

Gunston Bible Church  
Pastor David Bennett  
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## Got Growth

Good morning Gunston it is so good to see all your smiling faces here this morning, there are many places you could be and yet you chose to come here and we do not take that for granted.

OK for time's sake let us get into the word of God but more importantly let us get the Word of God into you!

I have a question for you to ponder this morning. I don't want you to answer it out loud, this is one that you can think on and answer to yourself.

Are you enjoying the **Christian life**? Or are you enduring it?

You should be **ENJOYING** it, this morning we are going to deal with the subject of how to grow in Christ, and trust me we could preach on this subject for the next year but what we are going to do is deal with three points this morning.

There are some pretty powerful statements about being saved and following Christ as **Disciple**, or being **Crucified** with him, or **Growing** in him.

In the presence of God is fullness of joy

**Psalm 16:11 (NASB)**, *"You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is **fullness of joy**; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever."*

**John 10:10 (NASB)**, *"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it **abundantly**."*

Is your life an echo of the promises of Jesus?

Or does your life reflect the barrenness, frustration and failure of the world?

Whatever side of the spectrum you find yourself on this morning hopefully today's message will spark the desire in you to grow in Christ, to be **crucified** with him.

What we as Christians don't realize is that you can't have **RESURRECTION POWER** until you have been **CRUCIFIED** with Him!

It is a process, however, most people don't want to put in the work or commitment in order to receive the blessings, sad to say in today's society have a microwave mentality, I want it but want it right now, it is like saying Lord give me patience and I wasn't it now, now **NOW!**

OK, In order for us to begin in our Growth, Crucifixion, Resurrection, with Christ the first thing we need to recognize is that.....

### 1. You must recognize what you WERE

We don't need to candy coat the issue, call it what it is, SIN!

Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman told of a distinguished minister, Dr. Howard, from Australia who preached very strongly on the subject of sin. After the service, one of the church officers came to counsel with him in the study. "

Dr. Howard," he said, "we don't want you to talk as openly as you do about man's guilt and corruption, because if our boys and girls hear you discussing that subject they will more easily become sinners. Call it a mistake if you will, but do not speak so plainly about sin. "The minister took down a small bottle and showing it to the visitor said, "You see that label? It says strychnine and underneath in bold, red letters the word 'Poison!'

Do you know, man, what you are asking me to do? You are suggesting that I change the label. Suppose I do, and paste over it the words, 'Essence of Peppermint'; don't you see what might happen? Someone would use it, not knowing the danger involved, and would certainly die.

So it is, too, with the matter of sin. The milder you make your label, the more dangerous you make your poison!"

It is summed up in a few words, **SINNER, Lost, and Eternally Damned!**

**Romans 6:23 (KJV)** *“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

**Romans 3:23 (KJV)** *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”*

**John 15:5 (NASB)**, *“I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”*

Illustration by Gregory McDonald Sr. Well, one way to respond to opportunity is to learn to **recognize** it even when it is disguised as difficulty.

In a famous study by Victor and Mildred Goertzel, the home backgrounds of 300 highly successful people were investigated. All 300 of these people made it to the top of their respected fields. And they were names all of us would probably recognize like...

- Franklin Roosevelt,
- Helen Keller,
- Albert Schweitzer,
- Clara Barton,
- Albert Einstein,
- Sigmund Freud, etc.,

Well here is what the study revealed. Three-fourths of these people were troubled in childhood by either **poverty**, **broken homes**, **rejection**, or **over possessive** or **dominating parents**.

74 of the 85 writers of fiction or drama, and 16 of the 20 poet, came from homes where, as children, they saw or experienced **physical, emotional, or spiritual abuse**.

More than 75 were victims of **physical handicaps** such as blindness, deafness, or crippled limbs. And yet every one of them somehow recognized the "**advantage of disadvantage**" ...and became the people God had called them to be.

It's amazing that some people automatically conclude that difficulty, adversity, obstacles and objections are signs that God is closing the door of opportunity. And most of the time that is just not true!

However closed doors are not **missed opportunities**, if you are truly letting God lead and direct your life!

What they are is **friendly stop signs** along the way God puts there to say, hey this is not the way! Let me **Spare you the drama** of going down the wrong way street you are about to regret.

How many of us could use a little less Drama in our lives?

If you are trusting God with your future and destiny, there is no physical limitations that can hold a person back achieving what God has for them!

Unless they think their limitations are bigger than Gods ability to help them in spite of what they think their limitations are!

Saints please listed, to this, if you take nothing else away from today please remember your past **does not** have to determine your future, it did help develop you into the person you are today but should not **hold you back** from becoming all God and wants you to be!

Can someone say Amen to that?

The starting point for growing in Christ was to recognize what you WERE, the next point is to....

## 2. You must recognize what you **ARE**

**2 Corinthians 5:17 Amplified Bible**, *“Therefore if any person is [in grafted] in Christ (the Messiah) he is a new creation (a new creature altogether); the old [previous moral and spiritual condition] has passed away. (Its dead as a doornail, quit trying to give it CPR) Behold, the fresh and new has come!”*

**Ephesians 2:1-9 (NASB)**, <sup>1</sup> *“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, <sup>2</sup> in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. <sup>3</sup> Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. <sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), <sup>6</sup> and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; <sup>9</sup> not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”*

Until a person truly relinquishes their control to the Lords will and destiny for their life, things will never change!

But once they do, things will start to change and it won't be because of anything they did, but everything God is doing for them, in them and through them!

We are no longer condemned.

**Romans 8:1-2 (KJV),** <sup>1</sup> “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. <sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”

**Romans 8:1-2 Amplified Bible,** <sup>1</sup> “Therefore there is now no condemnation [no guilty verdict, no punishment] for those who are in Christ Jesus [who believe in Him as personal Lord and Savior]. <sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life [which is] in Christ Jesus [the law of our new being] has set you free from the law of sin and of death.”

Dr. Donald Gray Barnhouse has a great statement about the practical effect the truth of "no condemnation" ought to have in our life:

A soul that comes to the full realization that he ought to be in hell but that in reality the Lord Jesus took his hell, and that there is therefore, now, now, NOW, no condemnation for him because he is in Christ Jesus, is likely to be quite moved by the truth.

If the members of the human race are permitted to yell because...

- When the **University of Alabama** wins a football Game,
- When our **Candidate** won an election,
- When the **Caps** or **Nat's** wins a playoff,
- When it doesn't rain during the **Cherry Blossom Festival**

You get my point, so Saints let us put this in perspective, when we are in Christ Jesus, there is, therefore, no condemnation for us **NOW!**

Accepting **Grace** and what Jesus did for you and truly **establishing a relationship** with Him **ALLOWS** Him to do for you what you could **NEVER DO** on your own!

If the law **could not** keep us on the straight and narrow before **Grace** came onto the scene, than its certainly **NOT** going to do it now!

There comes a time, where a person has to draw a line in the sand and say, **enough is enough**, I can't do it on my own!

It is that “I am **sick and tired** of being sick and tired” moment!

I'm not going to kid myself anymore, I'm going to lay it down once and for all and trust Jesus for every, single, solitary thing from this moment on!!!

If that's you this morning, I want you to know that you just opened the door wide open, for Jesus **Grace** to fulfill the plans God has for you in your life!

In 1981, a Minnesota radio station reported a story about a stolen car in California. Police were staging an intense search for the vehicle and the driver, even to the point of placing announcements on local radio stations to contact the thief.

On the front seat of the stolen car sat a box of crackers that, unknown to the thief, were laced with poison. The car owner had intended to use the crackers as rat bait.

Now the police and the owner of the VW Bug were more interested in apprehending the thief to save his life than to recover the car.

So often when we run from God, we feel it is to escape his punishment. But what we are actually doing is eluding his rescue.

The first point we discussed for growing in Christ was to recognize what you **WERE**,

The second point was you must recognize what you **ARE**, and the final point today is...

### 3. You must receive who you **ARE**

Saints remember Jesus paid the price of our punishment, his blood cleanses us from all unrighteousness, and Christ has redeemed us with his Blood purifying us from all sin, so that we can be acceptable to God.

**1 Peter 2:24 (NASB)**, *“And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.”*

**2 Corinthians 5:21 (NASB)**, *“He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”*

Do you think anyone is going to be able to drive a wedge between us and Christ's love for us?

There is no way!

- Not trouble,
- Not hard times,
- Not hatred,
- Not hunger,
- Not homelessness,
- Not bullying threats,
- Not backstabbing,
- Not even the worst of all sins:

If you were on trial for your sins and you were acquitted, you certainly wouldn't want to be retried each and every day would you?

Then don't, and the good news or **GREAT** news is you don't have to, as we have all been set free, thing is some of us are still acting like we are not free but still enslaved, that's a lie of the enemy!

When the past seems to creep up on us, you know what God sees? He only sees His Sons perfection because Jesus Blood covered it all!

How much is all?

**ALL MEANS EXACTLY WHAT IT SAYS!!!**

**Proverbs 3:5-6 (NASB)**, <sup>5</sup>*“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding.”* <sup>6</sup>*In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.”*



Jesus cannot forgive us anymore than we have been forgiven, completely means just that. God is not interested in your past, once a person has come to salvation He has forgotten it forever!

Saints we need to **KNOW** who we are in Christ because it makes all the difference in the world, I have one more thing to share with you this morning it is Biblical Truths taken from the Book Who I am in Christ, I am going to just skim over a few of them but it will be in the weekly email for all who want a full copy.

### **I AM GOD'S...**

- Possession (Genesis 17:8/ 1Cor 6:20)
- Child (John 1:12)
- Workmanship (Ephesians 2:10)
- Friend (James 2:23)
- Co-laborer (1 Timothy 5:18)
- Witness (Acts 1:8)
- Soldier (2 Timothy 2:3)
- Ambassador (2 Corinthians 5:20)building 1 Corinthians 3:9
- Husbandry (1 Corinthian 3:9)
- Minister/Instrument (Acts 26:16 / 1 Tim 4:6)
- Chosen (Ephesians 1:4)
- Beloved (Romans 1:7/ 2 Thessalonians 2:13)
- Precious Jewel (Malachi 3:17)
- Heritage (1 Peter 5:3)

### **I HAVE BEEN...**

- Redeemed by the blood (Rev 5:9)
- Set free from Sin /Condemnation (Rom 8:1-2)
- Set free from Satan's Control (Col 1:13)
- Set free from Satan's kingdom (Ephesians 2)
- Chosen before foundation of world (Ephesians 1:4)
- Predestined to be like Jesus (Ephesians 1:11)
- Forgiven of all my trespasses (Col 2:13)
- Washed in the blood of the Lamb (Rev 1:5)

- Given a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7)
- Given the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:22)
- Adopted into God's family (Romans 8:15)
- Justified freely by his Grace (Romans 3:24)
- Given all things pertaining to life (2 Pet 1:3)
- Given great and precious promises (2 Pet 1:4)
- Given ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 1:22)
- Authority over the power of enemy (Lk 10:19)
- Access to God (Ephesians 3:12)
- Been given wisdom (Ephesians 1:8)

### I AM...

- Complete in him (Colossians 2:10)
- Free forever from sin's power (Romans 6:14)
- Sanctified (1 Corinthians 6:11)
- Meet for the Master's use (2 Timothy 2:21)
- Loved eternally (1 Peter 1:5)
- Eternally kept in the palm of his hand (John 10:29)
- Kept from falling (Jude 1:24)
- Kept by the power of God (1 Peter 1:5)
- Not condemned (Romans 8:1-2)
- One with the Lord (1 Corinthians 6:17)
- On my way to Heaven (John 14:6)
- Quickened by his mighty power (Ephesians 2:1)
- Seated in heavenly places (Ephesians 1:3)
- Light in the Darkness (Matthew 5:14)
- Candle in a dark place (Matthew 5:15)
- City set on a Hill (Matthew 5:14)
- Salt of the Earth (Matthew 5:13)
- His Sheep (Ps 23 / Psalms 100:3/ John 10:14)
- A citizen of Heaven (1 Peter 2:11)
- Hidden with Christ in God (Psalms 32:7)
- Protected from the evil one (1 John 5:18)
- Kept by the power of God (1 Peter 1:5)

- Secure in Christ (John 10:28-29)
- Set on a Rock (Psalms 40:2)
- More-than-a-Conqueror (Romans 8:37)
- Born Again (1 Peter 1:23)
- A Victor (1 John 5:4)
- Healed by his strips (Is 53:6)
- Covered by blood of Jesus (Rev 12:11, 1 Pet 1:19)
- sheltered under his wing (Psalms 91:4)
- Hidden in secret place of the Almighty (Ps 91:1)

### I HAVE...

- Access to the Father (Romans 5:2)
- A home in heaven waiting for me (John 14:1-2)
- all things in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- A living hope (1 Peter 1:3)
- An anchor to my soul (Hebrews 6:19)
- A hope that is sure and steadfast (Hebrews 6:19)
- Authority to tread on serpents (Luke 10:19)
- Power to witness (Acts 1:8)
- The tongue of the learned (Isaiah 50:4)
- The mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16)
- Boldness (Hebrews 10:19)
- Peace with God (Romans 5:1)

### I CAN...

- Do all things through Christ (Philp 4:13)
- Find mercy and grace (Hebrews 4:16)
- Come boldly to the throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16)
- Quench all the fiery darts (Ephesians 6:16)
- Tread on the serpent (Luke 10:19)
- Declare liberty to captives (Isaiah 61:1)
- Pray always and everywhere (Luke 21:36)
- Defeat (overcome) the enemy (Rev 12:11)

## I CANNOT...

- Be separated from God's love (Rom 8:35-39)
- Be perish or be lost (John 10:28, John 3:16)
- Be moved (Psalms 16:8)
- Be taken out of my Father's hand (John 10:29)
- Be charged or accused (Romans 8:33)
- Be condemned (1 Corinthians 11:32)

Today we have talked briefly about...

You **MUST** recognize what you **WERE**

You **MUST** recognize what you **ARE**

You **MUST** Receive who you **ARE**

Let us Pray!