

Ephesians 4:20-24 “Our Joyful Commitment to Growing Disciples through Progressive Sanctification”^{**1}

Summer Series: *The Joy of Being a God-Centered Church: The DNA of WBC*

Main Idea: As a church we are joyfully committed to growing disciples through progressive sanctification. The key word is *growing*. We’re going to look at a biblical example of this commitment, and then consider the implications of it for WBC.

- I. An example of a joyful commitment to growing disciples (Eph 4:20-24)
 - A. Growing is a community project (20a).
 - B. Growing requires knowing Christ (20-21).
 - C. Growing requires learning the right curriculum (22a).
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 - G. We must do ministry with the long view in mind.

Affirmation: In Christ we have all that it takes to accomplish all He desires.

We’ve been rejoicing in God this summer through our series, *The Joy of Being a God-Centered Church*. Who God is and what God has done determines everything for us. This is our DNA as a church, twelve joyful commitments. Thus far we’ve seen...

Our Joyful Commitment to Expository Preaching

Our Joyful Commitment to Preaching the Whole Counsel of God

Our Joyful Commitment to Sovereign Grace in the Conversion of a Sinner

Our Joyful Commitment to God-centered Evangelism

Our Joyful Commitment to Church Membership

Our Joyful Commitment to Biblical Church Leadership

Today’s message is entitled, “Our Joyful Commitment to Growing Disciples through Progressive Sanctification.” We’re going to look at a biblical example of this commitment, and then consider the implications of it for WBC. Let’s read today’s text.

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 4:20-24

What picture best expresses what comes to your mind when you think of a church? What is a church? Is it a school classroom (a place to learn)? A concert hall (a place to listen)? A theater (a place to watch)? A fitness center (a place to get tired)? A day-care (a place that cares for kids)? A café (a place to socialize)?

When I think of various churches I’ve visited in my lifetime, those pictures come to mind. I suppose there’s an element of truth in each of those images. Church is a place for learning, listening, watching, getting tired in the Lord’s work, caring for kids, and

^{**} Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

¹ For a previous look at this passage, see the message preached at WBC in 2011 in our series, “Nine Marks of a Healthy Church.”

fellowshipping with others. Usually, if you had to do so, you could pick just one image to represent a particular church, for each church often has its own distinctive emphasis.

What picture best summarizes Wheelersburg Baptist Church? I know it's subjective, but here's a picture that comes to my mind. WBC is God's greenhouse, *a place for growing*. Granted, it's not all that we are, but it's central to our identity.

This is why if you come to WBC merely to listen to a sermon, or enjoy some music, or fellowship with some friends, or provide some spiritual care for your kids, you'll be disappointed. At WBC we believe that church is a place to grow, that by God's design church is supposed to be a place for growing.

What does that mean? Are we talking about growing numerically? Not primarily, though it's a by-product. We have in mind the assignment Jesus gave His disciples in Matthew 28:19-20. He told them to go and *make disciples*. He said to baptize those disciples to identify them as His followers, and then He said to *teach* those disciples everything He commanded.

This is the great commission. Jesus told the Twelve to do with others what He had done with them, to call people to follow Him, and then to invest time and energy into teaching them how to obey His commands. That's what making disciples is all about, and the fulfillment of this assignment takes, not just a few months or years, but a lifetime.

Friends, this is the mission Jesus gave, which the early church took seriously. Read the book of Acts, and what do we see? Disciples making disciples who become a community of connected disciples known as a church.

Keep reading the NT and we come to the epistles, and what do we see there? We see letters written to early churches and church leaders, and again we see the same emphasis on growing disciples. That what Paul's passion, and Peter's, and James'. They wrote their epistles to help Jesus' followers grow up and resemble their Savior.

At WBC, we seek to take this seriously. We are committed to growing disciples. It's part of our DNA as a God-centered church. Not just to giving people a good experience on Sunday mornings, not even just seeing people get saved. We're all about *growing disciples*.

So, what does it take to grow disciples? You can't just say, "Okay, grow!" Ultimately, only God can make something grow, as Paul explained in 1 Corinthians 3:6, "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but *God made it grow*." But God works through instruments, and when it comes to growing, our part is to create the environment for growing.

That's why I like the analogy of a greenhouse. Growing plants requires seeds, good soil, water, nutrition, sunlight, and a safe environment. Provide those things and watch God perform the miracle of life and growth for plants.

And so it is in the greenhouse of the local church. We provide the environment and the seed and the light and so on, and God produces the growth.

Now let's look at a biblical example, and then talk about implications.

I. An example of a joyful commitment to growing disciples (Eph 4:20-24).

I'm not sure there's a clearer explanation in the Bible of what a commitment to growing disciples looks like than Ephesians 4. In fact, Paul's relationship with the church at Ephesus models this joyful commitment to growing disciples.

Paul went to Ephesus (a large city in what we know today as western Turkey) on his second missionary trip, around AD 52. He did some synagogue evangelism, then left the city with the promise to return if the Lord allowed him, and left behind his Christian co-laborers, Priscilla and Aquilla (Acts 18:19-21). About a year or so later, he did return during his third missionary journey. He spent almost three years in Ephesus, from around AD 53-56, and he poured his life into growing disciples. Acts 19:9-10 indicates he found a lecture hall and started having daily discussions of God's Word that lasted for two years. What resulted was a church dear to his heart.

About five years later, around AD 60, Paul was under house arrest in Rome, when the Holy Spirit guided him to write this God-inspired letter to the church in Ephesus. In the first half of the letter, he reminds his friends of their resources in Christ. In the second half he talks about their responsibilities in Christ.

Ephesians is a great letter. We read chapters 1-3 and learn what we have in Christ. Then we read chapters 4-6 and find out why. We're going to examine Ephesians 4:20-24, where we discover five insights regarding the growth process.

A. Growing is a community project (20a). Verse 20 begins, "But that is not the way you learned Christ!" Paul knew these readers. He knew how they came to know Christ. In fact, in the first words of his letter he reminded them how they had experienced an identity change.

He began in Ephesians 1:1, "To the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus." That reveals some important things about these readers. They were *saints*—literally "holy ones, those set apart to God." And they were *in Christ*. That was their position, something Paul emphasizes throughout the first three chapters.

That's critical to see. The recipients of this letter *knew Christ*. They've been born again, are members of God's family, and are heading to heaven.

But they still *need to grow*. That's why Paul wrote this letter. They weren't where they used to be, praise God, but they still weren't where they needed to be either.

When you scan the letter you see Paul teaching about communication, anger, marriage roles, parenting, etc. What does that indicate? These people were in Christ, yes, but they were also in trouble. They still had areas in which they needed to grow.

Please don't miss the significance of the pronoun *you* in verse 20. It's plural. This says tons, namely, that by God's design, growing is something that's supposed to happen *in community*. But not just any community. God intends to grow up His kids in a community called *the church*. Growing is a local church, community project. More about that when we get to the implications.

B. Growing requires knowing Christ (20-21). Notice the relational verb in verse 20 (NIV), "You, however, did not come to *know* Christ that way." That indicates the people reading this letter had come to know Christ personally. They didn't come to know Him by indulging in the lusts of their fleshly appetite, as Paul just clarified in verses 17-20. How then? How did it happen? Paul reminds them in verse 21, "assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus."

There's how it happened. It's how any person comes to know Christ. They must *hear* and *be taught*. Hear what? *About him*, referring to Christ. And be taught what? *The truth*. What truth? *The truth* that is *in Jesus*. Jesus said in Matthew 11:29, "Take my yoke upon you and *learn from me*, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

Friends, we can't grow to become the person that God intends apart from hearing and learning the truth regarding Jesus. On our own, we're cut off from God. That's what sin does. It separates the sinner from His Maker. But God sent His precious Son into the world to reconcile sinners back to Himself. That's why Jesus, after living a perfect life, deliberately went to the cross to die a sinner's death. He came to rescue sinners by paying sin's penalty for them. And because He conquered death and is presently alive, He is a person we can know. And if we know, we can grow.

You say, "I've tried, but the Christian life doesn't work for me." Your problem could be a misunderstanding regarding how the Christian life "works," and we'll get to that in a moment. But the problem may be a faulty assumption, for the Christian life "works" only for those who truly *know Christ*. Are you sure you know Christ?

Awhile back I was talking with a man and asked him when he was saved. He told me it happened twenty-five years earlier in a revival meeting. That's when he got saved and joined the church. I had known this man for several years and I confess, I never heard him talk about Christ, nor ever saw any evidence that he was burdened to see others come to know Christ. I don't know his heart, but I do know there are people in churches today whose salvation experience goes back to a meeting with emotional music, a fearful story about hell, and a little bit of Jesus.

Now contrast that with the Christians in Ephesus. Paul said his readers were taught the truth regarding Jesus. That took time. That took a willingness on their part to learn. And when they professed faith in Christ, it's because they truly knew Him.

That's why I ask, my friend, are you sure you know Him. Growing is a community project that requires knowing Christ *personally*.

C. Growing requires learning the right curriculum (22a). If you have the NIV, you'll notice that the first words of verse 22 are, "You were taught." The translators use a passive verb which emphasizes that the Ephesians *were taught*.

Paul, of course, knew they were taught. He did most of the teaching. In Acts 19 Luke mentions the daily teaching sessions that lasted for two years. No doubt more teaching took place during the corporate worship service on the Lord's Day.

The word for "taught" is the Greek term *didasko*, which carries the idea of instructing in doctrine, even catechizing. If we're going to grow that's what we need, to be *taught*.

Taught what? What's the curriculum? In verse 21 Paul says they were taught, not just the truth that is in Jesus, but as the NIV puts it, "*in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus*." In other words, the truth about the person and work of Jesus has implications for the lives of those who know Him. And Paul taught those implications.

That's what he says in verses 22-24. "To put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds,²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness."²

This is the curriculum for growing disciples. We teach people the truth that is in Jesus, and then we teach them how to live in light of that truth. Or, as Jesus put it in the

² In the NIV, "You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."

Great Commission, “teach them to obey everything I have commanded you.” Not just *know*, not just be able to affirm, but to *obey*.

Quite frankly, in contemporary discipleship this is often ignored. Look at the typical discipleship resource for a new Christian, and what’s in it? It covers some basics about Jesus, and likely several important topics like assurance, prayer, Bible study, baptism, witnessing, maybe church membership, and so forth. But something’s missing.

Look at Paul’s curriculum. It’s not just academic, but about life-change. Scan verses 25 through 5:18 and you’ll see a host of real life realities that Paul included in his discipleship curriculum with the Ephesians.

In verse 25 he addresses the need to stop lying and become a truth-teller in every situation. In verse 26 he insists that Christians must not go to bed angry. In verse 27, he says that all stealing must go and emphasizes the importance of getting a good job, saving, and then sharing with those in need. He talks about how to communicate in ways that make Christ attractive in verse 29, about getting rid of bitterness and slander in verse 31, and how to be kind and forgive in verse 32. He talks about sex in 5:3-4, not wasting time in 5:15-16, and alcohol in 5:18.

That’s what I call a comprehensive discipleship curriculum! And that’s exactly what growing disciples requires. What’s more...

D. Growing requires participating in the process of change (22-24). Those are two key words, *participating* and *process*. Friends, there’s no holy zap in the Christian life. I wish there was. When I’m trying to help a brother who’s struggling with pornography or alcohol or his anger or tongue, I wish I could give him a prayer to pray that would bring instant transformation. But there is no such prayer. By God’s design, he needs to learn what we all need to learn, how to *participate* in the *process* of change.

It’s called progressive sanctification. Some churches teach that the Holy Spirit does “a second work of grace,” sometimes called “entire sanctification.”³

There’s the view of John Wesley, held to various degrees by Methodist, Wesleyan, Nazarene, and Holiness churches. John Wesley separated the time a person becomes a Christian from the time progressive sanctification begins. He taught “Christian perfection.”

Related to this is the Keswick, or higher life view, which is another type of second blessing theology. Christians experience two “blessings”. The first is getting saved. The second is getting serious. It’s this second blessing that’s the key to the “higher life” or “victorious life”.

Then there’s the Pentecostal view of sanctification, which has some variations. For some, there’s actually a “third blessing” that’s needed. The first is the crisis of conversion for salvation. The second is the crisis of sanctification for holiness, and the third is the crisis of Spirit-baptism for power in service.⁴

We do not believe this at WBC. We do not believe that what’s needed for a holy life is a second work of grace. We do not believe there’s any quick fix to our struggle with sin. Based on Ephesians 4 and other texts like it, we believe that sanctification involves a process, a life-long, two-step process.

1. *We must put off the thinking, desires, and behavior of the old man.* That’s verse 22. And...

³ <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/models-of-sanctification/>

⁴ This summary once again comes from the TGC article.

2. *We must put on the thinking, desires, and behavior of the new man.* That's verse 24.

This is vital to see. Life-change involves this ongoing double assignment. *Put off. Put on.* And not just behavior, but the thinking and desires behind the behavior, too. The assignments to *put off* and *put on* begin at conversion and continue to the day we meet our Savior. And the ability to do so is made possible by His grace, day by day, because of our union with Christ.

First, *put off*. It's a clothing analogy. There are things that inappropriate to wear, now that we're in Christ. What kind of things? Colossians 3:8 puts it this way, "But now you must **rid yourselves** of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips." Hebrews 12:1 says, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us **throw off** everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us." We hear it in James 1:21 too, "Therefore, **get rid of** all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you." It's in 1 Peter 2:1 too, "Therefore, **rid yourselves** of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind."

We are to put off our former way of life. Does that mean that we should no longer do anything we did in our pre-Christ lives? No. But it does mean we should no longer do anything the way we used to do it. Life in our pre-Christ days was all about us. We were created by God to live for God, but that wasn't happening. So when we played sports, it was about us. When we worked our jobs, it was about us. If we got married, it was because we were pursuing what we wanted. And so on. The Lord's purposes weren't in the picture.

But it goes further. There were some things, many things, in our pre-Christ days that now have no place in our lives. Not just ungodly actions either. Ungodly attitudes too. And ungodly desires. Anything that's not Christlike must go.

Yet this is only half the assignment. We must put off, then *put on*. This is the key to lasting change. Don't just stop something. Replace it.

Colossians 3:10 say, "**Put on** the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator." Because we have been raised in Christ, says Romans 6:4, "we too may **live a new life**." In practical terms, Romans 6:13 offers this exhortation, "Do not offer the parts of your body to sin...but rather **offer yourselves to God**...and the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness."

Put off. Put on. When will this assignment end? Not until we see Christ, for on the day we see Him "we will be like Him, for we will see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2).

And this brings us back to that word *participating*. We cannot be a spectator and be a growing disciple. We can't say, "Well, I went forward and turned my anger problem over to God. Now it's all up to Him." We can't say that because *He says* it's not all up to Him. He says that we have a responsibility, and it's a responsibility that we can fulfill because He gave us the necessary resources in Christ (see Eph 1:3-4).

I'll speak frankly. This is one of the main reasons I'm leery of the revival system used in many Baptist churches in our area. Yes, I believe in true, Spirit-produced revival, but the revival system that's been around since the days of Charles Finney often feeds a view of sanctification that ignores what we've just seen.

How did Paul say he grew disciples? He didn't talk about having special meetings once or twice a year. Look again at the list. He emphasized that growing is a community project. He said it requires making sure people really know Christ, which requires a regular teaching ministry using the right curriculum, and helping disciples participate every day in the process of change. In my opinion, the present day revival system often ends up becoming a short-cut approach that tries to bypass the hard work that God's Word calls us to invest in making disciples.

And the tragedy is, the short cut ends up being a dead end. It doesn't produce what it promises. So it must be repeated, again and again, with church-goers living most of their lives in frustration, or worse, deciding to walk away from the church altogether, convinced it doesn't work.

This raises an important question. Yes, we are joyfully committed to growing disciples, but to what end? What's the goal as we seek to grow disciples?

E. Growing results in resembling Christ (24b). Notice the final phrase in verse 24, "created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness." The NIV says, "...created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."

This is God's agenda, to see disciples resemble their Master, individually and corporately. To use Ephesians 1:4 language, He wants us "to be holy and blameless in his sight." It's not just our short-term happiness that matters to Him, but our eternal holiness. He wants us to look like His Son. That's what He's after. And that's what we are after at WBC. We are joyfully committed to growing disciples through progressive sanctification.

One of the most vivid illustrations of what progressive sanctification looks like in real time is a poem written by John Newton, the former slave trader and author of 'Amazing Grace.' I've quoted it before, but it's so insightful, it's worth hearing again.

*I asked the Lord that I might grow
In faith, and love, and every grace;
Might more of His salvation know,
And seek, more earnestly, His face.*

*'Twas He who taught me thus to pray,
And He, I trust, has answered prayer!
But it has been in such a way,
As almost drove me to despair.*

*I hoped that in some favored hour,
At once He'd answer my request;
And by His love's constraining pow'r,
Subdue my sins, and give me rest.*

*Instead of this, He made me feel
The hidden evils of my heart;
And let the angry pow'rs of hell
Assault my soul in every part.*

*Yea more, with His own hand He seemed
Intent to aggravate my woe;
Crossed all the fair designs I schemed,
Blasted my gourds, and laid me low.*

*Lord, why is this, I trembling cried,
Wilt thou pursue thy worm to death?
'Tis in this way, the Lord replied,
I answer prayer for grace and faith.*

*These inward trials I employ,
From self, and pride, to set thee free;
And break thy schemes of earthly joy,
That thou may'st find thy all in Me.⁵*

II. Implications of being joyfully committed to growing disciples

Being joyfully committed to growing disciples requires seven essentials.

A. We must understand that growing is a result of grace, not a requirement for it. The order in Ephesians is so significant. “For it is by grace you have been saved,” says Ephesians 2:8, “not by works, so that no one can boast.” But where there’s grace, works will follow, says Ephesians 2:10. “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works.”

Friends, we don’t emphasize growing at WBC because we’re trying to win God’s favor. We emphasize it because in Christ we have it. “Grace and peace be to you,” says Paul as he begins this letter in 1:2, “from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” We don’t need to grow to get grace. We have grace. And it’s what we have that makes the growth possible.

Sunday School teachers, make sure you teach those little ones about grace. Don’t just give them rules to live by, even though the Bible is full of commands, or they’ll end up either being proud or disheartened. Teach them God’s commands, yes, but also teach them about the grace of Christ that makes obedience possible.

Number two, in order to be a church that grows disciples...

B. We must have a strong teaching ministry. Teaching isn’t all we do, but it’s at the heart of what we do. In every ministry of the church, we’re either giving truth or trying to apply it. And by teaching, I don’t just mean information. “Teaching them to obey,” said Jesus. Teaching “in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus,” said Paul. Application teaching. Showing people what God says in His Word, then showing them what to do with it.

Friends, there’s no shortcut to this. In order to grow disciples, there must be a strong teaching ministry. I’m so thankful for our Sunday School teachers and FLY and youth workers and Preachers in Training and others who work hard to prepare biblically-sound, nourishing lessons for those under their care. Your efforts are appreciated! There’s no other way to grow disciples.

⁵ John Newton, “I Asked the Lord that I Might Grow”

And I would offer this reminder to you “in the pew.” Those nourishing messages won’t help us grow if we don’t hear them. Let’s do all we can to make the teaching ministry of God’s Word the foundation of our weekly schedule.

Here’s a third essential. To be a church that’s joyfully committed to growing disciples means that...

C. We must give new Christians a theology they can grow into, not out of.

We must be careful never to give trite answers to complex questions. “Just pray, and God will make it better!” Really? You tell a ten year old that now, and what conclusion will he draw next year when he prays and prays, only to see his best friend’s parents get a divorce?”

Right here, I think, is a primary reason as to why many young people walk away from the church when they hit college age. They didn’t receive a theology they could grow into, but one they’ve grown out of. It happened both at home and at church.

Parents, Sunday School teachers, children’s workers, remember this. God doesn’t fit into a little box, so let’s not try to make Him fit into ours. Let’s not be afraid to stretch our children. Let’s give them a big view of God, one they can grow into. There’s a difference between saying things simply and simplistically. Let’s teach our young ones about God’s sovereignty, and our depravity too, and about our need for justification, and progressive sanctification too. Let’s use those terms, then use simpler terms to explain the meaning, and then show them how they can experience these realities by simple faith in Jesus Christ.

This brings us to a fourth essential.

D. We must view sanctification as a process. I can’t emphasize this enough. If we don’t see sanctification as a process in which we have ongoing responsibility, we will flounder again and again. I see it all the time in the counseling room.

“Pastor, my marriage is in trouble. What went wrong?” And so I ask, although I already know the answer. “Have you been spending time in God’s Word every day? Have you been praying with your wife? Have you been meeting her needs? Have you been asking for her forgiveness when you hurt her, like God’s Word says we’re to do?”

Friends, we can walk an aisle every week, and shed tears, and plead with God, but that by itself won’t fix our broken marriage. In fact, it may contribute to the problem, for it reveals that we’re clinging to a wrong understanding about how change occurs.

At WBC we are joyfully committed to the doctrine of progressive sanctification. That’s why we welcome sinners to this church, no matter how messed up their lives may be when they first come. You don’t have to be perfect to belong to WBC, but you do have to be saved, that’s first, and then willing to grow and change.

Quite frankly, you won’t feel very comfortable in this church if you’re not willing to grow and change. We believe that growing and changing is why God saved us, so we’ll resemble His Son, all to His glory. And so we talk about growing, and teach about growing, and encourage each other to be growing, and even hold each other accountable to be growing. And we even go after each other when we’re not growing.

I’m so thankful to belong to a church family like this. I need it. We need to know that we have brothers and sisters who are committed to seeing growth happen in all of our lives.

If you want to learn more about progressive sanctification, for your own benefit, and for the benefit of others you’d like to help, here are two opportunities. First, come

back for next Sunday morning's message, *Our Joyful Commitment to Targeted Discipleship (Biblical Counseling)*.

Second, take a biblical counseling training course. There's an online option at TSBC that begins next month. There's also our Monday evening course scheduled this winter, January through March. If you're looking for a very practical way to grow as a disciple *and* as a disciple-maker, I invite you to join us. If you've participated in the past, then come again for a refresher course. And please, help us get the word out. Talk to your friends from other churches about these opportunities to grow.

For the sake of time, I'll just quickly mention three more essentials for growing.

E. We must remember that it takes the whole church working together.

Again, Ephesians makes it clear that growing is a community project. Ephesians 4:16 says the body grows "as each part does its work." We can't grow as God intends by just watching the online preacher at home. We need our church. And our church needs us, too, for we have gifts that God intends to use for the good of others.

F. We must provide modeling and accountability. We touched on this earlier, but it's worth repeating. We need each other if we're going to grow. We need examples and encouragement and at times, exhortations.

G. We must do ministry with the long view in mind. Several years ago I wrote something in my Bible that I heard Wendell Kempton say when preaching from Ephesians 4. "No one gets holy in a hurry." So true. That's why we minister with the long view at WBC.

So, you've stumbled and been on the sidelines awhile. Today's a new day. It's time to get engaged in the process and start growing again. Do you need help? Please ask. We love to help each other grow at WBC, not because it's easy, but because when we look in the mirror, we love to see our Savior's reflection. It's all about growing together so that we look like Him.

I think a fitting way for us to conclude this message would be to make an affirmation together. The affirmation?

Affirmation: In Christ we have all that it takes to accomplish all He desires.

In Christ, not in ourselves, not in some subsequent experience or blessing. No, *in Christ*, and in Christ alone. If we have Christ, and we do if we've been born again, *we have all that it takes*, not some, not most, but all. *To accomplish all He desires*, not some of what He desires, or most, but *all*. *To accomplish all He desires*, and what He desires includes our sanctification (our growth into His likeness) and our service.

Closing Song: #389 "More About Jesus" (all four verses)

July Benediction: Isaiah 33:2 (NIV 1984)