

beyond measure so that we have love to give.

Just image what sort of society we would be living in if everyone acted out of love for the other person, putting their needs first, so that it would benefit the other?

One of my favourite passages in the bible is found in this chapter of Ephesians; "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen." (Eph. 4:29) When you speak does it benefit those who listen? That's not a condemning question but a directing one, because in Christ when I speak as he directs it will benefit those who listen. And isn't that what we all want.

I know at times I haven't always liked it, but it was the truth spoken in love and I grew closer to Jesus because someone had the love and courage to speak in a way that I could hear and respond and change.

So I hope today is a reminder to keep growing, but not growing aimlessly, not unhealthily. But thankfully we can be growing in Christ. Growing in God's amazing love, his grace, his mercy, his character which leads to life lived to the full with no regrets. Growing in Christ in ALL things.

Isn't that part of God's amazing love for us in Christ, that he sees you and loves you to death. He doesn't pick out the good bits and leave the

rest. You're precious, so precious that nothing about you is insignificant to your loving heavenly Father. He wasn't all of your life to be lived to the full as you join Jesus in the wonderful, exciting adventure of life.

Let's keep growing in Christ in all things. Let's pray. Jesus, thank you for loving us more than your own life. Thank you for taking the curse of sin on yourself that we might now live in the love of God, knowing that in you we are forgiven and able to live a healthy, vibrant, intimate relationship with God, enjoying life with him in all his fullness. Please grow us so that in all areas of life we reflect your character, bringing praise, glory and honour to you. Amen.

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am
Pastor: Tim 0427326553
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Reaching Out with the Love of Jesus that All my Know, Worship & Grow in Christ

2 August 2009

GROW IN CHRIST, IN ALL THINGS

Ephesians 4:1-16

In Ephesians today we read; "Instead, speaking the truth in love we will in all things grow up into him who is the head, that is Christ." I reckon this is a great motto for life.

First it reminds me that life is not static, but it is about growing. I want to be grow up and not staying immature. I remember as a kid I looked forward to the time I could ride a bike, and then my mates and I rode everywhere. Becoming strong enough and mature enough to ride wasn't the end but only the beginning of some wonderful life adventures. Especially when you added a motor to the bike.

Today we are celebrating the confirmation of three wonderful young

people, and just like me becoming mature enough to assume the responsibility to ride, this isn't the end but this is meant to be the beginning of some great new adventures with Jesus.

So today is a step of growth, looking forward in eager anticipation of discovering wonderful new adventures of growth. It certainly would be sad if today was the end of our growth as a person. God has got so much more in store for us to discover. The adventure is nowhere near over.

Let's keep growing.

The second thing that Paul reminds me of is that I'm to be growing in Christ. Over the last few years I've been signing off all my

correspondence with; 'In Christ'. That's a reminder to me of where I need to be growing. Well that's not quite right is it? It's a reminder not of where but of whom I need to be growing to know, growing in the wonderful gift of sharing his adventure of life.

My growth isn't aimless or pointless. I could know everything there is to know about bottle-tops, where they were made, in what factory, at what time, with what material, how they were attached, and how they changed from clamping on to twist tops. But knowing all these wonderful facts and figures might be a little pointless in themselves; what would you thing if all I wanted to talk



about passionately was bottle-tops?

Life is full of choice. Choices that either grow me to greater maturity, or dig me deeper, loosing out on life. To grow healthy and strong the choice is simple; **JESUS**. Does it grow me closer in my relationship to Jesus? If not then I need to change because I don't want to be growing in the wrong direction.

In life there are lots of ways to grow. When I was young I grew up, and that was good. As I've got older I've grown out, and that's not so good!

In life we can make healthy choices or unhealthy ones. I'm sure everyone wants to make healthy choices, reaping the most out of life. Enjoying life to the full. Anyone here today want to live life to the full? Then the choices we make are crucial. I can

want to live life to the full, but if I chose to eat fat, fat and more fat, and then a few chips for a balanced diet, what will the outcome be for my health? Bad, wouldn't you say. That's not because fat is mean, but because I made, and kept making some unhealthy choices, which, no

surprise, would leave me with ill health.

To grow healthy and strong I'm reminded today to keep growing in Christ. To keep him as my focus, and to grow close to him, sharing life with him.

The third thing I noticed in the text, a little word that caught my attention – All. Paul wrote; 'In ALL things grow up into Christ'. In how many things was that? 'ALL' All is all

encompassing. What does it leave out? The way I play football. The choices I make when buying a car. How fast I drive. What beer I drink, or more importantly how much I drink. After all; 'it's my body and I'll do what I like'.

Have you ever heard that phrase or similar? Not the way to grow up. Definitely not the way to make good healthy choices, but really unhealthy selfish ones.

Life is about; in ALL things growing in Christ. Growing in doing things Jesus' way. Would Jesus play Aussie Rules? I'm sure he would, because Jesus knows his Father created people physical, needing exercise to stay healthy, needing community to enjoy life, but I'm sure Jesus wouldn't play dirty. He'd have turned the other cheek and not retaliated, but he

Keep Growing, In CHRIST

In ALL things

wouldn't have been wimp. He'd go in hard, but not out of a need to show how tough he was. That only proves you've got real social problems and need to be loved out of your aggression. Jesus would have played hard and fair and would have left the ground with no regrets; enjoying having played and shared life with others. And that enjoyment would have come whether he won or lost because the people around him are more important than the game.

In business, and economics are the people more important than the profit? As a pastor, are the people I meet more important than my role and the things I have set down on my agenda to achieve in the day?

Today Paul reminds us to keep growing in Christ, in ALL things.

The story of David and Bathsheba, which was continued from last week in the Old Testament reading for today, reminds me of what happens when I stop letting Jesus direct my growth and the decisions I make. David let his hormones get the better of him and acted in a totally selfish,

loveless, un-Christ-like way. Just because you think someone is hot isn't the healthiest way to decide whether to have sex with them or not. Yes, Jesus is interested in you having a healthy sex life. And being the creator he might just know something about it.

What does Jesus say in the 'Sermon on the Mount'? "You know the next commandment pretty well, too: Don't go to bed with

another's spouse.' But don't think you've preserved your virtue simply by staying out of bed. Your *heart* can be corrupted by lust even quicker than your *body*. Those leering looks you think nobody notices – they also corrupt." (Matthew 5:27,28 Message Paraphrase)

Jesus also shares with us how to build healthy, strong, intimate relationships. Ones that led to enjoying life, blessing not only us but the people around us, as well as the whole community. David's lust only left him in pain and death. Jesus' love grows us to be healthy people. People who can be open and honest because we are forgiven, we are loved by God. He has withheld nothing from us. Now instead of grasping to fill a hole in our lives, we are loved by God, in Christ Jesus'