



ST. MATTHEWS
Experience God's Family

Sermon Title: **Grow - Vision Sunday**

Sermon Date: **05 February 2012**

Preacher: **Mike Emslie**

Imagine knowing that you only had a year to live.

How would that impact how you viewed life?

Would you plan to do anything differently until the end of the year?

What would you stop doing and start doing?

And imagine that as you were thinking about all of this you started thinking about how some of your family and close friends were living and with your renewed focus, stripped of the lethargy that can come from thinking you have many years left to live, you decided to put down in writing down what was most important to you to be read at your funeral at least.

What would you write?

The apostle Peter faced a similar situation when he wrote 2 Peter.

He was in Rome in prison facing execution **1: 12 – 15** (Just comment on facing death for now)

And with his mind focused on what really matters Peter writes down the reason that he is writing **3: 1 – 2** (unpack)

And he wants wholesome / correct thinking about Jesus.

...Who is the focus of the Old and New Testament (3: 2 "recall")... who is the complete focus of the Christian life **1: 12 – 15** again (Note remember / nothing new / these things) and then **1: 1 – 11** (Note knowledge of Jesus = personal encounter / constant contact)

Why remind them about what they already know about Jesus?

Because we see in chapter 2 that there were false teachers teaching false things about Jesus **2: 1 – 3**.

Which is why Peter had said **2: 16 – 18**.

Peter is completely intolerant (virtue) of anyone who teaches unbiblical made up things about Jesus **2: 12 – 14 + 17 – 22**.

The frightening thing is that they had started with Jesus but had not grown in their knowledge of Him... they had forgotten what Peter was reminding his writers of that Jesus is everything (1: 1 – 11: He starts the Christian's life, He is the focus of our effort to grow in the Christian life and Him in heaven is the finishing line we are running to in life).

They had known this and gone after made up stories to satisfy their sinful natures / enable them to carry on living the sinful way they wanted to... even denying that Jesus was going to come back again as He had promised (didn't like the idea of judgment).

And Peter realises that the people who he was writing to face the same danger or forgetfulness and need to constantly be reminded that Jesus is everything... they constantly need to be told to grow on their knowledge of Jesus...

Which is why Peter ends off with probably the key verse of the letter **3: 17 – 18**... why he said **1: 5**.

Note Jesus is Lord – we grow in our knowledge of Him as our Leader and Master... we grow in living for Him and being like Him.

But also note Jesus is Saviour – we grow in our knowledge of His love for sinners.

3: 8 – 16.

The Christian life is like riding a bicycle... unless you keep moving you fall off.

No true Christian ever thinks they have “arrived” – they understand that they will always need to grow as they get to know more and more of the inexhaustible Lord and Saviour.

And no Christian ever needs to go onto anything deeper than a relationship (and ever growing one) with Jesus!

So growing is not a nice option for the follower of Jesus it is the sign of life in a follower of Jesus... not perfection but progress!

And so in keeping with Peter’s God inspired message our focus for 2012 is...

2 Peter 3: 18, ***“grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”***

Summarised by the word GROW.

- Which you see on the banner
- Which you see on the card that you were given as you came in [The word shines out and we grow up courageously, creatively and inspirationally... covered in prayer]
- Which you will see on wrist bands that we will be handing out as reminders in March
- Which we are praying you will see in reality as St Matthews grows in 2012

GROW is not a new vision... Our vision has never changed from being to help as many people as possible EXPERIENCE GOD FAMILY.

That is to help as many people as possible discover God’s family through a relationship with us (God’s family) and become part of God’s family through a relationship with Jesus. Knowing Jesus as Saviour. GO.

And then help those people really belong to God’s family through helping them see and experience the life of a disciple of Jesus. Knowing Jesus as Lord. TREASURE GOD.

And all we are saying this year is that the Lord wants to grow the numbers of people at St Matthews who are growing in grace and the knowledge of Him as Lord and Saviour.

- He wants to grow those who are already part of the family here
- He wants to the number of those who are a part of this family through us

Imagine...

...Your life a year from now... not because you are facing death... but because you are spreading the life giving word and your church our church is filled to overflowing with people who are being save and growing in their knowledge of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ... some of them people you know and love...

That is why Life Cafe, Little Tree Nursery, Book shop.

That is why renovations

That is why phase 2...

God is waiting to use those who are willing to embrace His growth plan for their lives and church...

Visual commitment!