

Trinity Reformed Church of Northwest Connecticut

Biblical, Traditional, Congregational

Lord's Day Worship for

August 17, 2025



trinityreformedct.org

"Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

– Philippians 3:13-14

“*” = Please stand if you are able.

Welcome, Greeting & Announcements

Call to Worship – Ezekiel 36:22-27

Leader: *Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD, It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name,*

People: **Which you have profaned among the nations where you went.**

Leader: *I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations,*

People: **Which you have profaned in their midst.**

Leader: *Then the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Lord GOD,*

People: **When I prove Myself holy among you in their sight.**

Leader: *For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands*

People: **And bring you into your own land.**

Leader: *Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean;*

People: **I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.**

Leader: *Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh*

People: **And give you a heart of flesh.**

Leader: *I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes,*

People: **And you will be careful to observe My ordinances.**

Prayer of Invocation and Confession

Gospel Absolution Text – Hebrews 10:10-13

*Hymn #208 – “O Come, All Ye Faithful”

Scripture Reading – Hebrews 13:1-25

Ancient Creedal Proclamation – Apostles Creed (pg#845 in the red hymnal)

Offerings Presented

[Please put your tithe/offering in the plates before or after the service – Thank you!]

[Gifts labeled “Deacon’s Fund go to aid those in need in the congregation.]

*Doxology #731 (red hymnal)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;

Praise Him above, ye heavenly host: Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*Prayer of Dedication

*Sung Psalm #92 – “It’s Good to Thank the LORD”

Prayers of the Church & Lord’s Prayer (sins)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Reformation Creedal Reading – Heidelberg Catechism, Q#115.

Leader: *Why will God then have the Ten Commandments so strictly preached,*

People: **Since no man in this life can keep them?**

Leader: *First, that all our lifetime we may learn more and more*

Rom. 3:20;

People: **to know our sinful nature,**

1John 1:9; Ps 32:5

Leader: *And thus become the more earnest in seeking the remission of sin,*

Matt 5:6;

People: **And righteousness in Christ;**

Rom 7:24-25

Leader: *Likewise, that we constantly endeavour and pray to God*

1Cor 9:24

People: **For the grace of the Holy Spirit,**

Phil 3:11-14

Leader: *That we may become more and more conformable*

People: **To the image of God,**

Leader: *Till we arrive at the perfection proposed to us,*

People: **In a life to come.**

Ministry of the Word

Prayer of Illumination

*Sermon Text – Hebrews 5:11-6:3

*Gloria Patri #735 (red hymnal)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

Sermon – “Leaving the Elementary”

A Mini-Sermon Series on Maturity

*Hymn #296 – “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name!”

*Benediction – Numbers 6:22-27

Everyone is welcome to Coffee Hour Fellowship downstairs after church today

Announcements & Upcoming Events

- Starting on Sunday, September 7, we will be back to our normal schedule:
9:00-10:00 AM Sunday School for all ages
10:30 AM **Lord's Day Worship**
c.11:45 AM Fellowship Time
- On Saturday, **September 13th**, from noon to 5:00 PM, there will be a **church picnic** at the Winter's house.
- The tentative date for the **Annual Calvinist-Christmas Party** is Friday, **December 5th**, at the Grange.
- Pastor Doug would like to know if there is any desire for an ***additional study this fall?***
 - **Sunday School** for all ages will return on September 7th.
 - **Wednesday Study** (6:30-8:00 PM) will be returning with a study of the Book of Hebrews on September 10th. The **Gen-Alpha Club** will return on the 2nd & 4th Wednesdays.
 - **YADG** will continue every 1st & 3rd Friday (starting c. 6:30 PM).
 - If you have a suggestion for another study, could you email pastor Doug, or give him a note.
Is there a particular topic you would like (Introduction to the basic doctrines?
Church history? Denomination overview?)
Is there a particular time you would like to meet?
Would you want it via Zoom?

ONLINE RESOURCES

TRC's Webpage:	TrinityReformedCT.org
TRC's Facebook Page:	facebook.com/people/Trinity-Reformed-Church/61554974150922/
TRC's Youtube Channel:	youtube.com/@TrinityReformedCT
Pastor Doug's	youtube.com/simplyreformed
Youtube Channels:	youtube.com/@PilgrimsOfPlunder

INTERNET PRAYER CHAIN

If you have any prayer requests for our prayer chain, please email them to Donna Ensminger at: **trcnwprayer@gmail.com**. (If you would like to join the Prayer Chain, also see Donna.)

LEADERSHIP

Elders:	Rev. Douglas Aldrich, pastor	860-379-1147	douglas_aldrich@sbcglobal.net
	Bob Ensminger	860-485-8738	robert.ensminger@arthurgrossell.com
	Rich Gabelmann	860-605-7852	rgabelmann0415@gmail.com
	Rev. Jonathan Haulenbeek	203-709-0784	jhaulenbeek@icloud.com
Deacons:	David Mattson (chair), Carl Bierce, Caleb Goodell, Mason Goodell, Dean Winters		
Sunday School:	Verna Aldrich, Vika Winters	Music Coordinator:	Cindy Rines
Clerk:	Sheryl Gabelmann	Treasurer:	Cindy Rines

Trinity Reformed Church of Northwest Connecticut

Worship Starts At: 10:30 AM (9:30 AM in the summer)

Sunday Worship At: Winchester Grange (100 Newfield Rd; Winchester Center, CT 06098)

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 343; Riverton, CT 06065 – Phone: (860) 238-7399

Webpage: trinityreformedct.org – Email: trinityreformedct@gmail.com

Sermon Notes

Hebrews 5:12-6:3

"Leaving the Elementary"

A Mini-Sermon Series on Maturity

August 17, 2025

Introduction – Hebrews

- 1) Could you define the word "mature"?
 - a) The easiest words are the hardest to define (e.g. good, justice, beauty, hope, etc.).
Even for the godly and certainly impossible for the godless.
 - b) The 1828 Webster's (the best edition!) defines today's terms in interesting ways:
Mature (first definition): "*Ripe; perfected by time or natural growth; as a man of mature age. We apply it to a young man of mature age. We apply it to a young man who has arrived to the age when he is supposed to be competent to manage his own concerns; to a young woman who is fit to be married; and to elderly men who have much experience.*"
 - c) Compare this with the modern Webster's definitions:
Mature (first & second definitions): "*Based on slow, careful consideration. Having completed natural growth and development: Ripe.*"
 - d) Do you hear the clarity and biblical assumptions of the older definition?
That of course everyone will desire to be mature.
 - i) And the unclear and worldly, individual, assumptions of the modern definition?
That maturity is almost something to be avoided.
 - ii) It explains a lot of what is wrong with the modern world.
- 2) The Bible calls Christians to maturity.¹
- 3) Debatably the two books that require the most maturity to understand, and which teach on maturity the most, are:
 - a) **Romans**: The most detailed description of the Gospel, especially chapters 1-8.
 - b) **Hebrews**: The most Christology-focused book. (*Christology*: the doctrines of Christ: Understanding His nature, purpose, power, and commands.)
- 4) Today, let us look at a section in Hebrews to ponder maturity, today.
 - a) Understanding the purpose of Hebrews explains some of the harder passages in the book. (Such as Hebrews 6:4-6.)
 - b) Hebrews appears to be a sermon to a small
house church of Jewish Christians in an
urban center.

Heb 2:3; 3:6;
10:21,25,32
Heb 13:2-3,14,17,24-25
 - c) The audience really knows their Old Testament but seems unsure about Jesus Christ.
 - i) As we will see in today's sermon text.

Heb 6:1b-2
 - ii) Or, by the fact that audience knows who Melchizedek
is but is not sure about Christ.

Heb 5:6,10; 6:20;
7:1,10-11,15,17
 - iii) For moderns, this is the exact opposite.

¹ Ps 92:12-14; Matt 5:48; John 15:1-8; Rom 8:29; 12:1-2; 1Cor 2:6; 3:1-3; 13:11; 14:20; 2Cor 3:18; Gal 4:19; 5:22-25; Eph 4:11-16; Phil 1:9-11; 3:12-15; Col 1:9-10,28; 2:6-7; 3:10; 1Thes 4:1; Heb 5:12-14; 6:1; James 1:2-4; 1Pet 2:2; 2Pet 1:5-8; 3:18.

- d) It appears there is pressure on this church to give up on Christ with the false temptations that they still can be a good person and even follow God by just obeying His Law. Heb 2:1-3; 3:12-14; 6:1-6; 7:18-19; 10:26-29; 13:9
- e) As the writer of Hebrews clearly teaches, this is impossible. (Which helps explain some of the more difficult passages in the book.) Heb 2:1-4; 3:7-4:13; 5:11-6:12; 10:19-39; 12:14-29

Hebrews 5:12-14 - Childish

- 1) The author of Hebrews is concerned that church members lack knowledge.
 - a) He writes, *"For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food."* – Hebrews 5:12
 - b) There is an office of teacher in the church that only trained and tested men should have. Acts 13:1; Rom 12:6-7; 1Cor 12:28 Eph 4:11-13; 1Tim 3:1-2; James 3:1
 - c) However, all Christians should be able to have a working knowledge of the basics of the Christian faith, especially about how to become a Christian.
 - i) Not just so you can give witness to the world when called upon. Ps 119:11; Matt 28:19-20 Col 3:16; 2Tim 2:15; 3:16-17
 1Peter 3:15 – *"but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;"*
 - ii) But more importantly, to remind, encourage, and gently correct each other. Rom 15:14; Eph 4:15-16; Col 3:16 1Thes 5:11; Heb 3:13; 10:23-25
 Hebrews 10:23-25 - *"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near."*
- 2) Because these Hebrew Christians lack the basics, they are childish (not child-like, but childish).
 - a) They need someone to teach them the *"elemental things (stoicheion)"*.
 - i) These are the basic principles/components/materials of the Christian faith.
 - ii) The lowest level: The "ABC's".
 - b) They don't know the basic oracles (sayings, words, utterances) of God. Acts 7:38; Rom 3:2; 1Pet 4:11
 - c) These Christians are so childish that they can't handle (to know, believe, and do) any teaching with any depth (i.e. food). They can only handle things that a child can understand (i.e. like milk). 1Cor 3:2 1Pet 2:2
- 3) It's like a whole congregation that can only handle children's messages and not real sermons.
 - a) When I hear a parishioner say "I get more from a children's message than a sermon" I don't think they understand how childish they sound.
 - b) Possible reasons for their opinion:
 - i) It's the pastor's fault: The preaching is just bad. Either by execution or content.
 - Content means if it is biblical and Christ focused.
 - Not that it is entertaining, that would be under execution.

- The mature Christian knows content is far greater than execution, though few practice this.
 - 2Timothy 4:3-5 – *“For the time will come when they (bad Christians) will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. But you (pastor Timothy), be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”*
- ii) The parishioner is just not that smart. Which isn’t a sin but is a cross he or she will have to bear.
 - iii) Or the parishioner is being childish, either being lazy or arrogant – not willing to repent.
 - The standard, of course, is Scripture.
 - If the pastor’s sermons are more technical than the Book of Romans or Hebrews, then the fault is on the pastor.
 - If you find the Bible too confusing, and the sermons sound like Scripture, then the problem is with the listener.
- c) One of the major causes of division in churches is how people define “maturity.”
- i) For many, maturity, is just volunteering to do something to “advance the Kingdom.”
 - Such as volunteering for VBS.
 - Of course, that is good; but that is hardly the biblical concept of maturity.
 - ii) Real maturity is to completely change how people think – to be transformed.
 - This requires critical thinking, courage, and the willingness to see how worldly and selfish is one’s thinking and then repent (literally to change one’s mind).
 - This is really hard to do if you have spent your whole life being childish and not realizing it.
 - What is easier to hear from the pulpit: Volunteer or repent?
- 4) Paul then defines maturity: *“For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.”* – Hebrews 5:13-14
- a) Just getting watered down preaching (i.e. milk) causes the parishioner to become unaccustomed to “the word of righteousness”.
 - b) At best they are just like a little child: They can’t handle “solid food.”
 - c) But what is this “solid food”?
 - i) It is *“the word of righteousness”*! But what does that mean?
 - ii) Answer: Mature teaching of God’s truth that produces and explains true righteousness.
 - iii) The “word” is both God’s teaching and literally Jesus Christ, who is the Word of God.
 - iv) “Righteousness” refers both to our justification (being declared righteous by Christ) and our sanctification (growing in holiness as we follow Christ.)
 - d) This is not just: Biblical knowledge, systematic doctrine, walking by the Spirit, knowing the Gospel, and doing the Law.

- i) It is all those things combined.
 - ii) And knowing when to focus on one more than the other.
 - iii) This takes great wisdom! It takes maturity.
- 5) Note the purpose of this maturity: *"Who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil."*
 - a) This requires education, training, and living it out.
 - b) The purpose is to discern between good and evil by God's standards.
 - c) This is not just about big things.
 - i) For example: Should the sermon be the center part of worship and that it should be biblical?
 - ii) Yet how many churches really don't believe that.
 - d) Maturity is about the small things especially that take more critical thinking.
 - i) For example: Should we do Children's Messages?
 - ii) It is amazing how even asking that question offends some Christians.
 - One response I got, for even suggesting we have a conversation about it was: "Why do you hate children?"
 - What a childish and stupid thing to say.
 - iii) It takes maturity to focus away from the practical, emotional and sentimental.
 - iv) It takes maturity to focus on discerning how the world might creep in.
 - (Are we encouraging individualism and a sense of entitlement?)
 - (Are we desiring to have a sentimental focus on entertainment in worship?)
 - (Are we encouraging a worship of childhood? Instead of striving to be mature?)
 - (Why did no one else do this for all the history of the church until now?)
 - (Why do liberal churches do this and not conservative?)
 - (Does it trivialize the holy worship of God?)
 - v) Do we fear God or fear the world?
 - Desiring the world is to fear it and not to fear God.

Hebrews 6:1a – Elementary Teachings

- 1) Maturity requires moving beyond the *"elementary teaching about the Christ."* – Heb 6:1a
 - a) Note: It is always about Christ. Everything is about Him.
 - b) The word for "elementary" in Hebrews 6:1 (*archē*) is different from Hebrews 5:12 (*stoicheion*).
 - i) Hebrews 5:12 is about the elements of the beginning or first principles.
 - Like the ABCs in language.
 - The rudimentary building blocks — the first lessons you learn.
 - ii) Hebrews 6:1 is more specific.
 - It is about the introductory Christian teaching.
 - Heb 5:12 is about the ABCs, while 6:1 is about the first lesson in the textbook.

- 2) Christians are called to “press on”.
 - a) Literally: “let us be carried” or “let us be borne along.”
 - b) This verb is in the "present passive subjunctive", which is important.
 - i) It does not imply there is no human self-effort.
 - ii) But that self-effort is being carried along by God towards the goal.
 - c) It is easy to say "to God alone be the glory" and that salvation is "all of God".
 - d) Maturity actually knows and means it.
- 3) "Maturity" here means “toward the maturity” or “unto perfection.” Col 3:14
 - a) This is the noun form of the verb to “complete,” “mature,” “perfect”.
(Its verb form is found in: Heb 2:10; 5:9; 7:19,28; 9:9; 10:1,14; 11:40; 12:23)
 - b) Here it refers to full/complete spiritual maturity, the intended goal of the church's growth.
 - c) The imagery is not “straining forward in our own strength,” but “allowing ourselves to be borne along” by God’s means of grace toward maturity.

Hebrews 6:1b-3 – Foundations

- 1) But what are these foundational things?
 - a) The author lists 6 things.
 - i) They are all related.
 - ii) They build on each other.
 - iii) They are all about salvation – Being put into Christ.
 - iv) They have an OT spin, but now have a more complete fulfillment in the New.
(Remember the Christians in Hebrews really know their OT.)
 - b) They are foundational truths shared with OT faith, but they are the starting point, not the full depth of New Covenant doctrine.
- 2) **#1 – Repentance from Dead Works**
 - a) In the OT sense "dead" works refers to "sinful deeds" Is 1:11-15; Hos 6:6; Amos 5:21-24
and/or "ritual acts done without true faith. Matt 15:8-9; Heb 6:1; 9:14
 - b) The Law frequently commands Israel to turn away Deut 5:32-33; 10:12-13; 30:15-16
from her evil works and to walk in God's ways. Josh 22:5; Ps 34:14; Mic 6:8
 - c) Still true in the NT. Matt 7:17-20; Rom 12:9; Eph 4:22-24; 5:8-11; Col 3:5-10; 1Pet 1:14-16
 - d) The NT, however, gives far more clarity, grace and hope.
 - i) The turning is not away from sin to yourself to try to earn righteousness from God.
 - ii) It is turning away from sin and to Christ and receive His righteousness, which is received by grace alone, through faith alone, on account of Christ alone.
 - iii) Even one's best works done outside of God's perfection are filthy rags, because they have not been covered with the perfect blood of Christ. (It is like a murderer helping a lady across the street thinking that will make him innocent of murder. It only adds to the offense. There must be justice.)

- e) Hebrews 9:13-15 – *“For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.”*

3) #2 – Faith Towards God

- a) Trust in God’s promises was always central in the OT. Gen 15:6; Hab 2:4
- b) But the faith looked forward, now that the Perfect has come (Christ) Christians look back with greater clarity and assurance of what is to come. Heb 9:11-12; 10:1-14; 11:1
John 1:17; Rom 3:21-26
Gal 3:23-25; 1Pet 1:20-21

4) #3 - Instruction About Washings

Heb 9:9-10

- a) In the OT there are many types of washing:
Multiple ritual washings in the Law Lev 11:25, 28; 14:8-9; Num 19:7-10, 17-19
Priestly consecrations included washing. Ex 29:4; Lev 8:6
- b) Now fulfilled in the one baptism into Christ, which points to inward cleansing by His blood. Matt 28:19; Acts 22:16
1Pet 3:21

5) #4 - Laying on of Hands

- a) In the OT, the laying on of hands could refer to:
- i) Laying on of hands on a sacrificial animal to symbolize identification and substitution. Lev 1:4; 16:21
 - ii) It was used as a blessing. Gen 48:14
 - iii) It was also used as a commissioning for service. Num 8:10; 27:18-23
- b) In the NT there are similar meanings:
- i) It is how the Lord Jesus, and His apostles, frequently healed. Mark 6:5; Luke 4:40
Luke 13:13; Acts 9:12,17
 - ii) Laying on of hands as a blessing. Mark 10:16
 - iii) Commissioning unto ministry. Acts 6:6; 13:3; 1Tim 4:14; 5:22; 2Tim 1:6
 - iv) Receiving the Holy Spirit. Acts 8:17-19; 19:6

6) #5 - Resurrection of the Dead

- a) The Pharisees, the majority sect of the Jews at the time of Jesus, believed the OT (correctly) teaches there will be a resurrection. Acts 23:8
- b) Christ’s resurrection guarantees the believer’s resurrection. 1Cor 15:20-23
- c) Hebrews later points to OT saints hoping in a “better resurrection”. Heb 11:35

7) #6 - Eternal Judgment

- a) The OT prophesied there will be a day when the Lord judges. Eccl 12:14; Dan 12:2
Mal 4:1-3
- b) The final judgment comes with Christ’s return. Matt 25:31-46; Acts 17:31
- c) Hebrews later warns of “a fearful expectation of judgment” (Heb 10:27) and God as “the Judge of all” (Heb 12:23).