

## No Other Foundation: Part 3 - Building on the Foundation

**1 Corinthians 3:10 ESV** According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. **11** For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. **12** Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— **13** each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. **14** If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. **15** If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

- I. This morning we're returning to our series on the foundation of the church. As you'll recall, we interrupted this series in order to reexamine the ministry, death, resurrection and ascension of the man, Jesus Christ, so that we could better appreciate his role as the foundation. Today we're going to move down the road a little further and see how we are to build on this foundation.
  - A. Building on the foundation of Christ is the central theme of the text we read earlier. Let's see if we can breakdown what Paul is telling the Corinthians...
    1. First, Christ is the foundation of the church. Hopefully we have established this beyond a reasonable doubt.
    2. Secondly, every believer is building on the foundation of Christ.
      - a) No matter how engaged or disengaged a person may think they are in kingdom work, everyone is building and no believer is neutral. Some are building well, some poorly.
      - b) This is evidenced by the quality of "building materials" Paul mentions in this analogy: gold, silver, precious stones (high quality), wood, hay, straw (low quality)
    3. Thirdly, Paul reminds us that every believer will be held accountable by God for what they build on the foundation of Christ.
      - a) Paul says that everyone's work will be "revealed by fire".
        - (1) His point is that gold, silver and precious stones cannot be damaged by fire, and in fact are strengthened and made more pure by it's refining power.
        - (2) Wood, hay and straw, on the other hand, are not purified by fire, but rather are consumed.
      - b) Every believer's work will pass through the fire. And only that which has eternal value will survive.
  - B. So today, let's examine the second and third points more closely, seeing how they are intertwined; and also begin to discover what constitutes gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay and straw.
- II. I have come to believe that there are three main ways in which we build upon the foundation of Jesus Christ: trusting fully in his work, following his example and obeying his teaching.
  - A. If we are to build properly on the foundation of Jesus, we must lay our lives down upon that foundation, trusting fully in his work, and resting in the sufficiency and

finality of everything he has done; everything we explored over the last several weeks. Trusting in his work means three things:

1. First, this means that we trust that he has **made** us righteous, instead of trying to vainly produce righteousness in order to gain his approval or feel better about our selves.
    - a) There is no more need for us to seek God's approval because we have come to know that we are in Christ, and he has been completely and eternally approved by the Father (therefore we are approved).
    - b) Because of this, a true believer has more reason to feel good about themselves than any AAA-grade moralist, since we have been loved and chosen by the King of Kings, and that because of Jesus and in spite of ourselves!
  2. Second, trusting in his work means believing that he is producing in us a new life of daily repentance and holiness; as he was raised from the dead, so too we are being raised to walk in newness of life.
    - a) New life means that when we experience temporal, earthly blessings we are less and less distracted by them, because we are daily determining that Christ alone is our great reward.
    - b) And since he is our reward, when we have setbacks, trials, and experience suffering, we know that they also are temporary, and that we can endure anything as long as he is with us, and loves us.
  3. Thirdly, trusting fully in his work also means that I can know that I have not been abandoned. Because Christ is at the right hand of the Father, he has sent the Holy Spirit to guide and empower me through everything that I might face in this life.
    - a) **John 14:15 ESV** "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. **16** And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, **17** even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. **18** I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you."
    - b) The Holy Spirit represents the fullness of Christ with us and in us all day, everyday to lead, convict, encourage, and empower us.
    - c) Interestingly, Paul, Peter, and Luke all call the Holy Spirit "the Spirit of Jesus" or "the Spirit of Christ", meaning the Spirit's work is Jesus' work.
  4. To trust Jesus' work in these ways represents gold, silver and precious stones with which we can build something beautiful on the foundation of him. But continuing to trust in ourselves, our claims of righteousness, or our religious observances produces something that will burn up on the Day of the Lord.
- B. In addition to trusting fully in Christ's work, we must also follow his example.
1. **1 Peter 2:21 ESV** For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, **so that you might follow in his steps.**
  2. Have you ever thought about the fact that Jesus has designed it so that you can never know his fullness from somewhere on the sidelines? There is no

such thing as “passive belief”. In order to be genuine, you must get in the game and live the way he lived, and die the way he died. The great affirmation of this truth is found in Luke 9.

- a) **Luke 9:23 NIV** Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. **24** For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. **25** What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self? **26** Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.
- b) Jesus begins with the word “wants”...”Whoever **wants** to be my disciple”. This represents an action of the will that is required. This means that no one is forcefully compelled.
- c) But Jesus’ “whoever wants” is followed by an absolute condition “whoever wants to be my disciple **must** deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me”.
  - (1) Truly understanding this takes our life and our discipleship to a whole new level. In John 13:35, Jesus states that everyone in the world will know who the true believers are by the love they show one another.
  - (2) But here Jesus says that **he** will know that we are his disciples when he sees us carrying his cross. Without the cross on your back, following him to the death he died (certainly in a spiritual sense, but often in a literal, physical sense as well), you are no disciple.
    - (a) There is no other evidence that Jesus looks for to determine your status as a disciple! Only the cross on your back!
    - (b) **Matthew 7:21 ESV** “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. **22** On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ **23** And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’”
- d) Jesus also says something in Luke 9 that should give us great pause to tremble and fear. He says that if we are ashamed of him and his words in this realm, that he will be ashamed of us before the Father in the heavenly one. Consider the implications of Christ being ashamed of you.
  - (1) In 1st John, the apostle describes Christ as our “advocate”. The Greek word is “paracletos” (par-ak’-lay-tos) meaning an intercessor, counselor (like legal counsel), someone who pleads your case before a judge.
  - (2) So to say that Christ will be ashamed of you before the Father doesn’t mean he’ll be “mildly embarrassed” or “somewhat disappointed”, it means if you are ashamed of him, that you’ll have no saving, pleading representative before a holy God!

3. A few years ago, Kyle Idleman wrote a great book called “Not a Fan”. His premise in the book is that most people who claim to be followers of Christ are merely “fans” who gather at the stadium every week to cheer their hero, but they’ve never had any “skin in the game”. They’ve never stepped onto the field or had any real investment in the success or failure of the team.
    - a) One great point he makes is about the connection of sincere belief and obedient action. He concludes (rightly) that one cannot exist without the other. To say that you are a believer in, or follower of Jesus minus obedience is to be fooling yourself: Listen to how he says it...
    - b) “When I was studying about the word “belief” I came across a secular article written by a psychiatrist. In the article he addressed the beliefs of his patients that had no basis in reality. A patient may sincerely believe he could fly — but that didn’t mean anything because there was nothing to back that up. The patient might be an abusive husband that sincerely believes abuse is wrong — but he doesn’t really believe that because his stated belief is contradicted by reality. But when the psychiatrist was speaking about his patients with beliefs that had no basis in reality he didn’t call them “beliefs.” Do you know what he called them? He called them “delusions.” We don’t often think of it this way, but here’s an important truth that needs some attention in circles of faith: A belief, no matter how sincere, if not reflected in reality isn’t a belief; it’s a delusion.” - Kyle Idleman
    - c) Are you an obedient follower of Jesus’ example, doing what he did, or are you merely deluded?
  4. To take up our cross, identifying with Jesus in both the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings is to stockpile gold and silver and precious stones upon the foundation. To let society show you how to live and to adopt it’s values is a sure way to have a life that goes up in flames.
- C. This is closely tied to the last way to build on the foundation of Christ that we are going to talk about this morning, and that is to obey his teaching.
1. If following Christ’s example means to live the kind of life he lived, then to obey his teaching means to do what he said to do.
    - a) **Luke 6:46 ESV** “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you? **47** Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: **48** he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. **49** But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.”
    - b) Jesus Christ is very serious about obedience. It is a mark of a true disciple. And yet it is increasingly something that we seem to de-emphasize both in the teaching of churches around the country as well as our personal lives. We see this in the way “evangelism” is done...

2. Today people are told over and over how much Jesus loves them and has a wonderful plan for their lives. They are told that if they will simply “ask Jesus to come in to their hearts”, that he will forgive all of their sins and someday take them to live in eternal bliss in heaven.
  - a) But while all of that may be partially true, does it represent the fullness of the gospel message? Let’s take a look at what Jesus said that we should do as we spread his story to every nation through the great commission.
  - b) **Matthew 28:19 NIV** Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20 and teaching them to obey (ESV: “observe”) everything I have commanded you.** And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”
  - c) Evangelism and discipleship require us to teach **obedience**, and not merely **belief**. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the great German pastor from WWII said, “Only he who believes is obedient, and only he who is obedient believes.”
3. But what does teaching them to obey look like? Are we talking about teaching new disciples a rigorous religious legalism? Should we tell them to brush up on the 10 commandments?
  - a) No! We must teach them that all Moses and the prophets said was about Jesus (Luke 24)! We must teach them that Jesus is the only way to get to God. (John 14) We must teach them that the work of God is to believe on the one he has sent, Jesus Christ (John 6).
  - b) True discipleship never means dispensing a self-improvement strategy; instead discipleship is constant reminder of every person’s desperate need for the gospel...at the beginning, as you progress, and at the end.
4. **Matthew 22:34 ESV** But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. **35** And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. **36** “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” **37** And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. **38** This is the great and first commandment. **39** And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. **40** On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”
  - a) There it is. Boom! Drop the mic and walk away! Two commandments that represent an absolute summation of the 39 books of the Old Testament. Love God. Love your neighbor. Do these two and you will be the perfect adherent to everything Jesus commanded.
  - b) Sounds too simple, too good to be true doesn’t it? There’s a reason for that.
    - (1) Affected as we are by the epidemic of sin, we find it nearly impossible to walk in anything resembling genuine love towards our fellow human beings. On the contrary, I am too often motivated by selfishness, greed, envy and pride to even notice my neighbor let alone love them!

(2) And truly loving God seems nearly impossible! I can tremble in fear before him, I can try to bargain with him, I can attempt to impress him with religious prowess, but loving him does not come naturally to me.

III. **Romans 7:24 ESV** Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? **25a** Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

A. By the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, I can trust in the sufficiency of his work, I can take up my cross and follow his example, and I can learn daily to obey his commandments, and teach others to do the same.

1. This is the path to building something of beauty and value on the foundation of Jesus Christ. Something glimmering like gold, shining like silver and radiant with diamonds and rubies.

2. But before you can do any building, you must do some demolition! You have to tear down the brush lean-to's of self-righteous religion, the thatched huts of sinful pride, and the wooden shanties of depraved worldliness.

B. And it would probably make a whole lot of sense to fire ourselves as the construction foreman of our lives before we even get started! We need to turn to the Holy Spirit to draw up the blueprints for what our lives should look like, and hire the right building crews.

1. The blueprints for our lives will be found in his word and in our individual gifting and callings.

2. The building crews of our life will be the found in the relationships we are led into and the circumstances we are led through.

a) The foundation of Christ will be built upon times of blessing and crisis, victory and despair, by our friends and our enemies, and in times of holy victory and sinful defeat.

b) The key is to trust the foreman. He built on this foundation many times before. Everything he has built endures and is beautiful.

C. Are you ready to trust him to take over the building of your life? I promise you won't regret it. Why don't you give him control today.