

# **Growing Together**

**Romans 12:5**

**The church in Chillicothe**

**2 YEAR ANNIVERSARY**

**By Mark Hatfield**

## Introduction

1. Today I would like for us to consider how much we have grown together in the Lord over the past two years.
2. As we assemble this morning, we are celebrating two years as an established congregation and we want to thank the Lord and all of you who have faithfully served with us here in Chillicothe.
3. This may seem like a strange lesson to use in preparation for the Lord's Supper, but nevertheless, I trust that you will see the application before our time together is completed today.
4. I want to begin by reading through the handout that each of you received. I would ask that you follow along with me as I read. (read handout)

## I. Growing

### A. Growth defined

1. Development - Everything has a beginning or a start, but must grow into something that is more complex.
2. Increase - The process of growth is measured by gradual increments

### B. Growth in action

1. The early church grew rapidly in both developing to become more complex, while also increasing in so many areas of the faith.
2. We read how the church went from twelve ordinary men to almost three thousand after just one gospel meeting (Acts 2:41). The number of the disciples increased to over five thousand men (Acts 4:4), not counting women and children. Most of the time the Bible just says that the number of souls saved increased greatly (Acts 6:7; 9:31)
3. Since that time, the Lord has been adding souls to His kingdom as they are saved (Acts 2:47; 16:5).

### C. Growth in Chillicothe

1. Before I share our first point here, let me say that God gets all of the glory for giving the increase in this work. We are but servants of the Lord.
2. We have made our presence known in Chillicothe. People are asking questions and want to know more about who we are. Let's go tell them.

3. Over the last two years, many souls have come in obedience to the gospel, others have been restored or rededicated and the opportunities to share the gospel are endless. Praise God. I want to commend all of you who have made it a point to be diligent about sharing your faith in Christ with others, being there to lend a helping hand, or for those of you who have prayed hard and especially for those of you who have been an encouragement and a source of strength when we needed someone with a positive optimistic outlook.
4. Who would have thought that just two years after we had our first meeting, we would have around seventy members and would be overwhelmed by the open doors that God has put before us (I wish I could say that I knew this would happen...O' me of little faith).
5. Who would have imagined through prayer, planning and participation in this new work that we would be able to go out and buy a piece of land and start building a brand new meeting place for the Lord's work to continue in Chillicothe, with very little cost to the local church.
6. People are hearing about this work and are excited about what God is doing among us. Since the inception of this work, Dan and I have been faithfully supported by churches and brethren all over the world. In addition to the support that we receive to provide for our needs, others have sent personal private donations for us to have a meeting place where we can establish this work with some permanency. We have had checks that have come from individuals in the amount of five to twenty five dollars. We have received money from some in the amount of five to ten thousand. Just yesterday, we opened a piece of mail with a beautiful letter of encouragement that contained a check for fifty thousand dollars. God is blessing us richly through so many brethren. Immediately following our service we are going to be heading down to the property on Western Avenue to have a ground breaking ceremony. The work on our building starts today.
7. How can we even begin to describe how God is at work among us? Think about the opportunities that we have had in the nursing homes, hospitals, local housing developments and even schools. God has given us the chance to meet so many souls just by being a part of everyday life in Chillicothe.
8. We have been able to function as a family that loves, is unified and wants nothing more than to see each person in the body of Christ thrive to be everything that the Lord wants them to be.

## II. Together

### A. Together defined

1. One gathering, body, union or relationship - We are expected to be a collective unit of those who love the Lord.
2. Cooperation and mutual action - We must work as one people without division or dissension

### B. Together in action

1. It shouldn't surprise you that in every passage where the Bible speaks of the growth of the early church that it also mentions their oneness in purpose and practice.
2. The early church did everything together. From assembling for weekly congregational meetings to meals in the homes of brethren (Acts 2:42, 46), even to gathering for prayer (Acts 12:12), they made a profound statement of unity amongst themselves before their local community.
3. Everyone was a part of the body of Christ and not one person was considered insignificant or unnecessary. Everyone took on a role that fulfilled their share of what was needed in a local church.

### C. Together in Chillicothe

1. How easy it can be to take for granted that this congregation is of one mind, one heart and of one spirit in the Lord. We work together, eat together, pray together, sing together, and enjoy much time together.
2. Just a reminder to most of us, it is not like this everywhere you go. We have something special that we cannot and will not allow ourselves to move away from as we grow together.
3. There is always the concern that when we get bigger as a congregation, that we will somehow lose our closeness and our desire for being as involved in one another's lives. This could only come to pass if we allow it to be that way.
4. We must determine now that we are going to be together through it all. The Lord intended for us to be together and we can see His ideals as we surround the Lord's Table each week.
5. Think about it. The Lord not only reminds us of who we once were (sinners), but that He loved us and gave His life for us. When we come together, it should be to partake of this supper in honor and memory of all that He has done to bring us into His body so that we can be saved (Eph. 5:23)
6. This is a time where God's people gather once a week to be together and reflect on their relationship to the Lord, Jesus Christ.

### Conclusion

1. As we consider how we have grown together over the past two years, let us give glory to God for the increases among us and let us be determined to continue serving the Lord faithfully as we enjoy His richest blessings.
2. The table of our Lord is where we have an opportunity to examine our lives to make sure that we are living up to the calling of our Lord to be His faithful disciple.
3. As we come together to share in the bread and drink from the cup, let us remember that we are sharing or communing with one another.
4. Thank you all for making the first two years of this work such a pleasure. God help us to keep our focus on the goal of heaven as we continue to do this work in Chillicothe.