

**Life on Mission: Grow**  
**October 7, 2018**  
**Lynn Haven UMC**

**Introduction**

“And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.’ The second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ No other commandment is greater than these.” (Mark 12:30-31)

Love God. Check. Love others. Hmm. That one can make us want to call an audible for God’s grace to come fill our hearts, quick and in a hurry. Indeed, people can be challenging so it’s a good thing to remember what we said a few weeks ago: You can’t look into the eyes of someone God doesn’t love! And since He has made it abundantly clear that He wants us to love Him and each other, we must begin to consider our neighbor as we do ourselves. The good news is He has equipped us with a powerful Helper to be able to accomplish this. Thankfully, when we grow in Christ, we are able to fully love God; and as a result, truly love others. This week we will discuss how we will grow our faith when we follow this commandment in word and deed as we seek to live a life on mission.

**Digging Deeper**

**You can’t grow without GRACE.**

- Read Romans 3:20-24. What does it mean to have God’s grace? Some might say grace simply means God’s unmerited favor. Through Christ, He has bestowed upon us a goodness that we have no right to claim or expect. God’s word says that He will always provide the sustaining grace to get us through life’s challenges. How has God’s sustaining grace carried you through difficult times? How has it grown your faith?

**Grow TO Christ.**

- “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Romans 10:13 NIV). Not just the “good and holy people” are eligible to receive salvation, it is a free gift to everyone who believes the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But we can’t accept Christ and stop there to smell the roses. Every day is an opportunity to move closer toward sanctification, or perfection in Christ. While we will never be able to reach the perfection that is Jesus’ alone, we can experience glimpses of what God means by this through our love for Him and for others. Have you ever experienced moments of love that were so complete that you knew they were a gift from God? Perhaps this will be how we feel all the time when we get to heaven!
- Oftentimes emotions can get in the way of how we develop spiritually. How does the way you feel about yourself (i.e. you like what you see in your life or you are depressed by what’s happening in it) affect how you seek to grow in your relationship with Jesus?

**Grow IN Christ.**

- We come to know the true meaning of grace only when we step into who we are meant to be as Followers of The Way. “Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 1:2 NIV) What does it mean to you when you tell people you are a Christian? How do you work each day at growing your faith? Is it possible that most people care more about not going to hell, and going to heaven than we do actually being made to look like Jesus? Being Christ-

like is more than a title, it's a way of life. We should take the time to rejoice in who we are in Christ. But we would be wise to also remove those clothes we wore when we treasured the things of the world above all else and put on the new ones that help display our undivided love for Him! "This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!" (1 Corinthians 5:17 NIV)

- Your experience of following Jesus should be taking you somewhere. Where has it taken you? How did you come to accept Him into your heart?

### **Conclusion**

So the final questions for today are: Where **ARE YOU** in your faith journey? Have you trusted Jesus for your salvation? What is your call to action in the church's task to spread the message of salvation to those who have not heard? Do you have room to grow? In a recent sermon on feeling like you are stuck in the middle (in terms of your faith walk), Pastor Steven Furtick preached about how we feel stagnant in our walk sometimes because we don't feel "close to God" even though we've done all the things we think we are supposed to do in order to feel that way. He points out that the middle is where we need to be because from the time we made the choice to accept Christ to where we are now, there is a gap that should make us feel grateful since we are no longer who we once were. But we also need to remember God is always pushing us to be more than we are today. So if we feel we are never quite getting caught up to Him and are stuck at some mid-point, well that is where we should be. We need a gap behind us to remind us to feel grateful for all He has done in our lives, and we need a gap before us to remind us that we always have room to grow. What is your next step toward growth going to be?

### What are some ways to draw closer to Jesus Christ?

- Spend quality quiet time with Jesus. This can be done by reading gospel oriented books or listening to devotionals or even Christian music. We have recently made two guides available for this purpose: "90 days in the Gospels" Bible reading plan and the "7 minutes with God" prayer guide. You can find these handouts online at <http://www.mylhumc.net/life-on-mission> or get a copy of them in the lobby on Sunday morning.
- Attend church regularly.
- Receive the sacraments (Baptism and Holy Communion).
- Read the Bible.
- Talk to Jesus through prayer.