

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

GROWING IN CHRIST

International Sunday School Lesson for July 26, 1953.

Memory Selection: "Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ."—Ephesians 4:15 (R.S.V.)

Lesson Text: Ephesians 4: 16, 11-6

The letter which Paul wrote to the Ephesians, while he was a prisoner in Rome, was addressed to the members of the church in Asia Minor. The first three chapters are doctrinal, discussing spiritual truths, while the last three chapters are of great practical value, advising these new Christians as to their daily responsibilities in conduct.

This Epistle has been described by the great English poet, Coleridge, as "one of the divinest compositions of man. It embraces every doctrine of Christianity;—first those doctrines peculiar to Christianity, and then those precepts common to it with natural religion." Bishop C. G. Moule said, "The epistle is both sublimely and practically Christian, and Adolphe Monod declared, "It expounds now its doctrines, now its morals, with such conciseness and such fullness combined that it would be difficult to name any great doctrine or any essential duty, which has not its place marked therein."

In the fourth chapter of Ephesians, Paul directs attention to the Gentiles walking "in the vanity of their mind," advising his converts to a higher life. "It is not surprising that Christians in the first century, just emerging from paganism and surrounded by degrading customs, should need such warnings and admonitions," declared Charles R. Erdman, but he continues, "it is humiliating to admit that believers of the present day, with all their advantages of inheritance and culture, need similar exhortations."

After appealing to the Ephesians to abandon the "old man" and be "new" men in righteousness and holiness of truth, he exhorts them to walk "worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love, giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Here we see Paul harking back to the necessity for a spirit of unity among believers. This is the goal toward which all must walk—unity and peace. There could not be unity or peace in the church of Ephesus, as there cannot be anywhere, until there was unity and peace in the hearts of the members. So Paul compared the church to the human body in which each member must work in unity for the good of the whole, so that the whole body might grow into full maturity, into the status of the man God intended it to be.

Paul declared that there is only one body—One Church—one great fellowship of believers, having the same Lord, the same faith, the same baptism, the same God and Father of all. The unity of which Paul speaks is not necessarily an organic unity, which would be expressed by the merging of the churches, about which we hear much today. While that unity might be desirable, it is not imperative, for it is possible to have unity of spirit within the divided denominations.

In order for the physical body to grow, there must be full cooperation of all the members or component parts of the body. The same truth is evident in the Christian life. For proper growth, there must be proper food and reasonable exercise. For proper spiritual growth, there must be nourishment with the Bread of Life and reasonable exercise through service to others. Someone has rightly said that there are "many people who are content just to enjoy their religion. They attend church regularly; they are faithful to the church. But, beyond that, they seem to do little to make the church attractive to others, or to spread the more attractive ideal of Christian character among those outside the church. They never suffer, or deny themselves for that faith; they just enjoy it."

Another writer declares: "There is no growth without struggle. Long ago the plains of Western Canada were a tropical paradise for the huge prehistoric beasts that lived there. They had no enemies and suffered no hardships. But when the climate changed slightly they died by the millions. They couldn't take it! It was the creatures they had hunted, which had been compelled to develop qualities of endurance and resistance, that survived. The fact that God has made the kind of world we live in shows that He is interested in the growth of character rather than easy enjoyment."

Just how much have you grown spiritually in the past year? Are you more, or less, interested in spiritual matters than you were last year this time. It's a good idea, from time to time, for us all to take stock of our spiritual growth.

(These comments are based on the International Uniform Sunday School Lesson outlines copyrighted by the International Council of Religious Education and used by permission.)



HARVEST TIME...

When the harvest comes the farmer reaps his grain, threshes and stores it, and soon it is on its way to the markets of the world.

The girl pictured above, posing amid the wheat shocks, takes the mind back to the days of Ruth of the Bible when the maidens of Judea gleaned the fields and gathered the sheaves behind the reapers of Boaz.

But sowing and reaping are not confined to the earthly fields of the physical world. In our moral and spiritual relations we are constantly scattering seed and reaping the results of our sowing.

If we cultivate the field of the spirit, and sow good words, good deeds and good thoughts, we will have an abundant harvest of the fruits of the spirit—peace and joy, hope and faith and love.

Those who sow to the spirit will find the Church an invaluable helper and the Bible an infallible guide.

THE CHURCH FOR ALL... ALL FOR THE CHURCH

The Church is the greatest force on earth for the building of character and good citizenship. It is a storehouse of spiritual values. Without a strong Church neither democracy nor civilization can survive. There are four sound reasons why every person should attend services regularly and support the Church. They are: (1) For his own sake. (2) For the sake of his community and nation. (3) For the sake of his moral and mental support. (4) For the sake of the Church itself. Plan to go to church regularly and read your Bible daily.

Day	Book	Chapter	Verses
Sunday	Matthew	13	24-30
Monday	Mark	7	26-32
Tuesday	Luke	10	1-9
Wednesday	Ruth	1	1-22
Thursday	Ruth	2	1-18
Friday	Ruth	3	1-22
Saturday	Ruth	4	1-22

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Perquimans Church Services

HERTFORD BAPTIST CHURCH
C. W. Duling, Pastor
Sunday School, 9:45 A. M.
Morning Worship, 11:00 o'clock.
Evening Worship, 8 o'clock.
Mid-week Services, Wednesday at 8 P. M.

BETHLEHEM CHURCH OF CHRIST
Joe Brickhouse, Pastor
First Sunday
11 A. M. and 8 P. M.

BURGESS BAPTIST CHURCH
Colon Jackson, Jr., Pastor
Church services second and fourth Sundays at 11 A. M.
Sunday School at 10:00 A. M.
Church service 7:45 P. M. second and fourth Sundays.

PERQUIMANS CHARGE CHURCHES
H. M. Jamieson, Pastor
First Sunday:
New Hope Church, 11:00 A. M.
Oak Grove Church, 7:00 P. M.
Second Sunday
Winfall Church, 11:00 A. M.
Cedar Grove Church, 10 A. M.
Woodland Church, 7:00 P. M.
Third Sunday
Oak Grove Church, 11:00 A. M.
New Hope Church, 7:00 P. M.
Fourth Sunday
Cedar Grove Church, 11:00 A. M.
Woodland Church, 10 A. M.
Winfall Church, 7:00 P. M.
Fifth Sunday
Woodland Church, 11:00 A. M.
Prayer Meeting each Wednesday at Winfall Church, 7:00 P. M.

ANDERSON'S METHODIST CHURCH
C. H. Beale, Pastor
Church School, 10:00 A. M.
Morning Worship, 11:00 A. M., second and fourth Sundays.

WOODVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH
Harvey L. Coppidge, Pastor
Church Services on second and fourth Sundays at 11 A. M.
First and Third Sundays at 7:45 P. M.
Sunday School 9:45 A. M.

UP RIVER FRIENDS CHURCH
Elizabeth White, Pastor
Sunday School, 9:45 A. M.
Church Services, 11 A. M.
Christian Endeavor, 6:30 P. M.

BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. Bennie Crawford, Pastor
Sunday School, 10 A. M.
Preaching first and third Sundays at 11 A. M.
Preaching second and fourth Sunday evening at 7:30.

PINEY WOODS FRIENDS CHURCH
D. Virgil Pike, Pastor
Church School 10 A. M.
Morning Worship 11 A. M.
Young People's Meeting 7 P. M.

WHITEVILLE GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH
Caleb Goodwin, Jr., Pastor
Sunday School, 10:30 A. M., every Sunday except third Sunday.
Church services every third Sunday at 3 P. M.

HERTFORD METHODIST CHURCH
A. L. Chaplin, Pastor
Church School, 9:45 A. M.
Morning Worship, 11:00 o'clock.
Youth Fellowship, 6:45 P. M.
Evening Worship, 7:30 P. M.
Mid-week Fellowship, Wednesday at 7:30 P. M.

BAGLEY SWAMP PILGRIM
Coy S. Saunders, Pastor
Sunday School, 10:00 A. M.
Morning Worship, 11:00 o'clock.
Young People's Meeting, 6:30 P. M.
Evening Worship, 7:30 o'clock.
Mid-week Services, Thursday at 7:30 P. M.

HOLY TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Rev. Charles F. Wolf, Rector.
9:45 A. M., Church School, every Sunday.
9:00 A. M., Holy Communion, 1st Sunday.
8:30 A. M., Holy Communion, 2nd, 4th, 5th Sundays.
11:00 A. M., Holy Communion, 3rd Sunday.
11:00 A. M., Morning Prayer, 2nd, 4th, 5th Sundays.
10:00 A. M., Holy Communion, Fridays and Saints' Days.

BERRA CHURCH OF CHRIST
Walker Perry, Pastor
2nd and 4th Sunday at 10:30 A. M.
Morning worship on first and third Sundays at 11 A. M.
Evening worship first and third Sundays at 7:30 P. M.

CHAPPELL HILL BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. Ralph Knight, Pastor
Sunday School, 2 P. M. every first Sunday.
Church Service 8 P. M. every first Sunday.
Sunday School at 11 A. M. every second, third and fourth Sunday.

Go To Church Your Church Any Church But Go