

Empire Church of the Brethren

Sunday Service Sermons

16 August 2026

The Grace of Growing

Text: "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen." *2 Peter 3:18*

Full text: *2 Peter 3:17-18*.

The Bible speaks of grace in many beautiful ways: the exceeding riches of God's grace, his abundant grace, and his manifold grace.

We sing of his grace, we confess it, and we glory in it.

Our Scripture reading for today emphasizes a new relationship to grace.

It is not enough to be saved by grace, or to live or to die by it, or even to know grace; we must grow in it!

As *2 Peter 3:18* says, "Grow in grace."

This is the final verse of Peter's two letters.

In *1 Peter* the theme is "the grace of God," and the letter describes the sufficiency of God's grace in salvation, submission, and suffering.

Second Peter has assurance and growth in spiritual knowledge as its theme.

So *verse 18* summarizes these letters by the thought of growing in grace and knowledge.

First *Peter 5:12* says, "Stand firm" in God's grace; *2 Peter 3:18* says, "Grow" in God's grace.

When we do both, we know the wonderful work of the Lord.

Let us examine three ideas about "the grace of growing".

The imperative of growing in grace.

"Grow" is a word of command.

God commands us to grow in grace, just as he commands us to do many other things, such as repent, believe, and love.

Growth should not be something difficult to do.

Where there is life, there is growth.

A little baby grows without exertion.

So where there is spiritual life, there is spiritual growth.

"Grow" is a word of continuity.

It is in the present tense, so it has the idea of continuing to grow in grace.

To do so is to bring glory to Christ, now and forever.

Not to grow spiritually is to grow cold in our hearts.

There are three ways to tell when Christians are not growing, according to *2 Peter 1:5-11*.

They are idle, not working for Christ.

Their lives are unfruitful.

They are blind, lacking spiritual insight.

They are spiritually nearsighted, with poor memory, for getting what God has done for them.

The alternative to growing in grace.

We can do something other than grow in God's grace.

Verse 17 says that we are either growing or falling.

It is important to examine some key words.

"Carried away" means "led away" and is always used in the passive voice.

Therefore, it describes being strongly influenced by someone.

If you are not growing, you need to be aware of who is influencing you.

According to *Galatians 2:13*, Peter, the Jews, and Barnabas were carried away from the truth by hypocrisy.

We need to be caution about whom we allow to influence us.

“Error of lawless men” refers to this sin of those who wander or who have forsaken the right path.

It may be in the area of doctrine or morals, two realms inextricably linked.

“Lawless men” are wicked people who are not living according to the law.

They are living without principles.

In *2 Peter 2:7* this word is used to describe the population of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Lot was oppressed by the sensual, immoral conduct of unprincipled people.

The word “fall” used here is from a Greek word used to describe flower that wither and die with the seasons.

It is also used to describe a ship out of control, running aground.

This is what will happen to us when we respond to wrong influences.

We will fall away from the course set for us in God’s Word.

This is a serious alternative.

It is time to stand guard.

It is time to grow!

The superlative of growing in grace.

God’s goal for our lives is for us to grow in grace and knowledge.

To grow in grace is to increase in it, expand our lives by it.

It carries with it several superlative meanings.

Growing in grace is growing in Christ like character.

Verse 18 truly means “Christ likeness.”

We need to be like him in spiritual qualities.

Growing in grace is growing in Christ like responses.

Matthew 5:41 teaches the “second mile” principle.

The first mile is the law mile; the second mile is the grace mile.

Treating one another in this spirit is indeed a Christ like response.

Growing in grace is growing in Christ like knowledge.

Verse 18 speaks of the “knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

We do this by growing in the Word of God, as seen in *Acts 20:32*; *1 Peter 1:5*; and *2:22*.

Growing in grace is growing in Christ like speech.

Colossians 4:6 says, “Let your speech be always with grace.”

See also *Ephesians 4:29* and *Luke 4:22* as references to Jesus’ gracious words.

We are to speak to one another in such a way that we enable God’s grace to penetrate one another.

Growing in grace is growing in Christ like trust.

John 1:16-17 says, “And of this fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”

As he constantly trusted his Father, so must we trust him for every need.

Growing in grace is growing in Christ like service.

The grace of Jesus’ life was that he did not come to be ministered to, but to minister, and to give his life for many.

Gracious serving is not always easy, but it is always valuable.

Growing in grace is growing in Christ like witnessing.

Wherever Jesus went, he spoke the words of God's grace.

Recall how he tenderly witnessed to the woman at the well, five times married and living with her current lover.

He graced her with life eternal through his witness.

Also recall Zacchaeus, a hated tax collector, to whom Jesus spoke words of salvation, so blessing him and his entire household.

Now you can see why growing in grace is an imperative for our lives.

We are to be like Christ in all ways.

Now that we have heard this work, we need to obey it.