

Sermon Study Guide – July 16th, 2023

Today's Focus: "Growing Christians in Just One Easy Step"

1) Thoughts to get you started...

- ◆ Today we are talking about how Christians grow in faith like a plant grows from a small seed into something much larger.
- ◆ What is strange about our theme? What does God use to grow faith in us, and would you describe it as "one easy step"? Aren't there other steps we need in our Christian growth?

2) Today's Message: Isaiah 55:6-13

⁶ Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near. ⁷ Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts. Let them turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will freely pardon. ⁸ "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. ⁹ "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. ¹⁰ As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, ¹¹ so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. ¹² You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands. ¹³ Instead of the thornbush will grow the juniper, and instead of briars the myrtle will grow. This will be for the LORD's renown, for an everlasting sign, that will endure forever."

3) What does God want you to hear today?

Throughout the sermon, consider...

How does today's sermon show you your sin? (i.e. What's the law?)

How does today's sermon show your Savior? (i.e. What's the gospel?)

Law:

Gospel:

Answer the following questions if it helps you follow the sermon...

1. In what ways does Jesus describe growing Christians “in one easy step”?

2. What is God’s tool for spiritual growth? How effective is it?

3. How is the message of God’s Word like...
⇒ *A pesticide?*

⇒ *A sower?*

4. Why are the Sacraments *not* an “extra step” beyond God’s Word?

5. How is using God’s Word both a) hard work, but b) an easy step?

6. What can coastal redwoods remind us about using God’s Word?

4) Taking it Home:

Read these sections of the Bible to reinforce this week’s truths:

Monday: *review* Mt. 13:1-9,18-23, Ps. 65

Tuesday: *read/review* 1 Cor. 2:6-3:23

Wednesday: Psalm 119:1-56

Thursday: Psalm 119:57-120

Friday: Psalm 119:121-176

Saturday: *read/review* Isaiah 55