

Part One:

Repentance From Dead Works

Finding the Foundation

CATECHISM TWO, LESSON 1

READING: LUKE 6:39-49;

HEBREWS 6:1-3

1. What Is a Foundation?

The term “foundation” has been borrowed from the language of building and architecture. It refers to the very first thing we do in building—we prepare a solid and stable support for the

superstructure. Since the foundation bears the weight of the entire structure, it must be done well. More than one building has later sagged or even fallen because of a faulty foundation. The taller the building is to be, the deeper the foundation must be.

Spiritually speaking, the foundation is the basis of Christian doctrine and experience (and these two are never separate) upon which all later development depends. It is instruction in the ABCs without which reading and writing would not be possible. Other words meaning the same thing as “foundational” include: “basic, elementary, beginning, first.” Paul put it in terms of first principles.

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit (Hebrews 6:1-3).^{[1](#)}

This one passage of Scripture summarizes the entire content of this course: “Understanding the Foundation Stones of the Christian Life.”

2. Why Do We Call the First Principles “Foundation Stones”?

The term “foundation stones” was coined to help us emphasize the distinctness of each truth to be believed

and experienced. Christ himself is the only foundation which can be laid, but we do this in practical experience through specific encounters with Him in obedient faith.

A. We are built upon the foundation which is Christ by the Holy Spirit and through the ministry of those who labor with God.

For we are laborers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no

man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:9-11).

B. The foundational doctrines were brought to us through the apostles and prophets who received the inspired Scriptures.

And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief comer stone (Ephesians 2:20).

C. As Christ becomes our foundation through experience, we are made able to worship and find our place in His Church.

To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively

stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief comer stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the comer. And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient.... (1 Peter 2:4-8).

The worldly-wise masons disallowed—set aside as rejected—the corner stone because it was a different shape from all

other stones. It did not seem to fit into any of the usual places. This is a picture of Israel rejecting her own Messiah because He did not fit their expectations. It is also a portrayal of modern theology which has no place for a living Lord who will define His own truth in terms of life-transforming experience. The first principles or “foundation stones” will not fit our neat little traditions. If we begin building with them, we must be prepared to start all over from the beginning. For this reason, the very first one is called “repentance from dead works”—the repudiation of tradition and unworkable theories.

3. What Are the Six Foundation Stones?

The writer of Hebrews lists the six basic experiences we must have with Christ before we are allowed to mature. We are not given a “building permit” to erect the edifice until the Holy Spirit, God’s building inspector, finds our foundation ready. These six transforming encounters with the risen Christ are:

(1)

Repentance from dead works.

(2)

Faith toward God.

(3)

The doctrine of baptisms.

(4)

Laying on of hands.

(5)

Resurrection of the dead.

(6)

Eternal judgment.

When the writer of the letter to the Hebrews tells us to leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ, he is literally telling us to go on from the beginning. We are not to stop and constantly review the first elementary truths we learned in Christ. It is possible to leave them not in the sense of forsaking them but in the sense of using them as a firm grounding underneath us while we reach on to higher truths. This can be

done because these first truths form a foundation. They establish us in such a way that these truths will no longer slip away from us. Now we can rely upon the Lord as we have come to know Him in these areas.

The Greek word for foundation is *themelios* (the-me-lios). The verb form not only means laying the foundation, but to ground someone, to establish them, or to render firm and unwavering. It is possible to have such real experience with God in both understanding and obeying these elementary truths that we are set on a firm footing for the remainder of our Christian walk. We have found a solid footing in God

and can stand when the storms come against us.

4. Why Is It Dangerous to Neglect Our Spiritual Foundations?

When we fail to put into practice what we have heard from God, we only fool ourselves. He will require of us an accounting of what we did with everything we heard. If we make a habit of not doing what we are told, we soon become lawless, and eventually will be called “workers of iniquity, or lawlessness” (Matthew 7:21-23). If we make a habit of not really listening, we will lose the power to hear. When the storm comes—and it does in every life—we will not be able to stand.

A. God tests our submission to His

Lordship on the basis of obeying His words, and laying each of these foundation stones is a command.

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day. Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Matthew 7:21-23).

B. We become a part of God’s people—His Church—by being joined to Christ through foundational experience.

*Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD,
Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation
a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner
stone, a sure foundation: he that
believeth shall not make haste (Isaiah
28:16).*

C. Only as we experience Christ in these foundation truths can we become different people.

*Nevertheless the foundation of God
standeth sure, having this seal, The
Lord knoweth them that are his. And,
Let every one that nameth the name of
Christ depart from iniquity (2 Timothy
2:19).*

D. We face not only the tests of our future in this life, but the judgment of God in the next life.

*Laying up in store for themselves a good
foundation against the time to come,
that they may lay hold on eternal life (1
Timothy 6:19).*

E. We will not continue growing if we fail to lay some foundation stones in our lives; we will remain babes on “milk.”

*For when for the time ye ought to be
teachers, ye have need that one teach
you again which be the first principles of
the oracles of God; and are become such
as have need of milk, and not of strong
meat. For every one that useth milk is
unskillful in the word of righteousness:
for he is a babe (Hebrews 5:12, 13).*

5. Why Do We Put So Much Emphasis Upon Laying the Foundation?

The Bible gives us clear evidence that trials and tribulations will come against each believer to test his faith. It is incumbent upon each of us to insure that our life in Christ is built on solid rock and not on shifting sand (see Matthew 7:24-27).

The Bible makes it abundantly clear how important the foundation is. But in addition, we as a local church learned by experience the sad results of failing to heed the Bible's instruction. We had experienced years and years of revival—the refreshing rain of His presence among us. We had seen hundreds and even thousands come to God in salvation, water baptism, and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Some received notable

healings. Others began to demonstrate God-given abilities or gifts of the Spirit. Many sought out fields for ministry. God was moving and we were very glad about it.

But something was wrong. After a time these people did not continue to grow. Some of those who had received marvelous experiences with God did not remain in the faith. We began to lose people. In our pastoral concern, the ministry of the Temple here sought the Lord's answer. He, the Great Shepherd of the Sheep, was faithful to answer us. Our problem, He said, was that we had failed to give the people a solid foundation. They were adding more spiritual bricks to their lives than the foundation

would hold. For this reason people were falling away.

It took a number of years for us to receive understanding as to what we must do to insure personal participation in each of these six foundation stones. God was gracious to grant revelation and understanding of His Word by His Spirit. As we have applied what we have learned, we have seen a great change in this work. People not only come to the Lord and enjoy the glories of the new birth, but they go on year after year growing up into the Lord. They become productive, creative Christians who can reproduce their kind. They have something to give, because they have truly received something firsthand. What we

are presenting in this course comes to you as the result of years of leadership in establishing believers upon Christ as the Rock, and preparing for a lifelong walk with God, and a reward in heaven.

Home Study: Lesson 1

Name _____ Date _____

1. Give a brief definition of the term “foundation” and then illustrate in your own words.

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2. List in order the six foundation stones or principles of Christ.

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

e.

f.

3. Read the following paragraph. Whenever you come to a Scripture reference, look it up and read the entire passage.

We cannot establish any doctrine on one isolated reference in Scripture. God always confirms His truth with two or three voices saying essentially the same thing. The idea of laying foundations is not only mentioned in the letter to the Hebrews and in the parable of the man who built his house on the rock, but in several other important passages as well. Compare Hebrews 6:1-3 and Luke 6:47-49, which we have studied, with the following:

1. Jesus warned His followers to count the cost before they began building their lives upon Him (Matthew 7:24-27; Luke 14:27-30).

2. We will be confronted with much false teaching, but our foundation stands sure in God; He knows who belongs to Him (2 Timothy 2:18, 19).

3. God warns those who rely upon earthly possessions that we need to lay up for ourselves good spiritual foundations for the future (1 Timothy 6:17-19).

4. What would you tell a confused young Christian who asked whether knowing doctrine is important in living the Christian life, or do we only need love?

1

This Scripture is to be memorized. It will be recited often in class as an oral review.[Back](#)