

1. The Importance of Good Foundations

a) Key Scriptures

Hebrews 5:11-6:3 Luke 6:46-49
1 Corinthians 3:10-15 1 Peter 2:5

b) Introduction

A foundation is a substance on which you build a structure. The foundation actually supports the building. In fact, each part of the building depends on the foundation. If it has good, deep, sure foundations, the building will stand, no matter what comes against it. If not, when trouble occurs the building will fall. As disciples of Jesus our lives are spiritual structures. In Scripture, this structure is called 'a temple of the Holy Spirit' (1 Corinthians 6:19), 'God's temple' (1 Corinthians 3:16), 'God's building' (1 Corinthians 3:9), and 'a spiritual house' (1 Peter 2:5). This also can only be built up strong, tall and able to resist trouble if the foundations are properly laid.

c) Jesus The Foundation

"For no-one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 3:11)

The best foundation of all for a building is bedrock. Other less stable layers such as gravel, sand, soil, clay and porous rock should be cut away so that a large structure can be built on bedrock. In our Christian lives it is the same. We should not build anything unless we found it on Jesus Christ. He is our rock (1 Corinthians 10:4) and we should do and build nothing that He isn't supporting. If we try to build something away from this truth, then the Day (the judgement Day) will bring it to light, because all that we have built will be tested and we will only receive a reward for what survives (1 Corinthians 3:10-15). Jesus will support only what He sees the Father doing (John 5:19). Therefore we must ask God the

Father for His will for our lives and do only this. Then we will know that Jesus will be supporting it and we can begin to build.

d) Rock or Sand?

In Luke 6:46-49 Jesus describes two ways to build: either upon sand (an unstable foundation) or upon rock (a stable foundation). So many people, including many Christians, are building their lives on unstable foundations such as materialism, ambition, sport, education, philosophies, traditions of men, man's wisdom etc. The only stable bedrock foundation is the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Living Word (the truth).

From this passage in Luke we can note the following seven things:

(i) What constitutes a sound life? (v.47)

- "Who comes to me" - relationship with Jesus.
- "Hears my word" - hearing His word.
- "Puts them into practice" - doing His will.

(ii) Can one hear and not do? (v.46)

"Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord', and do not do what I say?" This is knowing the Word and not doing it. (See also James 1:21-25).

(iii) What is a man like who hears and does the Word? (v.48a)

"He is like a man building a home, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock," He removed everything between himself and the rock. He made sure he was on solid footing even though he had to dig deep, which is costly and time consuming.

(iv) Why must the house be built on rock? (v.48b)

"When the flood came, the torrent struck that house)" It is the nature of life for it to be stormy (Hebrews 12:25-29). Nobody escapes the storms.

(v) What happened to the house on the rock? (v.48b)

The house would not be shaken because it was well built, it was founded on the rock. There will be storms in our

Christian lives, but if we are hearing and doing the Word of God, the storms will not shake us.

(vi) What is the danger when building our Christian lives?

(v.49a)

"The one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation." (or on sand in Matthew 7:26),

(vii) What happens to the house without a foundation? (v. 49b)

"The moment the torrent struck that house (the same flood or storm that struck the house on the rock) it collapsed and its destruction was complete." We need to recognise any unstable foundations in our lives, acknowledge them, and dig them out down to bedrock with the help of the Holy Spirit.

e) What Next?

The foundations of our lives as Christians are so important that it is impossible to go on to maturity without them, Hebrews 6:1 - 3 lists the basic foundational truths upon which our Christian lives are to be built (we shall call these the foundations of our faith) and urges us to press on to maturity with God's permission. There cannot be maturity without God's permission. If we will not lay the right foundations, God will not give us a 'building permit' to continue the building up of our spiritual house. So many Christians are immature, even many that have been 'born again' for years. This is a tragedy, Many of these people should now be teaching others or training their own disciples, but instead they are still like spiritual babies in Christ, still needing spiritual milk instead of solid food (Hebrews 5:11-14).

Evidence of Immaturity in Christians

(i) Dull of hearing

These Christians are lethargic and unwilling to be moved; they have no drive or push within them: many have started enthusiastically but have become this way over the years.

(ii) No responsibility

These are Christians that have never grown up but are childish when they should be mature teachers.

(iii) No participation

These Christians don't contribute anything, other than making up the numbers; many have been like this for years.

(iv) No discernment

These Christians don't even know how to distinguish good from evil a lot of the time.

(v) No stability

Every problem knocks these Christians; they are often spiritual butterflies flitting from one teaching and church to another.

g) Reasons for Immaturity

(i) They have never been truly born again

There is unmistakable evidence when we are born again:

- the witness of the Spirit (Romans 8:16).
- we are a 'new creation' (2 Corinthians 5:17).
- we desire to obey God (1 John 2:3).
- we love other Christians (1 John 3:14).
- we do the will of God (Matthew 7:21).
- we thirst after God (Psalm 42:1-2).

(ii) Neglect

They haven't bothered to keep themselves spiritually fit, but have rather just drifted along with everyone else.

(iii) Disobedience

God has asked them to do something and He is patiently waiting until they decide to do it.

(iv) **Compromise**

They have allowed in the 'little foxes that spoil the vine' (Song of Songs 2:15). They have done things contrary to God's way for them. They have obeyed their own selfish desires rather than God. These things now have a hold on them and are spoiling their walk with God. They are trying to live a life balanced between pleasing themselves and pleasing God. So instead of having a fruitful, fulfilled life in service for God, they end up frustrated and dissatisfied, pleasing neither themselves nor God.

i) Questions and Discussion Points

1. Why is Jesus a stable foundation upon which to build a life?
2. Why are materialism, sport, education, philosophies, traditions of men, man's wisdom and even religion unstable foundations upon which to build your life, even in part?
3. Rock or sand: where are your foundations? (Matthew 7:24-27).
4. What sorts of things do we need to cut away in our lives so that we can reach the rock, that is, Jesus? Are you willing to do this with the help of the Holy Spirit?
5. When we hear and read God's Word, do we obey as we should, or do we do little or nothing about it?
6. What steps can you take to ensure that you will build the right foundations and not be found wanting when the storms of life come your way?
7. Read 1 Corinthians 3:1--3. Why is this passage still as relevant today to many in the church as it was nearly 2,000 years ago?

8. Why are so many Christians satisfied with immaturity in God?
9. Are there any areas in your life that you have neglected or where you have compromised?
10. What is spiritual milk and who is this given to?

j) Summary and Application

1. Jesus Christ is the foundation upon which we should build our lives as His disciples.
2. Anything that prevents us building our lives on Jesus as the foundation should be removed with the help of the Holy Spirit.
3. Jesus wants us as His disciples to come to Him, hear His words and put them into practice.
4. God wants us to lay the right foundations and then He will take us on from spiritual milk to more solid food so that we can grow in maturity in Him.

