

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a magnifying glass over an open book. The hand is positioned on the right side of the frame, with the thumb and index finger gripping the top of the magnifying glass. The magnifying glass is held over the pages of the book, which are filled with text. The background is a soft, out-of-focus yellow and white. The overall composition is centered around the act of reading and focusing on the text.

**Chapman
Church of Christ
2006 Lectureship**

OPEN OUR EYES

“OPEN OUR EYES...”

“Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold
wondrous things out of thy law.”

Psalm 119:18

TO WHAT PRODUCES CHURCH GROWTH

Garvis Semore

TO THE VALUE OF A CHRISTIAN'S FAITH

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TO THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF CHRIST'S CHURCH

Troy McNutt

TO OUR NEED FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Tom Holland

TO OUR NEED TO STAY CLOSE TO GOD

Bart Warren

TO THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD

Terry Roberts

**OPEN OUR EYES
TO WHAT PRODUCES CHURCH GROWTH
Garvis Semore**

Introduction:

1. "He Died Climbing."
2. Is the church growing?
3. We usually turn to numbers to decide the answer to this question.
4. The early church grew at a phenomenal rate.
5. The example they left is the best plan for church growth today.

I. There was a problem.

- A. Acts 6:1.
- B. The church was in its infancy.
- C. They were already experiencing problems.
- D. I don't know of a congregation anywhere that hasn't had problems.
- E. In fact, we're good at finding problems.
- F. Sometimes we do little more than complain.
- G. 2 Thessalonians 3:11.
- H. 1 Timothy 5:13.
- I. But we want to learn how to grow even with our problems.

II. There was a solution.

- A. Acts 6:2-4.
- B. Whether it was warranted or not, there was a complaint.
- C. The apostles have now offered a solution.
- D. John 9:4.
- E. Ecclesiastes 9:10.
- F. Anyone can look around and suggest that the church ought to be growing more.

- G. The apostles go a step further.
- H. Here's the plan!
- I. Proverbs 29:18.
- J. It isn't enough:
 - 1. To simply identify the problem.
 - 2. And make a plan.

III. There was work to be done.

- A. Acts 6:5-6.
- B. Can't you picture a modern day church meeting?
- C. We think there is a problem.
- D. Word look around to try to find a solution.

IV. And the excuses begin.

- A. Follow the pattern.
- B. A problem – our widows are being neglected.
- C. A solution – we've got a plan.
- D. Work follows – that's the only way things will change.
- E. Too often we get stuck on identifying the problem.
- F. It's easier to complain than to work.
- G. Proverbs 26:13-14.
- H. Matthew 25:24-30.

Conclusion: Acts 6:7

- 1. The number of disciples multiplied!
- 2. Church growth can happen again today.

OPEN OUR EYES
TO THE VALUE OF A CHRISTIAN'S FAITH
Garvis Semore

Introduction:

1. I'm convinced that most of us want to grow.
2. We want to be happy in our walk with God.
3. We want to trust Him completely.
4. How can I mature into the kind of Christian I want to be?
5. 2 Peter 1:1-11.
6. Faith is the starting point.
7. Luke 17:5.
8. Increase our faith.

I. The world is full of trouble.

- A. Just before the apostles cried out for maturity (Luke 17:1-4).
- B. Offenses (sins) are going to be in this world.
- C. Jesus gives two lessons here:
 1. Rebuke the brother who sins (verse 3).
 2. If he repents, forgive him.
- D. It is here that Jesus teaches further on forgiveness (verse 4).
- E. No wonder the apostles would say that they needed more faith!

II. Seeds and trees.

- A. When the apostles asked for help.
- B. Jesus told them about seeds and trees (Luke 17:6-10).
- C. Mustard seeds.
- D. Sycamine trees.
- E. Christians.
- F. Work for the Master (verse 7).

- G. Even go the “extra mile” (verse 10).
- H. We’re still unprofitable.

III. So how do I grow?

- A. Start with a firm faith.
- B. The apostles cried out for even more faith.
- C. The question remains – how?
- D. Romans 10:17.
- E. Hebrews 11:1-12.
- F. So where do we stand?
- G. We stand in need of an increased faith.
- H. A faith that will allow us to stand even in the face of the enemy.
- I. We stand with the apostles.
- J. Amazed at the goodness of God.
- K. Staggered by the perfection of His Son.
- L. Indebted to them for the offer of salvation.
- M. Striving to live a life of faith so that others may see Him in us.

Conclusion:

1. Don’t lose sight of our goal.
2. We must develop the kind of faith that will allow us to launch out into the deep.
3. 2 Peter 1:5.
4. Increase our faith.

OPEN OUR EYES
TO THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF CHRIST'S CHURCH
Psalm 119:18

Troy E. McNutt

Introduction:

1. What a wonderful subject we have before us tonight.
2. Many today, even in the Lord's church would have us to believe that we should go along with the denominations—let us agree to disagree—and for the moment overlook any differences.
3. According to Scripture, we are to be different:
 - A. 2 Corinthians 6:14-17—separate.
 - B. I Peter 2:9—peculiar.
 - C. Romans 12: 1,2—transformed.
4. There are 2 terms in our topic tonight that I would like for us to take a further look at:
 - A. “Open”—as Christians we need to have our eyes wide open to the things round about us.
 - 1) Acts 26:14-18—Saul before Agrippa—“...to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God...”
 - 2) Luke 24:44,45—Jesus in speaking to his disciples—“...then opened he their understanding that they might understand the scriptures...”
 - 3) Thayer says, “to open the sense of the scriptures, explain them, to open the mind of one, to cause him to understand.”
 - 4) If ever a time existed when the Scriptures need to be understood, today is the day.
 - 5) One needs to have open eyes and not closed eyes:

- a. Matthew 13:15
- b. Matthew 15:13,14
- B. “Distinctiveness”—from root word —*distinct*.
 - 1) Webster—“that something is distinguished by the mind or eye as being apart from or different from others; capable of being easily perceived; clear well defined.”
 - 2) *Distinguished*—“to set above or apart from others, to mark as separate or different.”
- C. Are we different? Cf. 1 Peter 2:9
- D. Are we separate? Cf. 2 Corinthians 6:14-17
- E. The condition of denominationalism—Romans 10: 1-3.

What are some things that distinguish the Lord’s church from denominationalism? Let us explore!

Discussion:

I. Distinctive Mark #1—The Church of the New Testament Had a Certain Beginning Place, a Certain Time, and a Certain Founder.

- A. Beginning Place—Jerusalem
 - 1. Isa. 2:2,3
 - 2. Luke 24:45-48
 - 3. Acts 1:12; 2:1-38
- B. Certain Time—Roman Empire.
 - 1. Daniel 2:36-44
 - 2. Matthew 3:2
 - 3. Mark 9:1
 - 4. Matthew 16:13-18
 - 5. Mark 15:43
 - 6. Acts 2:47
 - 7. Luke 3:1,2—Tiberius was Roman Emperor
 - 8. AD 33—Time

C. Certain Founder—Jesus Christ.

1. Matthew 16:18
2. 1 Corinthians 3:11
3. Ephesians 1:20-23

D. What about the denominational world?

Roman Catholic	Rome	606AD	Boniface III
Lutheran	Germany	1520AD	Martin Luther
Presbyterian	Switzerland	1536AD	John Calvin
Baptist	Holland	1607AD	John Smythe
Methodists	England	1739AD	John Wesley
Jehovah's Witness	America	1872AD	Charles T. Russell
Mormons			

E. The church of which I am a member began in Jerusalem in AD 33 and was founded by Jesus Christ—How about yours?

II. Distinctive Mark #2—The Church of the New Testament Worshipped God in Spirit and in Truth.

A. John 4:23,24

1. “Spirit”—right attitude, motive
2. “Truth”—by Christ’s authority
3. “True worshippers”—indicates that one can be a false worshipper.

B. There were specific acts of worship in which the early Christians engaged:

1. Prayer—Acts 12:5; Acts 2:42; 1 Timothy 2:1,2
 - a) Denominations pray to Jesus.
 - b) Denominations pray to Mary.
 - c) Denominations pray to dead saints.
2. Preaching/teaching—Romans 10:13-17
 - a) Denominations tell stories.
 - b) Denominations talk about the comic strips.
 - c) Denominations talk about everything but the Bible.

3. Giving—1 Corinthians 16:1,2
 - a) Denominations have bake sales.
 - b) Denominations have car washes.
 - c) Denominations have rummage sales.
4. Lord's Supper—1 Corinthians 11:23-28
 - a) Each Sunday (first day of the week) as a memorial.
 - b) Acts 20:7—cf. 1 Corinthians 16:1,2—same rendering.
 - c) Yet, denominations have no problem understanding the collection but not the Lord's Supper.
 - d) Many denominations observe it monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, annually.
 - e) Some believe the elements actually become the body and the blood of Christ.
5. Singing—Ephesians 5:19
 - a) 2 types of music—vocal and mechanical.
 - b) Why not instruments of music:
 - 1) Not authorized—cf. Matthew 26:30; Acts 16:25; Romans 15:9; 1 Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; James 5:13; Hebrews 2:12; 13:15.
 - 2) It is an addition to God's Word—Rev. 22:18,19
 - 3) Arguments for instrumental music:
 - a) “Well, the Bible doesn't say you can't.”
 - b) When God tells one what to do, he doesn't have to tell us what not to do.
 - c) Illustration: Son to store for a gallon of milk and a loaf of bread—Do I have to tell him the 10,000 other items in the store that I do not want?
 - 4) Example: Noah—Ark—gopher wood—1 door—1 window—3 stories.
 - 5) “Well, I like instruments of music in worship.”

- 6) I like baseball, soccer, basketball—shall we bring them into worship?
- 7) “Well, the majority use them.”
 - a) Matthew 7:13,14
 - b) Exodus 23:2
 - c) Right is never determined by the number of people that do a thing.
- 8) “Well, it is only an aid.”
 - a) An aid will not change the activity that is being done.
 - b) Walking cane—aids one in walking, but the person is still doing the same thing—walking.
 - c) Col. 3:16—“teach and admonish”—instrument interferes with the purpose of singing.
 - d) Aids in serving the Lord’s Supper—containers for both the bread and fruit of the vine, but elements remain the same.
 - e) Instrumental music in worship is not an aid, it is an addition—another kind of music is added.
9. “Well, the Greek word *Psallo* includes the instrument.”
 - a) If that’s the case—the instrument would be mandatory for each person.
 - b) Paul commanded singing, not playing—the instrument is the human heart.
10. “Well, they used them in the Old Testament.”
 - a) They also kept the Passover.
 - b) They also offered animal sacrifices.
 - c) They also burned incense.

III. Distinctive Mark #3—The Church of the New Testament taught certain things to be obeyed in order to find salvation.

- A. Hear—Romans 10:17
- B. Believe—John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6
- C. Repent—Acts 17:30; Luke 13:3,5
- D. Confess—Romans 10:9,10
- E. Baptism—Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21
- F. Faithfulness—Rev. 2:10
- G. Denominationalism has differing and varying ideas pertaining to salvation:
 - 1. All one has to do is believe and pray the sinner's prayer.
 - 2. One can't do anything until the Holy Spirit moves him.
 - 3. One must give an "experience" or "witness."
 - 4. Baptism has not one whit to do with one's salvation.

Conclusion:

- 1. As Christians, we are to be different from the rest of the world.
- 2. As Christians, we are to be peculiar.
- 3. As Christians we are to be separate from the world.
- 4. How different are you? How separate are you? How peculiar are you?

Come out from among them and be ye separate.

**OPEN OUR EYES
TO OUR NEED FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH
II Peter 3:18**

Tom Holland

Thesis: To challenge God's people to accept the necessity of growing spiritually.

Introduction:

1. Living things grow.
2. Spiritual growth is a challenge:
 - A. To accept God's Word.
 - B. To accept personal responsibility.
 - C. To enjoy the blessing of growing.
3. This study will focus on:
 - A. The Possibility.
 - B. The Process.
 - C. The Promise.

Discussion:

I. The Possibility of Spiritual Growth

- A. Our nature: body (outward person) and spirit (inward person) (1 Peter 3:1-4; II Corinthians 4:16-18).
- B. Materialists deny the reality of inward person: soul/spirit.
 1. Worldly materialists.
 2. Religious materialists: cults.

II. The Process of Spiritual Growth

- A. Begins with a "new birth" (I Peter 1:22-25).
 1. One cannot be born again physically.

2. The New Birth affirms the reality of the inward person.
3. Jesus' doctrine (John 3:3-5).
- B. Rid soul of parasites (I Peter 2:1).
 1. Danger of parasites (I Peter 2:1).
 2. Rid through repentance.
- C. Necessity of proper nourishment (I Peter 2:2,3).
- D. Proper environment for growth (I Peter 2:5).
- E. Personal involvement (II Peter 1:3-9).

III. The Promise of Spiritual Growth

- A. The honor of God's recognition (I Peter 2:9, 10).
- B. The possibility of teaching others (I Peter 3:1-4; 2:11, 12).
- C. The love of life (I Peter 3:10-12).
- D. The joy of knowing the Lord (II Peter 3:18).

Conclusion:

1. Lack of growth reveals a problem.
2. Measure the growth. Are you stronger now than a year ago?

**OPEN OUR EYES
TO OUR NEED TO STAY CLOSE TO GOD
Bart Warren**

Introduction:

1. Maintaining balance is the absolute key to life.
 - A. We must eat a balanced diet.
 - B. We must balance our hectic work schedules with time for fun and relaxation.
 - C. Most importantly, we must be balanced in our religion.
 - 1) Preachers must preach the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27), not just a hobby or pet issue.
 - 2) Each individual member must recognize the need for spiritual balance.
 - a. Some seek a “relationship” with Jesus and our fellow man while discounting the importance of doctrine (worship styles, gender specific leadership roles, et al.).
 - b. Some seek to keep each and every rule with cold, robotic precision – ignoring the intent behind the law.
 - c. Our goal should be to balance the *doctrine of God* with our *relationship with God* – the two absolutely go hand in hand.
2. It seems as though many have fallen prey to the myth that simply showing up at “church” and going through the motions is what being a Christian is all about...such could not be further from the truth!
 - A. Sadly, even many in the Lord’s church have come to operate under a “works mentality.”
 - B. Many act as though showing up at the building on Sundays and going through all the acts of worship puts them in good standing with God.

C. Some of our denominational friends participate in what is known as “sacraments.”

- 1) For example, by simply partaking the “Eucharist” (a.k.a. the Lord’s Supper) one is infused with grace.
- 2) This divine grace is bestowed regardless of the spiritual condition of the individual, separate and apart from personal submission to the will of God.
- 3) Are there any among us who view the Lord’s Supper (or even just attendance) in a similar fashion?

3. While it is certainly true that we must follow commands (there is no escaping the fact that we live under law – 1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2), we must do so with the right attitude.

4. We must recognize our need to stay close to God – to maintain a real relationship with Him as we keep His commandments.

I. The Heart of David

A. David was called a man after God’s own heart (Acts 13:22) – but why?

1. He recognized that God is our strength and protection. Notice the number of times words such as “shield,” “rock,” and “refuge” appear in Psalms.
2. He had a heart that would break when confronted with sin (Psalm 51:1-15).
3. He recognized the necessity of sincere, heart-felt worship (Psalm 51:16-19).

B. He instructed Solomon to “know God” (1 Chron. 28:9).

1. God knows us (Matt. 10:30), we are to know Him too.

2. How can we know someone we never talk to or spend any time with?
- C. Thus David provides us with the key to recognizing our need to stay close to God.
 1. It is only in His arms of love that we are safe.
 2. We must demonstrate our gratitude by living differently, developing into mature citizens of the kingdom (Phil. 3:20).
 3. Such a life involves more than mere participation in formal rituals.

II. The Worship of Israel

- A. We must be careful not to allow our worship of God to become mere rituals where we are no more than robots who are simply “going through the motions.”
- B. Notice some of the problems the children of Israel were having:
 1. There was the tendency for their religion to only consist of outward forms with no inward reality.
 - a. Hosea 6:6; Joel 2:13; Amos 5:21-24; Micah 6:8; Malachi 1:10
 2. Clearly, God requires not just worship, but the worshippers themselves!

III. The Expectations of Christ

- A. One of the best examples explaining this concept is found in Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount.
- B. In Matthew 5:13-48, Jesus clearly explains that it takes more than simply knowing some rules to be a true disciple of His.
 1. True faith is easily detected (5:13-16).
 2. The problem the Pharisees had – they knew all the rules, yet they didn’t know the ruler.

3. It is not enough to follow rules, you must give your heart to the Ruler!
- D. Imagine what Jesus might say to us today about some of the rules we try to squeak by on...
1. You have heard it said...
 - a. ...we are to sing in our worship (Eph. 5:19).
But I say to you...if you are not singing with all of your heart, praising the Father and seeking to encourage your brothers and sisters, then you are merely making noise.
 - b. ...we are not to forsake times when the church assembles (Heb. 10:25).
But I say to you...if you don't really want to be with my people when they assemble, you might as well stay at home...your heart is far from me and it shows.
 - c. ...you will be judged by my words (John 12:48).
But I say to you...how can you know my word if you don't take advantage of opportunities to study in an organized manner with fellow Christians?

Conclusion:

1. Are we balancing the doctrine of God with our relationship to Him? We must strive to know God!
2. God hates hypocritical ceremonialism in worship (Isa. 1:14). God is looking for true worshippers (John 4:23), those who not only do things right, but do them for the right reasons with heart-felt sincerity.
3. Dear Father, open our eyes to our need to stay close to you!

OPEN OUR EYES TO THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD

Psalm 119:18

Terry Roberts

Purpose: Reminder of what we learn when God opens our eyes to His word and by His word.

Introduction

1. "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law" (Psa.119:18).
2. The psalmist is asking God to take away that which may prevent or hinder him from seeing clearly the beauty of God's law, to see clearly what God says in His written word.
3. May each of us open his eyes and strive to open the eyes of our friends and neighbors to the power of God's word. We are to be a light to help others see clearly those things once hidden from man, but now revealed (Eph.3:3-5, Eph.3:17, Heb.4:12, II Tim.3:16-17).
4. What a tremendous blessing God has given mankind. The individual choice to open our eyes to His word or not to open our eyes to His word (Josh.24:15, Deut.30:19-20).

I. Barriers that hinder or prevent man from opening his eyes to God's word.

- A. Traditions of men (Mark 7:7-9). Traditions are a very powerful weapon Satan uses to prevent man from obeying God's word.
- B. Satan's arsenal is great; let us be aware of his weapons of warfare (II Cor.2:11).
 - (1) Love of self, selfishness (Luke 9:23).
 - (2) Love of family (Matt. 10:35-38).

- (3) Love of money (I Tim.6:10, Matt.16:26).
 - (4) Pleasures of sin (Heb.11:24-25).
 - (5) Love of this world (I John 2:15-17).
 - (6) Other gospels (Gal.1:8-9, Gal.5:7, II Tim.4:3-4).
- C. Let each of us tear down these barriers that hinder people from opening their eyes to the truth which makes men free (John 8:32).

II. What one will find when one opens his eyes to God's word.

- A. One will find out if his heart is honest with God's word (Luke 8:15; II Cor.4:2).
- B. One will find that the gospel is God's way of calling sinners (II Thess. 2:14; I Pet.2:9; Matt.28:18-20; II Tim.4:2; I Cor.1:18).
- C. One will find the Lord's invitation and His bride's invitation are one (Matt.11:28-30; Rev.22:17).
- D. One will find that all need to turn from darkness to light (Rom.3:23; Acts 26:18; I Cor.6:9-11).
- E. One will find that the gospel of Christ reveals to us the righteousness of God; it is the standard of right (Rom. 1:16-17; Psa.119:172; II Tim.3:16-17).
- F. One will find love and what true love is (I John 4:8; I John 5:3; John 3:16; John 14:15).
- G. One will find that God is merciful, kind, just, longsuffering, unwavering, eternal, good (Psa.136:1-26; Rom.2:4).
- H. One will find something to believe based upon facts, not opinions or theories (John 14:1-3; John 20:30-31; Gen. 1:1; Psa.19:1-2; Eph.3:4).
- I. One will find that there is something to repent of (I John 3:4; II Cor. 7:10; Acts 17:30-31; Prov.13:15).
- J. One will find something to confess (Matt. 10:32-33; Acts 8:37).

- K. One will find something to go down into (Acts 8:38; Gal.3:27; I Pet.3:21).
- L. One will find something to hope for and press toward under hardships that all of us must face upon this earth (II Tim.3:12; Col.1:5; I Pet. 1:3-4; Phil.3:14; Phil.1:23).

Conclusion:

Let it be our desire to continue to use the opportunities God provides to further open eyes to God's word, the power to save (Jas.1:21, Rom.1:16-17).

