage to be skilled in the Word of God if you think about it. If you went to the apostles and told them about what all we have, like that we have the Bible on our phone, that would be unbelievable. I have a Bible app called "Logos" that has around 15,000 commentaries on it and all of the Greek and Hebrew tools that I could ever need right on my phone. It's

right there with a push of a button. That is crazy! I can access YouTube videos that have preachers telling me about the gospel. It is unbelievable what we have. We have all of the advantages but we also have all the distractions too because the same phone that holds your Bible is the same phone that then keeps you from your Bible. Have you ever noticed that? It's like a war. We have such an advantage but also a disadvantage because we are so distracted with everything around us. So we have to be the people that intentionally tune out things and turn off things to dive deeply into things. That is what we have to do as the people of God. We have to be skilled in the Word of God.

The second mark of being a baby Christian or immature Christian is to be undiscerning. It's not having discernment. It's not knowing the difference between good and evil or not knowing the difference between right and wrong. Here is what he says in verse 14, "But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil." So what do the mature do? What does a mature Christian do? They have their powers of discernment trained so they can distinguish what is right and what is wrong. Discernment is a hard thing. Discernment is a complicated thing because discernment often means that we don't know exactly what to do in a situation. There isn't a "thou shall" or "thou shall not" that covers it. It's those questions that are not obvious right off the bat so we have to use wisdom- discernment- to wrestle with it and figure it out. We have to use discernment.

This past weekend starting on Thursday and then Friday and Saturday, I can't tell you how much time is spent on the phone dealing with Trunk or Treat. It's unbelievable! Me, Shelley, Abbey, and the rest of the team were trying to wrestle with what to do about Trunk or Treat and we kept going back and forth, back and forth. We prayed, "Lord, tell us what to do," but he didn't just shout down from heaven we to do so we had to turn to discernment. We all have experience and knowledge here but guess what? There is not a right or wrong answer. There is no oath from the Lord that tells us what to do. We had to make a decision and we had to discern. We had to think about the weather and if it was pouring down rain whether people would come or not. We had to think about rescheduling the event. It was all of these different things and there was not necessarily a black and white yes or no. That is discernment. We had to figure it out. We were

literally at the First Fruit Farms Welcome Wagon at 7:48 am when service started two minutes later thinking about what we were going to do. We love Trunk or Treat, we love to be a community, we wanted all of these things to happen but it was going to rain all day so we used discernment to decide we just couldn't do it. That was discernment. You all have discernment about all sorts of different things but in here it's a little more serious. It's not just a church event and making the decision on whether we do it or not. It's the difference between good and evil, right and wrong. What does he say? The mature Christians know how to discern. When things come at them they can by reflex know what is right and what is wrong.

I love what Mueller would say about this idea of discernment. He says, "to put it another way, discernment is like a theological grid or a worldview that helps us make instant moral and theological judgement about a circumstance." We're skilled in the Word of God so when something comes at us we have a moral grid; we have a framework that helps us know to say yes to this and no to that. There is discernment that takes place there. As a Christian, what you should be now if you have been walking with Jesus for a little while, you should be able to begin to learn how to discern between right and wrong. You should be able to discern what is worth your time and what is not. You should be able to discern what you should say yes to and what you should say no to. That is discernment happening.

And I just want to say that if we need skills because of the world that we inhabit right now that doesn't share our worldview then I think as the Christian church we need discernment more than ever for the world that is coming because there is a world that is coming that I'm not sure we're ready for yet. There is an artificial intelligence revolution happening right now that I'm not sure the church and Christians are quite ready for. Do you know what that world is going to require? That world is going to require lots of wisdom and lots of discernment because you can't turn to 2 Timothy and look up what Paul said to Timothy about artificial intelligence. So how do you figure this out? Well, you have to know the Word of God enough, you have to be skilled enough, to know what God would feel about this, to know what God would want you to do here, and what God would not want you to do there.

I started my week, Monday and Tuesday, at a pastor cohort in Bowling Green. Pastors from all over Kentucky, about 20 of us, come together and have this cohort once a year. Two of the sessions were on pastoral ministry and artificial intelligence and I'll just say we all left there wanting to go sell our house, get a tent, and camp in the woods for the rest of our lives. That was how we left. What's coming is pretty wild. Now, there are some amazing things that are coming. He showed us all kinds of apps we could use and these things that could make our lives so much better. There are some pretty amazing things to artificial intelligence. And, by the way, pretty much all of you use it right now. If you've googled anything in the last six months then you've used artificial intelligence. It's all over. Every app you use is all embedded with A.I. and it is a wonderful tool to some degree but then there is this question- can we do this? Or, SHOULD we do this is the question we should all be asking and not enough of us are asking should we do this?

For example, A.I. is really cool and can be used as a note taker for you. It can summarize your meeting notes and that is great but when A.I. is available to clone me and then put out false videos of me doing devotions and sermons online that aren't actually me but just a clone, I think we can all agree that is bad. But, most of the world doesn't think that's bad. Most of the world think that's fine and that's good because there is no difference between real and fake. There is no difference between this and that. We're all going to live in a space that is just generated and not rooted in reality. As Christians we are about to enter into a world where we are going to have to have some major discernment to know whether to say yes to this or no to this and we can't be baby Christians. We have to grow and mature so that we have a lens which looks at the world with a biblical worldview so we know what to do in the age we're about to go into. We need skills right now. We need discernment right now. But, we also need it for the world to come because we have to figure out what to do and what not to do in these situations.

Then notice what it says about this idea of discernment. It says this, "powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil." See, discernment is a human superpower and A.I. can't do that. If you ask ChatGPT, "can you discern things" it is going to say no. It can't because that is a human thing. Humans discern. Humans are able to

distinguish between right and wrong. That is something that we can do and must do and where does discernment start? It starts with conviction. It starts with knowing what is good, what is right, and what is true. In my conviction I can look at something and know what I should do or shouldn't do. Well, how do we get that conviction? It happens through training. It happens through constant training of distinguishing between right and wrong. We have to train ourselves in it.

I have three boys who are all learning new things. One of my boys loves to fish and it is kind of new to him so do you know what he does? He watches YouTube videos that teach him how to cast, how to use baits, and things like that. Then he goes out and does it. He is watching and learning. Then, I have another boy who is into golf. Do you know what he does? He has a flight simulator so he is hitting and then he is looking at his ball flight. He's asking me, "how do I do this?... How do I get the correction?" He's getting data and then he's practicing over and over again. I have another boy who is trying to learn how to play the guitar and it is not going well so far. It's like... *bro, can you just stop playing because that sounds bad...* But, I will say, three weeks ago it sounded way worse than it does now. He's watching YouTube videos too. He's trying to figure it out. He's watching the videos and then doing it himself.

That pattern is what we should be doing as Christians! We should be reading God's Word and then living our life. We read God's Word and then live our life. Then, as we go through life and it's not working out we go back to the source. We go back to scripture and reapply it over and over again. Through growth you begin to learn it is a gospel reflex. We learn this is what we should do and this is what we shouldn't do. We are being trained because we are using our discernment. When we mess up we repent and then when we do it again we do it right. So it is by practice, by living out the gospel in real life, that we have this muscle of discernment and distinguishing so we can tell what is right and what is wrong.

Christians, we have to grow! We have to grow up. We can't just assume the world is going to teach us everything. We have to dive deeply into God's Word. So what should we be doing? We should be seeking to grow. Notice chapter 6, verse 1, says this, "Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of

repentance from dead works and of faith toward God. 2 and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. 3 And this we will do if God permits.” So what does he want? He wants us to mature. Notice how he says it, “let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity.” He wants us to move. He wants us to go on to maturity.

Now, I want to ask a question. What does it mean to leave the elementary doctrine of Christ? So we get sort of a summary of these doctrines, but as one commentator, Michael Krueger, pointed out those things that he just referenced- the repentance of dead works to faith, the washing, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and the eternal judgment- are the first things you learn. You learn about what faith in Christ looks like. You learn what baptism looks like. You learn the end is coming and you need to repent. Those are the first things that we learn. Those first things are foundational. The first things are the most important. The first things are the bedrock. So what does he mean by leave those things and go on to maturity? I don’t think he’s saying leave those things behind and go to something else because we know the whole Bible would teach against that. No, what he’s saying is leave those! In other words, build upon those! Don’t just stay in the ABCs of the gospel. Take the ABCs of the gospel and move into learning all of the other stuff. Now build upon this foundation the walls and the windows and the roof where you have a robust understanding of God and his Word so that you can be a Christian who walks in culture and knows what God would have you do.

In other words, don’t leave the gospel behind, never leave the gospel behind, but based on the gospel, build upon that and start growing in your Christian life. Start diving into the scriptures and figure out how it all works and how you should live it out in your life. See I think he’s trying to say... *Hey, you’ve been saved by the cross but now the question is this- are you being formed by the cross?... See, it’s good that you’re saved by the cross. You never want to leave that behind. You never want to leave the gospel behind. The death, burial, resurrection of Jesus, the empty tomb, that is your salvation. It’s by faith only. There is no good works that can get you into that. It is about Jesus- that is the gospel. You’ve been saved by the cross but now sanctification is being formed by the cross... Hey, I have Christ in me, the hope of glory. What does that look like? How do I walk*

that out?... That is being skilled in the Word of God. Now since you have milk you should begin to add to it all those other things that Christ would have you to know and do. Grow up now! You have the ABCs now build upon that.

We don't tell our kids... *hey, now that you know the ABCs you should leave them behind...* No. Why do we teach kids the ABCs? Because everything else in their educational career is going to happen based on those ABCs. That's the start. That's how you grow. That's how you add to it. You don't leave them behind. No, you leave in a sense of building upon that. Then, he lists those sort of first things. Don't lay again a foundation. In other words, what is a foundation for? To build on. Don't just keep laying a foundation over and over again of the same things. Take the foundation and then build the walls. Build it out. Build your life. Start growing.

Then notice what he says in verse 3, "And this we will do if God permits." What does that mean? It means that growth ultimately comes from God. You can't cause yourself to grow spiritually any more than you can cause yourself to grow physically. You can't cause yourself to grow physically. It just happens to you. Do you know what you have to do? You have to eat and you have to exercise and then growth will come. That is what God is saying... *Dive into my Word. Surrender yourself to my spirit and growth will come but growth is for me...* Do you know what that means? If you're a mature believer it never leads to pride. In mature believers in Christ it always leads to humility because they know growth is a God thing and not a me thing. It is all God and only God. We surrender our life to God. It's God who causes growth.

So what I want us to do is think about this challenge to grow. I want us to think about five ways to move from milk to meat. It's short and sweet but we'll close out with some really practical ways based on this text on how to move from milk to meat, how we can go from knowing the gospel, holding onto the gospel, and being firmly planted in the gospel to wanting to grow from the gospel into the person Christ wants us to be.

Number one, open your ears to preaching. That is what this sermon is about thus far. He says... *hey, listen up! You're lazy! You're dull in hearing. You're not listening. I can't build anything more because we have to take a*

detour, park the car, and get the kids engaged... It's a rebuke of dull hearing and of lazy hearing. So what is the application? Don't be lazy in your hearing. There is something special that happens every seven days when we come together and hear the preached Word of God. What happens is this- God takes the Word of God by the Spirit of God and preaches it to the people of God. Change happens! Growth happens! But you can miss it if you don't listen. You can just come, sit, occupy a chair, and then go home. Then week after week when you do that you never grow. You never get the filet. You never get the meat. You never get the full substance of all that God has and wants you to do. So come in here expecting to grow, longing to grow, and listen intently.

See, you have just as much work as I do. I have work to preach a sermon. You have a lot of work to hear a sermon. You don't just get to checkout. It's an active working by the Spirit to listen to God's Word and put it into your life. So have open ears.

The second thing is this- open your heart to the Bible. What I mean by that is this- when you do your daily reading- and hopefully you are- are you opening your heart to what you're reading? It's really easy to open up the Bible app and just read it and check it off your to-do list and feel good because you read three chapters of the Bible today. Well, good job but did you actually ask the Lord to transform you? Was your heart engaged as you read the text? Are you praying and repenting of things based on that? Are you asking God to do something from that text in your heart? Does your heart open to it or are you just doing something? Open your ears and open your heart.

Thirdly, open your mind to Christian wisdom. One of the great things about Christianity is that we've had 2,000 years of it. Do you know what that means? There are a lot of guys and girls who have wrote some great things about God. I would encourage you to grab some of the great works throughout church history and read some great books about the Christian faith and about God and grow in reading. I'm reading "Pilgrim's Progress" to my little girl at night right now and John Bunyan is so amazing with how he articulates and weaves the gospel into this beautiful story. It's awesome! I would encourage you to grab some really great Christian books and dive into them so that you can grow in your faith.

Number four, open your hands to serve people. Growth takes eating and also exercise. If you eat only and never exercise what happens? Some of us know, right? If you don't exercise you only grow in the wrong way. You need to eat and also exercise if you want to grow in the way that God wants both physically and spiritually. When it comes to growth, we have to actually serve people. We have to do something with all the knowledge and if not then it'll just be all in our head and never in our heart and never in our hands. It's hearing from God and then going and doing something, serving somebody, engaging in something, and being used by God for something. It isn't about just reading your Bible a lot. It's read your Bible a lot and then go love your neighbor. Read your Bible a lot and then go serve people because both of those things are how we grow.

Lastly, open your mouth to share the gospel. If you want to begin to grow in your faith start sharing your faith. Do you know what happens when you start sharing your faith? The person you're sharing with will ask questions. They'll ask questions that you don't know. They'll ask questions that you can't handle. Do you know what you'll have to do? You'll have to say, "man, I don't know but let me try to figure that out" and you'll have to go back and figure that out and then report back to them and give them those answers. Every time you do that do you know what you're doing? You are learning and growing and maturing. You're feasting on a filet. You are understanding the Bible deeper because you're not asking all the questions that they might ask so through questioning, pondering, and deep diving into God's Word you begin to grow, learn, and experience all that God has for you. So I encourage you to open your mouth and share the gospel with someone and see how that causes you to grow based on what you don't know and what you need to know.

In closing, I want us to think about this idea of rebuking because the preacher rebuked us a little bit. He pulled the car over and said... *Hey kids, you're not listening and because you're not listening, you're not growing. And because you're not growing you can't discern. You're unskilled and you're floundering...* And here is the real warning next week- some of you who aren't listening are actually going to fall away. You're going to get out of the car, go into the rest stop, and never join the family again. Some of you are going to leave and never come back. There's the idea of apostasy

that some can fall away and that really scares us. So what do we do with that? Next week we're going to talk about this idea of him saying some of us might fall away. Then we're going to come back with some strong encouragement that he doesn't think anyone will because they're anchored in Christ.

The rebuke this morning leads to a warning that leads to comfort. Are you listening? Again, some of you, as you hear that, have one of two responses to rebuke. You either get mad or you get motivated. You can get mad about being called a baby Christian and then continue or you can get motivated and realize you're still drinking milk but you want to begin to dive deep into God's Word. You want to begin to figure this thing out. You want to begin to grow. And guess what? You're not going to go from milk to steak. You have to go from milk to the kid's menu with the grilled cheese and colors but eventually you get going and you get, you start progressing, and begin to grow and become all that God wants you to do so that you can discern and distinguish what is right and wrong. You can live out the gospel for people. So, where are you at and what do you need to do about where you're at?

KT