

# Growing Pains

This morning we heard from the Frolhoff family briefly on the subject of missions, near and far. As we grow as a church we will hear more about the subject of missions because it is part of God's Great Commission that we are called into the kingdom to fulfill.

This is not new. It's some two thousand years old and the job isn't done so we don't stop working. Jesus told His disciples to "go and make disciples" starting where they lived, in their case Jerusalem, and then to the neighboring regions and all the way to the ends of the earth.

It may concern some people that this intimate environment we have been blessed with here will somehow change and as we do more we will grow apart and disconnected. That would be against the Lord's prayer to the Father for us in John 17 where He asked God to help us be one.

Jesus from the very beginning when He said in Matthew 4:17 From that time, Jesus began to preach, and to say, **"Repent! For the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."**

This "kingdom" Jesus was referring to that was at hand, in other words right in front of them in bodily form, was and is one of love and unity. Obeying the Commandment to love God is a foundation to build the love for one another on! We are to do both while we are reaching out to the world around us. This love that we are to demonstrate to one another is not just a warm greeting in church and then "good bye till next Sunday" the whole idea is that we build relationships with one another. As we do this we are strengthened, encouraged and equipped to partner with one another in life and ministry.

But this is not automatic. As a matter of fact the enemy of our souls, Satan, that serpent of old, wants to keep that from happening and he will send all kinds of things against us to try to isolate us and eliminate our efforts! The Lord wants us each to grow in our relationship with Him and one another so that He can use us to reach His lost children.

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Growth is painful. It is common for a teenager to have growing pains in their legs and knees as they experience the growth spurts of youth. When a body builder wants to grow they know they have to reach the pain level and then push through it to actually add muscle mass. A long distance runner learns to run through the pain to extend their distance and as ministries grow their can be pain as well.

We have been blessed in this space in many ways. We have been able to grow, see people come to the Lord, have the luxury of a sound system and all the other perks that come with a large facility. Maybe we are too comfortable.

Church is not about the building and our comfort. The church is a living growing body of believers that is engaging the culture by being salt and light while bringing the love of Jesus to that lost and broken world. We are to build up and sharpen each other's lives so that we each become all that God designed us to be and only then will we really experience the fullness of joy He promises each and every one of His children.

I think the enemy would love us to stay right here and be comfortable and lull ourselves to sleep with our Sunday morning Wednesday night meetings. The early church didn't limit themselves to the Sabbath and a mid-week study session. **Acts 2:44-47 (NKJV)** says:

44 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, 45 and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church[a] daily those who were being saved.

Those people were working on their relationships with one another every day!

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They had a sense of connectivity that was unifying, empowering and emboldening! The body of Christ grew was from house to house and day to day! That is the community I want to be a part of.

We are blessed at our home because there are people coming and going almost every day and these people are also part of the body of Christ and this congregation by membership or association. That is the beginning of community. Satan hates that. I love it!

The shepherd wants to always keep the sheep close together because he knows if they stray from the flock they will be a quick and easy catch for the ravenous wolves that are lurking nearby.

Satan is known for being a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. 1 Peter 5:5-9

5 Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for

**“God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”**

6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, 7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

Our brotherhood in the world is the persecuted church. **Nigeria: Attacks in Plateau State**

Muslim extremists carried out new attacks on villages in Nigeria’s Plateau state in September, killing more than 100 Christians, including entire families, according to Compass Direct News.

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## Iran: Government Takes Child

Agents of Iran's intelligence ministry recently took a Christian couple's adopted child, demanding that the couple file a complaint against other Christians being held in prison, according to Mohabat News. The couple was taken to the hospital because of emotional stress caused by the loss of their child. "This is the first time I have ever seen this tactic — taking a child hostage," said a VOM contact. "In the past, it is always the parents."

## Somalia: Christian Decapitated

After an extensive search, Christians in the Bakool region of southwestern Somalia discovered the decapitated body of kidnapped Christian Juma Naradin Kamil on Sept. 2, 2011. Kamil's body reportedly bore the marks of an execution by the Muslim terrorist group al-Shabab.

These are just a few of the hundreds of Christians that daily lose their freedom, their families or their lives for proclaiming the name of Jesus Christ and we sit in this comfortable place.

I'm not trying to make us feel guilty that we are not doing more I'm simply saying that if we are going to grow there may be pain or discomfort or and best inconvenience but, as Jackson Sonyounga, a Preacher from Uganda, told the California mega-church congregation, "Let me inconvenience your convenience!" And as Francis Chan recounts what caused him to leave his thriving successful church in the sunny California suburb he says a that , "God didn't call me to be comfortable, He called me to win souls for Jesus!"

Francis is now in San Francisco living out his faith with his family. His blog states:

Hard to say what the greatest blessing was... Maybe it was watching my 15 year old washing and massaging the feet of homeless people for hours while telling them about

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Jesus. Maybe it was seeing my 11 year old pass out meals or walk the streets, sharing her faith. Maybe it was watching my wife lead worship in a room full of passionate worshippers. Maybe it was the opportunity to preach to a gathering of believers who spent the day living out what they believed. Maybe it was listening to the stories of lost people and being able to speak truth into their lives. Ultimately, it was a great time watching my family join with other believers who were willing be uncomfortable. I'm used to seeing this on mission trips, but not so much in our own backyard.

“Our own back yard...” Springvale is our own back yard. When we move to the center of the village, next to the park visible to the world as it passes by and not just on Sunday but every day of the week, we will reach out to our own back yard and give them Jesus!

When we get out of ourselves and start serving people that don't know Jesus so they can see Jesus in us all of our challenges in our lives will fade away and be replaced with the fullness of joy Jesus promised us.

Please pray for this holy discomfort to be the new way of the future for God's House On The Hill.

Jesus said in John 16:33,

“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

So, as we go I'll conclude with 1 Peter 5:10-11

10 But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. 11 To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.