Oh, grow up.

Let’s start with a quick prayer

Dear God,

Thank you for the opportunity to gather here today. Help us to continue to praise you in a manner that is worthy and pleasing to you. And thank you for the gift of forgiveness and love. It’s in your son’s name we pray. Amen

Good evening! I know it’s super bowl Sunday, so I’ll try to be brief. I can’t believe the one time the Bengals are in the Superbowl, I’m slated to speak haha, but I’m thankful for the opportunity to share. I’ve got to be honest; life’s stressors have got me reminiscing for the good old days of juice boxes and being home before the streetlights came on. Back when my biggest worry was making sure my homework was done and I had stuffed all the dirty clothes in my room under the bed, so mom didn’t get mad. But we all gotta grow up some time, I guess.

The past year has brought up a lot of milestones for me. Growing up wise. I had to deal with high blood pressure, Coop is on his last year of elementary school, Adrienne finished her masters, Gabe started high school, got his first buck and started driving. I will say that last one has really improved my prayer life. I’ve gotten to the point where I check the weather app more than my messages. I dress for comfort instead of style. I lose my phone about 3 times a day. I even find myself staring out the window going “We needed this rain” haha

As much as I try to fight these things, they are part of life. Growing up is part of life. Don’t get me wrong, I’ve still got plenty of growing up to do. I still stay up too late, eat unhealthy foods, whine every time I get on the treadmill and listen to my music too loud but I’m growing. Growing is an important part of life. It’s not something we can avoid. If we’re not growing, we’re dying. Sometimes we’re forced to grow up quicker than we want but we still need it. It helps us to develop character.

As Christians we should never stop trying to grow. We need to grow by developing a better understanding of God’s word and will for us. I see some of the older, more experienced members of our congregation and I see how effortless they make it look. That’s what I should be striving for. Pushing every day to grow. We do this by study, prayer and repetition. Just like any skill that we want to improve we research it, we talk to others about it and we practice. Just like we hone other skills whether it’s sports, teaching, cutting hair, being a mechanic there is always room for improvement. We need to hone our Christian skills also. By studying God’s word, praying about it, talking about God’s word with others and by studying daily.

**2 Timothy 2:15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.**

**Joshua 1:8 says to Keep this book of the law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.**

With the Superbowl coming on tonight, many people will tune in just for the commercials. They used to be awesome, seems like now a days they’re getting a little weird but there is one commercial that has always stuck with me. The Farmers Insurance commercial. I know a thing or two because I’ve seen a thing or two. I’ve grown up and I know a few things. As much as I don’t want to grow up, I’ve learned that it is beneficial for me. I’ve learned things over the years that keep me from panicking and getting frustrated. Another time my growth helped me was when I was showing a new hand how to braze with oxygen and acetylene torches. I warned him that sometimes, if you’re not careful things can explode. As we finished that conversation something got sucked up into a fan and started banging around. In a split second I turned around to check on him and he was gone. I couldn’t find him anywhere. I ran in and shut down the unit. When I came back outside, I see his head pop out of the van. Eating a bag of chips, and he says “You said it could explode”. We teased him about that for months. He was scared, he ran away. Can’t blame him though, he didn’t know any better. I didn’t run because I’d been around it, like that commercial I knew a thing or two because I seen a thing or two.

As Christians, we should always strive to grow in maturity and knowledge. The more we know the better of a job we can do. The more we know the less likely we are to be easily swayed or panic. There’s so much information out there that it can be hard to tell what’s true and what’s not. Especially if we’re not well anchored in God. If we all practice being anchored in God’s word it’ll help us, as well as it benefits the whole body of Christ. We can use our growth in knowledge to guide others both inside and outside of the church. We will be able to answer questions with confidence and trials with scripture. Just like Jesus did time and time again. Ephesians 4:14-15 Lays this out so well for us.

**Eph 4:14-15 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the Head, that is, Christ.**

Growth will help us to have a stronger foundation, then we can help others to improve themselves. As we strengthen one part of the body the whole body benefits. We can build this stronger foundation by creating good habits. Habits like starting our day off with study, so we start our day focused on God. Watching what we watch and listen to. Controlling our mouths. Philippians 4:8 Finally, brothers, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable-if anything is excellent or praiseworthy-think about such things. Starting and continuing these habits will lay a foundation for good spiritual growth.

 **Matthew 7:24-25 Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.** This way we will be that fertile soil that the seed lands on instead of the pathway to be trampled.

I bet we could probably sit around and talk about the things we’ve seen over the years. My favorite one to talk about is passing fads. When I was a kid, I remember being obsessed with cartoons and collecting basketball cards. That transitioned into BMX bikes, which turned into cars with obnoxiously loud exhaust and speakers. Speakers that cost more than the car did. Now I just want one with lumbar support. HaHa

I really like being old enough now to watch these fads roll through. Right now, kids are growing mullets. I’ll be glad when that one dies. There’s been so many over the years, planking, fidget spinners, Tamagotchi’s, bell bottoms, hammer pants, all the different hair styles you could ever dream of, big, small, variety of colors, all the product you could fit in there, side ponytails, frizzy, not frizzy. Crimped. It’s never ending.

But as we grow our way of thinking grows. It’s hard-earned knowledge that allows us to evaluate life differently than we did as kids. When I was young, I’d spend money as quickly as it hit the bank but now I’m starting to appreciate just letting it sit there. I’d prefer to buy all the fishing stuff, and toys and trucks I could but I’ve learned it’s much more important to pay for the house, get life insurance, and make some memories rather than just having things.

Growing up changed my way of thinking towards money, friends, investments, vacations. Everything. As Christians we should strive to grow up in our thinking too. We can’t settle for the kiddie pool we need to challenge ourselves and grow. By changing the way, we think we can be renewed, by shifting our focus toward God, we can step away from some of these petty earthly squabbles and get to the heart of the matter, a world embracing sin that is in desperate need of God’s love.

Listen to **Romans 12:1-2 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is-his good, pleasing and perfect will.**

We gotta grow up. We can’t keep chasing every new and shiny thing that pops up in our life. We need to move on to more important things. Things that last. Grow up by making good investments, paying attention where we are putting our heart. Matthew 6:21 says for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also

 We need to spend more time, reading and study Jesus’ example and less time worrying about ourselves. **1 Corinthians 14:20 says Brothers and sisters, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults.**

We need to grow up and mature. It’s part of life, there is no stagnating for us, we’re growing or we’re dying. Just like any set of skills we need to use them, develop them and grow them. Paul’s letter to the church in 1 Corinthians 3:2 comes with some honest talk for them and a bit of bite that still applies today.

**1 Corinthians 3:2 I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready.**

Now, we all know that growing up isn’t always easy. Sometimes it’s downright unpleasant. An example from my last year was stepping back from coaching. I love to coach; over the last 9 years I’ve coached a lot. Everything from tee ball to safeties reading an offense to wrestling take downs to Junior high basketball, but we hit a point in our life, where I needed to be home. Learning to prioritize the need over the want has been one of the more trying things I’ve done in a while. At first, I thought it would be no problem to step back. I thought I’ll have more time; I can go back and help here and there. But I got to be honest, I can barely sit through a ball game now without feeling my heartbeat in the side of my head. You know what they say “Lead, follow or get out the way” I’m most definitely in the get out the way crowd. Learning to see what’s truly important and sacrifice what I want to do isn’t just hard outside these church doors, it’s hard for me to step back and let God have control.

We can grow by developing our trust in God. I need to grow up and learn to trust God. I need to keep Proverbs 3:5 in the front of my mind and in my heart. It says **Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.** Part of growing up we learn who to trust and who not to trust. Too often we put our trust in people, jobs, government, and possessions. But all of those things are self-serving and can lead us astray. Instead we need to grow up and learn to lean on God. Trusting him to take the reins and lead us where he wants us to be.

**Prover 16:1-9**

**16 To humans belong the plans of the heart,
    but from the Lord comes the proper answer of the tongue.**

**2All a person’s ways seem pure to them,
    but motives are weighed by the Lord.**

**3Commit to the Lord whatever you do,
    and he will establish your plans.**

**4The Lord works out everything to its proper end—
    even the wicked for a day of disaster.**

**5The Lord detests all the proud of heart.
    Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished.**

**6Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for;
    through the fear of the Lord evil is avoided.**

**7When the Lord takes pleasure in anyone’s way,
    he causes their enemies to make peace with them.**

**8Better a little with righteousness
    than much gain with injustice.**

**9In their hearts humans plan their course,
    but the Lord establishes their steps.**

I tell ya church, we need to keep growing. Not just in our day to day lives but in our Christian walk. We need to push every day to better ourselves. Growing in our thinking, in our habits, in our love and in our trust. I want to encourage you to keep pushing just a little further. So that when we reach the finish line we can hear those words “Well done, good and faithful servant” I want to push myself to grow closer to God and be more trusting. So I can follow Jesus’ example and be the person God wants me to be. A person mature in Christ and mature in faith. I want to leave you with one last verse from 2 Timothy

**2 Timothy 4**

**New International Version**

**4 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: 2Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. 3For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. 5But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.**

**6For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. 7I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.**

Thank you for coming tonight, please keep growing, and continue to fight the good fight.