

FOUNDATIONS #2

This is the 2nd message in our sermon series on the Foundations of the Christian Faith....

“Christ the Cornerstone”

I. Introduction

God reveals Himself to us through the Word of God as a Father, a Savior, a Healer. But we often overlook how the Bible teaches us that....

A. God is a Builder!

1. The very *1st verse* of the Bible reveals that God is a Builder!

Genesis 1:1

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

2. The entire *1st chapter* of the Bible is a dramatic description of an all-powerful Being constructing the universe through His wisdom and the power of His spoken Word!

- a. God *spoke* the worlds into existence out of nothing!
- b. 7 times in Genesis 1, we read: “And God said”, and whatever He spoke came into being.
- b. So the New Testament writer of Hebrews says this:

Hebrews 11:3

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

- c. Even today, home builders begin by “framing” a house.
- d. That same Greek word for ‘framed’ is used in Ephesians 4:12, where Paul speaks about the “*edifying* of the Body of Christ”; our English word “edifice” literally means, a “building”.

“Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in van.”

Psalm 127:1

3. And in the Book of Job, there's a place where Job makes God angry by questioning His wisdom and it says God spoke to him "out of the whirlwind"...

Job 38:4-7

"Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me if you know so much. Who determined its dimensions and stretched out the surveying line? What supports its foundations, and who laid the cornerstone as the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?"

4. God wants us to know Him as a Builder! When the Son of God came into the earth, what was His earthly occupation? What was His job? Was He a fisherman? Was He a shepherd? No. He was a *carpenter*. A carpenter is a builder. Why did He become a carpenter? Because His father was a carpenter! And so they knew Him...

Matthew 13:55

Isn't this the carpenter's son?

5. Jesus began His earthly life building physical houses for others to live in. But at the age of 30, He began to build a spiritual house for He and His Father to live in; He began to build His church! And like any builder, His first concern was the foundation!

II. The Foundation is Laid

A. Matthew 16

Matt 16:13-16 NKJV

13 When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?"

This is the most important question God requires every soul to answer!
(What think ye of Christ? Matthew 22:42)
And then as now, there many opinions.

14 So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

16 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Matthew 16:17-18

**17 Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.
18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.**

1. I believe that this encounter between Peter and Christ is...

B. A Prototype of Christian Salvation (4 Elements)

1. First: There Must Be a Personal Confrontation

“Who do you say that I am?”

a. There must be a place where there is a face to face encounter with the Son of God where you are confronted with one great question: “Who do YOU say I am?”

b. Notice that this is a very personal confrontation; there is no Priest, no mediator, no middle man. It matters not what others say about Jesus. What do you say?

c. Notice this is not about doctrine, or church membership; Christian salvation is not about what you know; it is about Who you know!

Peter got it right; “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

2. Second: There Must Be a Divine Revelation

Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

a. Salvation cannot come by “flesh and blood”; this is nothing you can learn from a teacher; you cannot read a book or study your way into it. You say “So and so led me to Christ”. Perhaps. But only God can reveal Him to you!

b. Salvation can only come when God the Father reveals (unveils or discloses) the revelation of the true identity of His Son through the Holy Spirit!

c. They all “knew” Jesus after the flesh; Joseph’s son; Mary’s boy; the carpenter from Nazareth; just as today, everyone “knows” Jesus in some way; “good man”, “wise teacher”; but we never know who He really is until the Father reveals Him through the Holy Spirit.

3. Third: There Must be a Personal Response

a. Salvation begins with a personal confrontation; followed by a revelation; followed by a personal response to what God has revealed to us. No one can answer for you. And this is followed by a ...

4. Public Affirmation

“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!”

a. Some say there are “secret believers”, those who are Christian but never say so. This may be so for a season; but at some point, there must be a public profession!

Matthew 10:32-33 NKJV

"Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, (NLT-“acknowledges Me publicly; GWT-“in front of others), him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.

b. I have been told there are many celebrities who are “closet Christians” in Hollywood or among the media; but if they speak for Christ they might not get acting jobs or be denied promotions on the job. I wonder if Jesus had them in mind when He said this:

Mark 8:36-38

For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

c. It is not for me to judge someone else’s soul; but I would question my own Christianity if I have not had:

- **A Personal confrontation**
- **A Divine revelation**
- **A Personal response**
- **A Public affirmation**

And there is one more thing the Lord taught me here;

I can never know who I really am until I know who Christ really is.

C. When the Father Reveals Christ to Me Then Christ Reveals Me to Myself

Matthew 16:17-18

Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ the Son of the living God”...and Jesus said “and you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church...

1. Notice that once Simon could properly identify Jesus then Jesus could properly identify Simon! (“You are the Christ”; “And you are Peter”)

- a. We can never know ourselves until we know God.
- b. Jesus Christ is the cure for our identity crisis!

2. No one had heard the term “identity crisis” before 1954; but today you hear it all the time.

“identity crisis”

A period of psychological distress when a person seeks a clearer sense of self and of an acceptable role in society.

- a. There’s a lot of it going around today.
- b. Hollywood’s Lily Tomlin might have spoken for a whole generation when she said...

“I always wanted to be somebody. Now I wish I had been more specific.”

Lily Tomlin

c. I could make an argument from the Bible that we can never truly know ourselves until we know God.

3. Once God reveals Himself to us He can reveal us to ourselves. Once Peter knew Christ as the Rock he was able to know himself as a living stone.

D. Cornerstone and Living Stones

1. There’s a play on words in Jesus’ response to Peter’s profession:

Matthew 16:17-18

And you are Peter (Gk. “petros”, meaning a small stone, or pebble) and upon this rock (Gk. “petra” meaning a large rock, a cliff, bedrock) I will build my church.

- a. Peter is not the “rock” on which Christ builds His church; if he were, the foundation would be fairly flimsy!
- b. The rock is Christ Himself; Peter is a pebble in the Church Jesus is building.

2. The prophet Isaiah foresaw the Messiah as God’s cornerstone:

Isaiah 28:16

**Therefore thus says the Lord God:
"Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation,
A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation;
Whoever believes will not act hastily.**

- a. We are a pebble but when we believe our foundation is a rock!
Look at the...

Various Translations of Isaiah 28:16

**Whoever believes...
NIV-will never be dismayed
NLT-need never be shaken
NASB-will not be disturbed
God’s Word-Whoever believes in Him will not worry
NET-will not panic
Apologetics Bible-He who believes will be unshakeable**

3. Now notice how the Apostle Paul refers to Isaiah’s prophecy in writing to the church at Ephesus:

Ephesians 2:19-22

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone...

a. The foundation is “apostles and prophets” which refers to the scriptures, the written Word of God in the Old and New Testaments with Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone!

Ephesians 2:22

...in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

b. True believers are being built together on the foundation of Christ the chief Cornerstone.

c. God is fitting us together so we will GROW into a holy temple for the Lord, in whom we are BEING BUILT TOGETHER for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

4. Notice how the Apostle Peter refers to Isaiah’s prophecy:

1 Peter 2:4-5

Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

**...you also are the living stones that God is building into His spiritual temple
NLT**

a. As Christ is the rock and Peter a stone; so we are “stones” that God is building upon Christ, the cornerstone.

5. There is proof that the Apostle Peter never forgot the lesson he learned at Caesarea Philippi!

1 Peter 2:6-8

Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame." Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone," and "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense."

They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.

- a. Christ is either your Cornerstone or you “stumbling stone”; He is both chosen and precious to you or He is a “rock of offence.”
- b. You will either believe in Him or be disobedient to Him.
- c. If He is not your foundation, you have no foundation.

III. Close: A Word of Warning

A. Take Heed How You Build

1. The Apostle Paul wrote this to the Church at Corinth:

1 Corinthians 3:9

For we are God's fellow workers...you are God's building.

1 Corinthians 3:9-10

...as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ

- a. Faithful ministers see the Church as God’s building and they care about foundations!
- b. Paul has laid the right foundation; there is really none other that can be laid!
- c. But there is a word of warning: let all other ministers be careful how they build on it!

2. This is a very prophetic warning; that even in churches where the right foundation has been laid, the building can be interrupted; the growth of the people can be hindered. Things can be taught and believed that will not stand a trial by fire!

1 Corinthians 3:12-15

Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

B. My Personal Thoughts

1. As a Pastor and Teacher, I apply these words very personally as to how my ministry will be judged by God.

2. Paul is teaching us that God will judge all ministry work by fire.

a. There are ministers who build good things on the foundation; represented by the metaphors of gold, silver, precious stones; precious stones is good, silver is better, gold is best

b. There are ministers who build poorly on the foundation; represented by the metaphors of wood, hay, and straw; wood is poor, hay is poorer, straw ministry is useless

c. All our work will be tested by fire; all we have believed, all we have taught

d. The work of the one who built well will endure and he will receive a reward.; the work of the one who built poorly will be burned up and he will suffer loss; he will be saved, “yet so as through fire.”

3. God is calling all His ministers to build well on the foundation, which is Christ, the Cornerstone.

God is a Builder; we are His building; the foundation is critical!

“We can never build a Christian life greater than what our foundation can support.”

Derek Prince