

## INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Colossians 1:9-12**.
- B. For Effingham Lectureship.
- C. With the topic that I have been assigned, I get to talk about my favorite subject--JESUS. In Col. 1:18, Paul says that JC has come to have first place in everything.
- D. Look at Paul's prayer in 1:3-12 esp. v6 and v9-11. He wants their lives to grow, to increase, and be filled with the knowledge of X.
- E. There's no short-cut or "quick-fix" to spiritual maturity. No one verse or one sermon will instantly make one spiritually mature. It comes from a long lasting relationship with X.
- F. I believe that as one grows in X they become more spiritually mature. I will use the terms "growing in X" and "spiritually mature" interchangeably. This morning, using the book of Colossians, I want to suggest four things. We grow in X:
  1. By growing in praise.
  2. By growing in doctrine.
  3. By growing in our relationships.
  4. By growing in service.

## I. GROWING IN CHRIST, BY GROWING IN PRAISE.

- A. Scripture text: Col. 1:15-22.
- B. Spiritual maturity comes from knowing how great a X we serve. He is the King of kings, and Lord of lords for a reason!
- C. The world says that Jesus was just a man who was a great teacher. But He is so much more. It's time to investigate this Jesus so that we may grow in Him. It sounds trite but, "When you have Jesus you have it all!"
- D. Paul lists 10 points of supremacy:
  1. Jesus is the IMAGE OF GOD (v15).
  2. Jesus is the FIRSTBORN OF ALL- CREATION (v15).
  3. Jesus is BEFORE ALL THINGS (v17).
  4. In Jesus ALL THINGS CONSIST (v17).
  5. Jesus is the HEAD OF THE BODY (v18).
  6. Jesus is the BEGINNING (v18).
  7. Jesus is the FIRST BORN FROM THE DEAD (v18).
  8. In Jesus ALL THE FULLNESS DWELLS (v19).
  9. Jesus is the RECONCILER (v20).
  10. Jesus is the ONE WHO PRESENTS US TO GOD (v22).
- E. May we learn in our prayer lives to praise God. Have the attitude found in the Psalms, of praise and thanks. Grow in the One who has everything we need!

## II. GROWING IN CHRIST, BY GROWING IN DOCTRINE.

- A. Scripture text: Col. 2:6-8; 16-19; 20-23.
- B. Spiritual maturity does not come from the empty philosophies of men (2:6-8).
  1. Greece said, Be wise, know yourself!
  2. Rome said, Be strong, discipline yourself!
  3. Religion says, Be good, conform yourself!
  4. Epicureanism says, Be sensuous, enjoy yourself!
  5. Education says, Be resourceful, expand yourself!
  6. Psychology says, Be confident, assert yourself!

- |                        |                                  |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 7. Materialism says,   | Be satisfied, please yourself!   |
| 8. Pride says,         | Be superior, promote yourself!   |
| 9. Asceticism says,    | Be lowly, suppress yourself!     |
| 10. Humanism says,     | Be capable, believe in yourself! |
| 11. Legalism says,     | Be pious, limit yourself!        |
| 12. Philanthropy says, | Be generous, release yourself.   |
| 13. Jesus says,        | Be a servant, forget yourself!   |

Remember 2:9 says that in X all the fullness of deity dwells.

- C. Spiritual maturity does not come from religious legalism (2:16-19):
1. Legalism is the belief that a person can be saved by keeping law.
  2. Some have tried this short-cut to maturity. Take the law of X and tighten down the screws. If things aren't working well, tighten them some more!
  3. Paul says let no one judge you, or defraud (cheat) you through legalism.
- D. Spiritual maturity does not come from man-made disciplines/rules (2:20-23).  
Only 3 things wrong with asceticism (self-denial and punishment):
1. The beginning-- it originates with men (2:22b).
  2. The middle--it's worthless in controlling sin (2:23).
  3. The end-- it will perish (2:22a).

### III. GROWING IN CHRIST, BY GROWING IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS.

- A. Scripture text: Col. 3:1-11; 3:12-17; 3:18-21; 3:22-4:1.
- B. Spiritual maturity in personal purity (3:1-11).
1. Seek the heavenly (3:1-4).
  2. Slay the earthly (3:5-9).
  3. Strengthen the Christly (3:10,11).
- C. Spiritual maturity in the church.
1. Grow in the graces of X (3:12-14).
  2. Grow in the peace of X (3:15).
  3. Grow in the word of X (3:16).
  4. Grow in the name of X (3:17).
- D. Spiritual maturity in the home.
1. Grow as husbands and wives (3:18,19).
  2. Grow as parents and children (3:20,21).
- E. Spiritual maturity in the workplace.
1. Grow as servants (3:22-25).
  2. Grow as masters (4:1)

### IV. GROWING IN CHRIST, BY GROWING IN SERVICE.

- A. Scripture texts: Col. 4:2, 6, 17.
- B. Spiritual maturity in prayer.
1. Grow in faithful prayer (4:2).
  2. Grow in thankful prayer (4:2).
  3. Grow in watchful prayer (4:3).
  4. Grow in purposeful prayer (4:3).
- C. Spiritual maturity in speech.  
Grow in what you say and what you don't say (4:6).
- D. Spiritual maturity in ministry.  
Grow in how you serve to be able to do it better (4:17)

## **CONCLUSION.**

- A. See Colossians 4:12.
- B. Verse 12 is special to me. Look at the two great promises to be obtained by growing in X, by being spiritual mature:
  - 1. Stand perfect (complete, whole, mature, full-grown).
  - 2. Fully assured in all of God's will (confident, without reservation).
- C. This is what growing in Christ is all about. To able to stand before God perfect and mature (like Him), fully confident of one's actions and thoughts.
- D. Growing in Christ means...
  - 1. Growing in praise.
  - 2. Growing in doctrine.
  - 3. growing in our relationships.
  - 4. Growing in service.