

Sermon Title: Food for Thought

An exciting time is fast approaching in the Carroll house, we love the Olympics.

Sports is not the only area of life that has great analogies for our faith, we can also learn from food.

So, my food for thought question this morning is how are we doing putting in the work to spiritually grow right now? Or maybe a better food for thought question would be why do we need to grow?

1 Corinthians 9:24-26, Philippians 3:12-14

In these two passages Paul is equating the Christian life to preparing for an athletic competition.

- In the 1 Corinthian passage he reminds us that we are trying to win a prize that will not fade away.
- We are living this life with the purpose of being more like Jesus Christ.
- In Philippians Paul tells us that the race isn't over when we become a Christian.
- 2 Cor 5:17 Paul says that if anyone is in Christ Jesus he is a new creation, the old has gone and the new has come, and John 3:30 says it simply like this, "He must increase, I must decrease."

Over the next 5 weeks I will be preaching on the 5 things every Christian needs to grow, and it talks about the fundamental disciplines of Christianity that are important if we want to grow.

- There is not just one area of Christianity that we can look at to measure growth, it needs to be growing in all 5 areas.
- Just like running a race.
- Just like growing a garden.

The next logical question is, "How do I grow Pastor Jay?"

- The first answer is that you need to want to grow.
- The desire to grow needs to come from inside yourself. Like the desire to lose weight or get healthy.
- If you have the desire to grow, Pastor Dan actually gave you the answer on how to grow last week.
- Pastor Dan's challenges were great, but they weren't that strenuous.
- The verbs that Paul uses in the Philippians passage of pressing on and straining are verbs of immense effort. Coasting and mediocrity do not produce spiritual growth.

The hardest part for me is when I face any kind of adversity.

- If I do, I normally quit and go back to my old eating habits. But, if we want to have real change, and we want to put forth that immense effort, we need to make a lifestyle change.

So how do we make a serious spiritual lifestyle change?

- See if there is anything sabotaging our growth from the inside.
- Romans 12 says do not be conformed to the patterns of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.
- Each one of us has patterns in our brain that are neurological pathways, and Paul is telling us that not all of those pathways are good because our sinful nature has corrupted them.
- But the problem is that they have been there for so long that we just accept those and think "that's just who I am."
- We get really good at telling ourselves lies or half-truths like, God created me this way, why do I need to change, or this is how I am, take me or leave me.
- Or possibly our identity is wrapped up in something about ourselves that is temporary, but we are not ready to give that up yet.
- Maybe you are a person that thinks everything is perfect right now and you don't want to change that, or maybe you would never admit it, but you know everything so how could you possibly grow?
- When I was coaching football some of my players had what I called "In one ear and out the other syndrome."
- The spiritual equivalent is someone that has read the Bible, heard the bible preached many times, and knows right from wrong, but continuously chooses to ignore what is right and do what is wrong.

Over the next 5 weeks we will be studying Scripture reading, prayer, worship, service, and stewardship.

Challenges:

- They echo the challenges from last week: commit to being in church the next 5 weeks, join a small group, and serve the Lord.
- One more challenge in song

How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time!

- Don't get overwhelmed by what may seem like an impossible task, and this week just focus on the challenges we have put forth

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