

EXILES

"Built To Grow"

Sermon Recap

This sermon, "Exiles: Week 2," from 1 Peter, calls us to embrace spiritual growth as a vital response to God's grace, enabling us to "stand firm" in a challenging world. Pastor Jared clarified two essential theological terms: **salvation**, which is God's free gift received by grace through faith in Jesus' finished work (death to life), and **sanctification**, the lifelong process of growing more and more into the image of Jesus. While salvation is instant, sanctification is a continuous progression, like learning a new skill that requires consistent practice and intentional effort. We don't grow morally to earn salvation, but out of gratitude for the kindness, grace, and mercy we've already tasted from the Lord.

To stand firm and mature spiritually, Peter guides us in four key areas. First, we must **grow in understanding of God's Word** by preparing our minds for action and exercising self-control (1 Peter 1:13). This means 'girding up the loins of your mind,' intentionally choosing to build faith on what God says is true, rather than relying on feelings or cultural influences like social media or AI, which often tell us what we want to hear. Our decisions should lead, and our feelings should follow. Second, we are called to **grow morally**, living as God's obedient children and not slipping back into old desires (1 Peter 1:14). This involves giving Jesus complete access to every 'room' of our hearts—our thoughts, habits, money, and even sexuality—allowing Him to do the 'renovations' and make us holy, or 'set apart,' for His purposes.

Third, spiritual maturity requires us to **grow relationally**, showing sincere love to each other deeply with all our hearts (1 Peter 1:22). This implies that genuine growth happens within Christian community, where we are called to be contributors, not just consumers. We are encouraged to serve, bring encouragement, and notice those around us, understanding that sometimes the people who irritate us most are the 'spiritual sandpaper' God uses to shape us. Finally, we are to **crave pure spiritual milk** like newborn babies (1 Peter 2:1-3), getting rid of evil behaviors, deceit, hypocrisy, jealousy, and slander. This means continually returning to the foundational truth of God's eternal, living Word (1 Peter 1:23-25) so that we may grow into the full experience of salvation. This journey of sanctification, exemplified by Peter's own transformation from a big mouth and short temper to a faithful apostle, is a work in progress for all of us, enabling us to have deep roots and unshakable faith when life inevitably throws 'haymakers' our way.

We don't grow morally to earn salvation. No, we grow morally because of grace, out of gratitude.

Discussion Questions

Girding Up Your Mind in a Digital Age

The sermon challenges us to "gird up the loins of our mind" and build our faith on God's Word, not fleeting feelings or unreliable sources like social media and AI. In what specific ways do you find culture, social media, or other external voices influencing your thought life, and how can you intentionally anchor your mind in biblical truth amidst these influences?

Giving Jesus the Keys to Every Room

Pastor Jared uses the analogy of Jesus wanting access to every "room" of our hearts for renovation, not just a select few. What is one area of your life—perhaps your habits, finances, relationships, or thought patterns—that you have been hesitant to fully yield to Christ's lordship, and what might be a practical first step to invite Him into that space?

Growing Through Relational Investment

The sermon emphasizes that spiritual maturity happens in relationships and that we grow when church becomes a family we invest in, rather than just an event we attend. How can you shift from a consumer mindset to a contributor mindset within your church community, actively seeking opportunities to serve, encourage, or connect with others, even when it's challenging?

The Motivation for Holiness

The message clarifies that we grow morally "because of grace, out of gratitude," not to earn salvation, but because God has more for us. How does understanding this grace-driven motivation for holiness impact your desire and efforts to pursue sanctification, and what does it mean for you to experience the 'full life' that Jesus offers beyond just salvation?

Prayer

- May our minds be girded for action, built firmly on the truth of God's Word, enabling us to discern clearly and resist the sway of unreliable feelings or cultural deceptions.
- May we continually yield every area of our lives to Christ's lordship, embracing the lifelong process of sanctification with intentionality, so that we grow in holiness and become increasingly like Him.
- May we embody sincere and deep love within our spiritual family, actively investing in Christian community by serving and encouraging one another, recognizing that our growth is profoundly shaped in relationships.
- May we diligently cultivate deep spiritual roots in anticipation of life's challenges, finding our unshakable strength in God's unwavering goodness and grace, enabling us to stand firm through every trial.