

Pastor's Paragraphs February 2016

I love my grandbabies- we see them just often enough to see significant growth in them - Quinn is the youngest and she is starting to really talk and make facial expressions that will make anybody smile and laugh. Harper is singing songs and dancing and is trying to take over the household.

Good stuff! All that reminds me of what the Bible says about Jesus' growth as a child in Luke 2:52 *...And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.* He grew in all the ways we expect children to grow. There was intellectual growth, physical growth, spiritual growth and social growth.

Have you ever stopped to consider that the church- as a body of Christ should grow the same way? Together there should be growth in knowledge and wisdom, physical or size growth, favor growth - with God- He ought to be more pleased with us now than before, and there ought to be favor with men- when we are faithfully being Jesus to the world we alone have the power to bless those around us more than any other people or organization!"the church isn't a building but a body, not a place but a people, not an organization but an organism." (Ken Hemphill) We are a body made up of living members joined together by God to glorify God (that's what Jesus did) as the body of Christ. We expect our kids and grandkids to grow and if there is not growth in one of those four areas we need to do something. Both of our kids had growing pains growing up and that was painful but part of life. IT hurt us to see them hurt! And then it hurt again buying all new cloths and shoes three times a year during those growth spurts. Growth sometimes hurts as a kid and sometimes it's painful in the body of Christ. That doesn't make pain a bad thing- it's part of growing. Jesus promised in Matthew 16:18 to build His church. *"And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it."* He is the foundation and the head, (1 Peter 2:1-10), (Colossians 1:18... *"And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent."*, Ephesians 5:23..*"For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior."* and we see that growth begin to happen in Acts 2:41-47, *"So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. 42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved."* Since it is Jesus who builds it, it is done with supernatural power and incredible balance- just like He grew as a boy in wisdom, stature and favor with God and men. We see in Acts 2:42-47 that the same thing happened in the early church. They 1) devoted themselves to teaching and fellowship, vs 42, thus wisdom, 2) vss 41 & 47 God grew them in stature (physical growth) 3) their desire for fellowship and their spontaneous generosity grew them in favor with God and man and they were all about joyous worship. (44-47) The churches baby pictures looked just like Jesus! By the way, verse 43 says.. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.

That is our yardstick for growth in 2016!

Pastor Mark