

# Of Foundations and Roots

October 18, 2026

Sermon by Dr. Richard Herman for Covenant Church's 50th sanctuary anniversary. Texts: Ephesians 2:19–20; Matthew 13:31–32; Hebrews 3:1–6; Psalm 118:22–24.

**Theme:** "From Foundation to Future: A Celebration of God's Faithfulness." Nothing new, just a reminder of who and whose we have been, are, and are becoming.

## Introduction

1. Dick Herman could not come because Lissa is recovering from surgery. He still wrote the sermon.
2. Built around Covenant's mission statement: grounded in God and His Word, connected to Christ and His family, for impact through the Holy Spirit.
3. The church is people, not a building. "People don't enter a church; the church enters a building" (Sam Allberry).
4. Christ is the only adequate cornerstone (Eph. 2:19–20). No pastor, tradition or by-law can bear that weight.

## I. Grounded in God and His Word

1. The cornerstone sets the alignment of every other stone, and Christ sets a church's vision, worship and mission.
2. Grounding means hearing and doing.
  - o The wise and foolish builders (Matt. 7:24–27).
  - o "Don't just listen to God's word... do what it says" (James 1:22–25).
3. We study Scripture for transformation, not just information. "Follow Me."
4. "How firm a foundation... is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!"

## II. Connected to Christ and His Family

1. Trees run through Scripture: Eden, Psalm 1, the cross, Revelation 22. The olive tree of Romans 11 pictures one body in Christ.
2. Like a forest, a church shares roots underground (Wohlleben, *The Hidden Life of Trees*).
  - o One tree alone is not a forest. Together, trees shelter and feed each other.
  - o Trees that look out only for themselves leave gaps that let in storms.
3. No one is expendable: "I don't need you" is never true (1 Cor. 12).
4. Put others first (Phil. 2:2–4). Jesus prayed "that all of them may be one... so that the world may believe" (John 17).

## III. Impact in Our Communities and the World through the Holy Spirit

1. A healthy forest grows: it bears fruit and scatters seed.
2. The mustard seed (Matt. 13:31–32): God starts small.

- o Homan Walsh's kite string (1848) became the Niagara suspension bridge.
  - o Small acts count: welcoming visitors, Camp 3-C, hospital visits, food pantry, small groups, praying for pastors.
  - o "Birds in its branches" hints at Gentiles and all nations being welcomed.
3. Acts 1:8 and Covenant's reach:
- o **Jerusalem:** downtown Sharon, 168 years.
  - o **Judea and Samaria:** Shenango Valley, Western PA, Eastern Ohio.
  - o **Ends of the earth:** Appalachia, Pittsburgh, campuses, Haiti, Mexico, Sierra Leone, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Peru.
4. "The church is the only cooperative society... that exists for the benefit of its non-members" (William Temple).

## Conclusion

1. Grow deeper in Christ, stay connected in love, spread your branches, and scatter the seed of the Word.
2. 168 years as a church, 50 years in this sanctuary. May it continue until Jesus returns.