

3.9.2025 Sermon

The Elementary Truths | Hebrews 5:12-6:3

SPEAKERS

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You know, my sermon this morning is on spiritual maturity and laying the foundation. And this is it.

This is the foundation of what we're going into next in Hebrews. We, as the church, and I'm so jumping ahead, stay up here because I don't know what's going to happen. This is so important. These words are so important.

It says: You've owned your fear and all of your self-loathing. You have owned the voices inside of your head. You have owned the shame and reproach of your failure.

The church has taught on sin, on how bad we are, how many mistakes we have made, and how much of a failure we are. The church, we have sat under teaching that has told us if you don't do X, Y, and Z, you are going to hell.

If you are not perfect, then give up. The church has taught us how to feel shame, how to look at ourselves in the mirror and berate ourselves. We have all cut our teeth on this.

We don't have the perfect faces. We don't have the perfect bodies. We don't have the perfect life. We don't have the perfect children. We don't have the perfect bank account. We don't have the perfect, fill in the blank. And if the church doesn't do it, then television does it. Social media does it. We are constantly in the barrage of how imperfect we are, and we own it. We have to own the fact that we own it.

We have to own the fact that we take it in and that we say yes to it. We have to do that because if we put the blame outside of us, if we put the blame where we do not take responsibility for the wall, for the boundaries of our own selves, if we put the boundary and the onus on somebody else, then we will never change. We will never change.

We have to own our own stuff. We have to own our own lives. We have to own our own strength and ability to change. And you know what else? We have to own our belovedness.

We have to own that we have a God who came and died for us and said, "You are righteous. Period. Period. You are righteous. You are righteous. You are righteous because my Son died for you. You are righteous because Jesus came. Period."

Grace is God's greatest gift to us, and we have to own it. When those lies come to us, we say, "I am beloved." When those lies come to us, we say, "I belong."

When those lies come to us, we say, "This is my space. This is my footprint, and my footprint belongs on this earth, no matter who says what and no matter what anybody around me says. I belong here. You belong here. If you are breathing, you belong."

We belong. And it is time. It is time. It is time that we own our belovedness as much as we have owned the lies that we have bought into and believed. This song is so important.

Do we dare to believe that when we were conceived in our mother's womb, God smiled? No matter how that conception took place, we belonged from the beginning, and God smiled. Do we dare to believe that God looks at us and says, "You are beautiful" in every way?

In every way. In every way. In all of our mess, in all of our pain, in all of our yuck, in all of our stupid mistakes, in all of the stuff that we do, in all of the trip-ups that we have done, in all of the lies that we've told, God still says, "I died for you, and you are my beloved."

God invites us to the deeper because there's more for us. Because there's more, and there's better, and there's beauty for us.

And this song where it says, "My love is fierce and unending", does God have to prove God's own love for us in any more way than that? God sent God's own Son to die on that cross for us. And when God says, "I will find you whatever it takes, whatever it takes," God never stops chasing us down. God never stops chasing our loved ones down. God never stops wooing us and calling us. In every sunrise and sunset, God screams God's own love for us and invites us to come into a deeper way.

So I want us to go back into this song for a moment, maybe just the chorus. I don't even know. Can we just breathe in that we are God's beloved? Can we dare to believe that we are God's beloved? Because this is spiritual maturity in a nutshell.

It's it. So what I was going to preach on is daring to believe that we are God's favorite.

That God loves me. That God looks at all the me's in this room and loves all the me's unequivocally and thinks that we're all lovely.

Can we dare to believe that? And can we stop owning the lies? So let's just take a moment and breathe this song in again.

Sing that with me.

I am going to rewrite my sermon as I'm speaking. So I am going to jump all over the place. Otherwise, we're going to be here till two, and nobody wants that. So we're starting a new little series within the series, and we're talking about the gym, but I'm not going to go into that.

I was also going to talk about kind of leading us up into Hebrews and where we are, because I never like just jumping into a series, especially when we're going into the middle of a book without laying a foundation. My seminary training does not like that. However, I'm going to skip that.

Thank you, Brandon. Because what I'm just going to go, exponent...ex... I can't think of the word. Forget what I'm going to say, what it, help me. Extemporaneously. Thank you, Matt. Yes. Because spiritual maturity is so important, and I'll tell you why.

It is not so that we can become holier than thou. It's not so that we can have intellectual prowess. It is so we can move forward in our lives. It is for us.

It is not for our neighbor, although it will affect our neighbor and it will affect the world in a beneficial way. But the gift from God is to us first, and then it spreads out to everybody else. It is for us, for life, love, peace, growth, and development. It is for us to own our belovedness, to own our beauty, to own the goodness at our core, to own that we belong, to own a freedom like we've never felt, to own the breath that we all long for, to own what we all strive for, a spiritual maturity that we are forever and always invited into, and that we will never attain, by the way.

We will forever be growing into it our whole life, and it's so key. And yet, I don't know how many actually get there. I don't know how much we ever really hear sermons on it.

The importance of, I love that song so much. We could not have chosen a more brilliant song because we own so much of the garbage.

And we take it like it's like, we accept it. We just accept the negative, grotesque words that we all live in. We live in them and we accept them. But when it comes to how many times do people give you a compliment? You go like this, yeah, yeah, you're with it. I loved your blah, blah, blah. I love the way you look at him.

And we just, we just, we put up a block. We with it instead of going, Yeah, I do look good, right? I love what you did. There me too. We don't do that. We don't do that. But, man, when somebody says something to us, negative. Man, we suck that in. But spiritual maturity, we don't have to take that in.

And those I've never noticed that this says you own these things, and we do. We own them. I could just stop we own them instead of owning our belovedness of who God says that we are.

So when I was looking up spiritual maturity was so interesting to me because if you ever want to go on a wild ride, look up what is spiritual maturity on the internet. I'm going to tell you this right now. Nobody knows what the it is.

Nobody. There were so many things that I found. And I'm only gonna give you like four. There were so many, well, I think that it's that, well, no, no, it's this, like there were so many things. So one said, of course, actually, I said, this fund, this was my idea. I thought it was like the fruit of the Spirit, right? Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness. That sounds good? Does that sound good? Sounds good.

And then another site says spiritually mature person is positive under pressure, sensitive to people, mastered. Mouth, I failed peacemaker, not a troublemaker, patient, prayerful. I'm like, Okay, that sounds good.

Another one said they based their reaction on Scripture and God's character instead of their feelings and emotions. They listen more, talk less. They have a sense of humility. To them. They have self-awareness. They have healthy boundaries and actual discernment.

Okay, another study showed that us Christians rank somewhere between an infant and a toddler when it comes to spiritual maturity.

Okay, I'm like, who measured that and how, like, I'm looking at the test, right? I'm like, how did you measure it? Yeah, and like, what's the criteria? And like, where's the toddler, where's the infant? Like, you know, they just threw the information out there, like they were the expert. And I'm like, well, give me the test. Yeah, it was so interesting.

And by the way, did they follow them around? Did they give them a questionnaire? You know? Because I think most people think they're a little more mature than they really are. I don't know, but you know, things that I found, you know, some idea spiritual maturity were measured by discipline, commitment to Scripture, baptism, tithing, forgiveness, washing your words, respecting your body, telling others about Christ.

Who made the list? Who made this list? It's so subjective. And, and this is just like a drop in the bucket, the tip of the iceberg. I was astounded at how many things came up. And I was like, really, nobody knows.

And, and by the way, in the in the spiritual maturity, as I was looking it up, what I found fascinating as I was looking biblically as well, and in the commentaries, by the

way, that I was studying as well, they had less clue, maybe more, maybe I'm being hard. Is nobody said anything about the Beatitudes.

Isn't that interesting? Jesus? Jesus said the Beatitudes, so they didn't say anything about Blessed are those who are poor in spirit.

Blessed are those who mourn. Blessed are the meek. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Blessed are the merciful. No one said this. Blessed are the pure in heart. Blessed are the peacemaker. Blessed are those who are persecuted. For my name's sake.

Why? Nobody that I found said spiritual maturity is following after the Beatitudes? Isn't that interesting? Nobody said living a life of love again, even the commentaries, nobody said living a life of sacrifice like Christ, and nobody brought up the fruit of the Spirit, which to me was obvious, and when I looked at the list, some of them actually underscored the list that I'm going to read in a minute in Hebrews it, rather than moving beyond that list, which the list I'm about to read in Hebrews is the foundation that we're supposed to move away from.

So let me read that list now.

Hebrews 5:12 through 6:3. It says we have much to say about this, but it's hard to make it clear to you, because you no longer try to understand man hang on to that.

Talk about owning your own faith, your own beliefs, your own stuff. In fact, though, by this time you ought to be teachers. You need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word. All over again, you need milk, not solid food.

This is a big insult. Anyone who lives on milk being still an infant is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. This is a key. They're not acquainted with the teaching about their belovedness.

They're not acquainted with the teaching about their right standing with God. If you do not understand the basic that you are in right standing with God, we are infants. Do you hear that?

If we do not understand that at the very foundation of our faith that we stand pure and holy and righteous before God, we are infants. If we do not understand that our sin is done away with once and for all, we are still infants.

When I say that, how many look at the church nowadays and think we're still in the infancy stage?

Because what we still focus on is sin and it and it's and it says anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant is not a quaint understanding our belovedness, understanding our righteousness is infancy that's profound to me.

That blows me away. I almost can't breathe. It's so profound to me.

I had a pastor who spent a year on this verse here that righteousness became such a foundation in my life of understanding that I am pure and holy before God, no matter what that God looks at me because of Christ as holy, and that everything that was marked against me was crucified on that cross in Christ, period, period.

And then, no matter what, I am pure and holy. How many times? How many have heard that throughout your life?

Right? It's very rare. It's very rare.

But solid food is for the mature who, by constant use, constant use, constant use, have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

It's time to own something other than what we've always owned. It's time to own that constant use means to practice.

Therefore, let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward into maturity. And here's the foundation, not laying again, the foundation of repentance from Acts that lead to death and of faith in God, instruction about cleansing rights, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment and God permitting, we will do so.

So the elementary teachings here, this is literally the ABCs. This is literally what we learn in preschool and kindergarten. This is if we don't lay the foundation of our ABCs in the world here, we never learn to read. If we don't lay the foundation of these things that the author is talking about here in Hebrews, then it's very hard for us to grow into spiritual maturity.

What I find fascinating here is the foundational things that they're talking about. I feel like, in many ways, we have not moved off of it. It's so interesting to me, which tells me there is something that is so far deeper that God is inviting us into to move forward. But let me go over a few things.

This spiritual maturity here, it means spiritual development, and this is key, usually as a result of experience and teaching. It also means for the result of training, and it means a mature condition or state. So because of their mature condition, that is, their physical senses, including their minds, have been trained.

It is about learning, and it is about development, and it is about practicing. And again, I'm going to use this song because I can't get it out of my head. When we own something, it is about owning it and practicing and training. Our spiritual maturity is about owning our faith and practicing, practicing, practicing.

Can I tell you, Sunday church is not enough? Even Bible studies are not enough. It is what we do in between all of that that matters. It is how we have that relationship with God that matters. It is about our connection there. It is about how we practice and practice and build and build.

We need those foundational truths that we continue to practice and build on in order to build into spiritual maturity. Have we?

Have you ever seen babies when they start weaning off of milk? They hate it. They don't really like it. They prefer milk, especially if they're nursing. It's like, "No, I want the nurse. I want to stay here." And then if you ever see them start to eat solid food, that was my worst part as a mom. I hated it because they gag, they spit it out the whole time. It's like they're gonna die. You get ready to do the Heimlich on them. Half the time they choke.

And then, you know, when they do eat, you look at them, and it's like in their hair, on the, you know, the floor. If you have dogs, you know the dogs hang around them the whole time, waiting to eat. It's a mess.

So as we're building on a foundation here, it's going to be a mess. It is going to be a mess. But we're building on a foundation to spiritual maturity.

It is owning our own faith. It is not just coming into church and being fed. It's not just going into Bible study and being fed. It's not even just reading a book and being fed. It is owning our own faith and practicing on our own and learning.

What does it mean for me in a moment when words are screaming in my mind about how terrible I am, or how terrible life is?

It's what you said, and you're really prophetic today. Can I tell you that?

Yeah, you own it. Own it exactly.

But it's what you were saying when you said, "I can look at people. I can look at inside. I can look at anything, but if the place I have to go is to God," that's practice, all the time.

Because people will let you down. Things will let you down. The world will freak you out. God will hold you steady.

That's practice.

Does it mean we're not going to have feelings? Yes, we are.

Does it mean we're not going to have bad days? Yes, we will.

Does it mean we, yes, all of that. But what it means is we practice owning our belovedness.

That when those things are coming against us, we find God in the midst of it.

You know, last week, no, I think it was a few weeks ago, somebody was talking about, yeah, I think it was Pastor James, yeah, that we walk through the valley of the shadow of death. Thou art with me. That has been staying with me, and I've been thinking a lot about it. It just stuck out to me that day.

Yeah, though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we're going to walk through it. The difference? God is with us.

So we're going to go through this stuff. We're going to have the lies. We're going to have the garbage. We're going to have the people. We're going to have our own selves attacking our own selves. We're going to have the lies from childhood, from people, from places, from things, from jobs, from government, from whatever.

We are going to have it.

Don't fight it.

We are going to have it.

The difference is: Thou art with me. Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

That's the difference, and that is the practice of spiritual maturity. The garbage is going to be there. We build on the foundation of who God is. We build on that.

Let me see if I can find something in here to keep going.

So the foundation, according to Hebrews, the ABCs of our faith, is the teachings about Christ, knowing Christ, knowing who he is.

Repentance, what does it mean to turn around and go the other way?

Faith in God, what does it mean to trust in God? And we're going to preach on all of these.

Cleansing rites, what are those? I haven't studied it yet, so I don't have a clue, but I have an idea.

What does it mean that we're pure before God?

Laying on of hands, I'm so curious why this is a foundation. Now listen, these are foundations we have. I don't mean to keep getting down on the church, and I don't like being negative. And what I mean by "church" is church global.

But there are churches that don't even believe in laying on of hands, yet it's a foundation, so that, it's curious to me.

Resurrection of the dead, this is even preached on.

What is it? And is it what we think it is? Or have we simply believed what we've heard preached all these years? Because I have a different take on eternal judgment. But there's a foundation that's to be laid.

And verse 11 says this:

"We have much to say about this, but it's hard, hear this, to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand."

There, the Greek there is: you're dull, you're slow, you're lazy, you're sluggish, you're slow to learn, you're lacking intellectual acuity.

What I'm curious about is: how much do we actually want to grow into spiritual maturity? Or how comfortable are we just coming into church, sitting, letting somebody else feed us, going home, doing our own thing, forgetting about it?

How much does it matter to us to own it?

And you know, what we have done is turned church and God into trying to be holy, trying to be better, trying to get somewhere, trying to be better than the next person, instead of a way of life, a way of being, a way of communing with the creator of the world.

A way of intersecting, of relationship, of breath of life, of wholeness, of beauty.

Of being able to walk through what I consider to be kind of a difficult space called Earth, in peace and in joy and in love, and in something better than what we so often feel.

That there's more.

Are we willing to continue to try to understand until the day we leave this earth?

Are we willing to continue to learn?

So I'm going to bring us to a close, but there's a sandwich for me in these verses.

I want to talk about the sandwich in bringing us to a close. And it's this. It's this verse:

"We have much to say about this, but it's hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand."

The bread for me is on one side. It's like a hoagie, but it's a hoagie that doesn't have calories. It's a hoagie that's really healthy for you, delicious, nutritious, and that you can eat with no guilt and enjoy. And it's really big. Zero calories.

So, the one side of the bread is that we purpose to understand. We make that purpose to go, "I want to understand. I want to own my own growth and my own spirituality." Like that song, it's time to own our growth. It's time to own what it looks like to go to the gym.

Look, I said I was going to close, but now, look, I've stepped away. Whenever you see me do this, you know I'm going off.

How many have gone to the gym, and you see the buff person over in the corner, and you wonder why you don't look like that after doing chair yoga one time a week, right? Exactly. You know that person lives in the gym, and they've been doing it a long time, but we want to look like that by doing chair yoga one time a week.

We're like that spiritually too. "Well, I prayed in my car on the way to work. Why aren't I spiritual? I talk to God." But there's a practice, a development, and a laying of a foundation that we're invited into. Are we going to own our own growth and spiritual maturity?

And then it says, "But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained up themselves to distinguish good from evil." That constant use means to practice, practice, practice, practice, practice. Are we going to purpose to train? That's the other side of the bread. Are we going to own our own growth, and are we going to practice that growth? Are we going to practice the foundation that we have?

And the meat within this sandwich is, "Let us move beyond the elementary teachings and let's lay the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, faith in God, instruction about cleansing, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, eternal judgment, and, God permitting, we will do so." The meat is to be taken forward. The meat is the foundation that we're invited into.

Why? To be taken forward. To move forward.

It's not about becoming Joe and Jill Christian. It's about moving forward into a space that God is calling each one of us into. And the space is beautiful. The space is deeper. The space is to our true selves. The space is God whispering to us of beauty, love, and sweet things that only God can give.

And we've all experienced those moments when God goes, and we're like, there's nothing like those moments. There is nothing like those moments.

So are you willing? Are we willing to move forward into a new space where God is calling us?

So here's my workout activity for this week: the foundation. I'm going to invite you into a foundation, and that is to begin to look at Hebrews 5:12–6:3. Look at it for yourselves because this is where we're heading. Take a look at that.

We're starting with repentance next week. We're going to go two weeks on repentance, and then we're going to go the next two weeks on righteousness. I kind of flipped it when I was studying it. I should have done it the other way, but that's okay.

What does it mean? What does repentance mean? Look it up on the internet. Look it up in commentaries. Look it up in the dictionary. Do your own study. Start laying your foundation, and then when Pastor James and Sandra come in to preach on it, you are joining them in the sermon. You are preparing for what they're going to bring us.

That's us owning our own maturity, our own growth, what God is inviting us into.

Amen. Amen.