

#510 – Laying The Foundations As Life Experiences.

The Disaster of Ignoring The Preparations That God Has Ordained.

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Because, over the years, we have attempted to identify the reasons the visible church is in such a pitiful condition, some of our “reasons” have become surprisingly controversial. Blaming the “ministries” for the lukewarm and fleshly condition of the visible church has not been a very popular position. Since I pastored a church for 30 years, some have said “Since you were in the ministry, you are part of the problem.” I am quick to agree but add “That is why I say I have wasted 30 years of my life in worthless activity that has produced very little that is eternal.” I am only trying to save ministers another wasted life. Maybe there is an answer to the problem in the Bible. A good Bible answer should not create hostility in the minister!

It remains profoundly obvious that this “system” of having church is not working at the present time and has not worked for many years. Why do we say that? Simply because the visible church is lukewarm, carnal, fleshly, infantile, childish and in a visible and identifiable status quo condition of NO growth. ( You shall know them by their fruit. If the fruit is bad something is wrong!) According to the scriptures and Paul’s writings these things should NOT be this way.

We hear, but, brother, it has always been this way. Flesh is normal in every group. This is certainly NOT a valid response. Paul could NOT share any kind of revelation or spiritual insight with a group in this condition because they had NO capacity to receive it. To accept this pitiful state of the church as normal or what God has purposed and designed is accepting the evaluation of the deaf, dumb, blind, and stupid. If ministers think this pitiful condition is normal, I wonder if they have ever read the Bible.

1Cor 3:1 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, **but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ.** 2 I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able *to receive it*. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, 3 for **you are still fleshly**. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and **are you not walking like mere men?** 4 For when one says, “I am of Paul,” and another, “I am of Apollos,” are you not *mere* men?

It would be nearly impossible to confuse what Paul is writing here and assume he is pleased with this condition or that he thought this was normal. He is rebuking them for their carnality, not making excuses for them because they were carnal, fleshly or babes. His solution is NOT throw them out of the assembly!

In this study we will attempt to identify one of the major failures of the ministries that have been given responsibility for the preparation of the church. Hopefully, this will not be seen as just more criticism but a possible solution.

The main failure of the ministries is in NOT laying the foundations in their own lives and therefore, unable and unqualified to lay foundations in the believers lives! Most of the looming problems that can be witnessed in the present church system can be traced back to neglecting to lay the proper foundations in the leader’s experience. It is the leader’s preparation that is in question. This is of primary importance because his development becomes the doorway to the

foundations in the believers experience. Why? Because no leader can be expected to lay a foundations in others if no foundation has been laid in his life.

The response I sometimes hear is this; “Well, I baptized them but if they didn’t get anything that is their problem. I refuse to take the blame for their carnality.” If I ask if they had laid ALL the foundations in the believers “experience,” the response is a shock or amazement. When some ask “What foundations” I know where the problem lies. Other times I hear; what do you mean “ALL” the foundations? Are there more than one. I thought Jesus Christ was the ONLY foundation that can be laid. I think any foundation beyond that must be the full responsibility of the believer. Since the primary foundation is Christ any others must not be that important. I have already laid the foundation of Christ!

1Cor 3:9 For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, God’s building. 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder **I laid a foundation**, and another is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds upon it. **11 For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.**

Does this mean that ALL these foundations are false doctrines because the scriptures only recognize one foundation, Jesus Christ? If the “THE FOUNDATION IS JESUS CHRIST”, as the UNIT, Does that eliminate any need for more foundations to be laid on this Primary Truth? Does the one foundation include all these “foundations” which are the preparations that are essential to put OFF Adam and to put ON Christ. These preparations are called “the foundations,” plural, which stabilize the Christian Life. When the foundations are lacking the old nature, Adam /flesh, will continue to rule. It is my opinion that ALL the problems in the assemblies are caused by the Adam Syndrome. The carnality that exists in nearly all assemblies is the direct result of the ministries neglecting the foundations. Exactly what does “the foundation of Jesus Christ really mean. Is it a doctrine or a change of life? Does the “foundation” mean experiencing every thing concerning Jesus Christ or does it mean accepting Jesus as your personal Savior as is commonly taught?

If there is carnality in the assembly but no authentic foundations have been laid then the fleshly and natural conditions in the assembly can be fully expected. Until the flesh is rendered ineffective it will certainly manifest in the assembly. If the ministries have been appointed to lay the foundation but no foundations have been laid then we can only point to the “ministries” and proclaim that the ministries have failed in their most basic work. I MUST include myself with those who have failed. Do you mean you never taught on the foundations? Of course not! I accepted that as the very root of our calling. I have certainly taught on the subject of the foundations many times but that is entirely different from laying the foundation as Life experiences!

Distributing the facts and information about foundations is the quick and easy part. Writing books or documents on the foundations can be done in the privacy of an office. However, laying valid foundations in people’s lives requires personal contact (ministry) over many days or months or even years. Paul stayed in Rome two full years. Staying in Antioch and writing letters about the foundations is not the same thing nor can we expect the same result.

Identifying the Foundations that God has established as absolutes is not very difficult. However, we must first understand the reason for the foundations and that seems to be the greatest hindrance to the foundations becoming THE first priority of ministry. This seems to be VERY simple so anyone can understand it. Foundations, that are NOT experiential, are NOT foundations but just doctrines. I think since the ministries are too busy in irrelevant activities there is no time to complete this basic work. It is clear that laying the foundations is very time consuming and cannot be done from the pulpit. It is for that reason that the foundations (basic preparations) are just ignored or neglected. Today, believers move from church to church and from group to group so no one knows who has experienced what. After being in this ministry for nearly 42 years it is my opinion that VERY few believers have even the basic foundations laid as experiences in their lives. If we are honest, it will be apparent that most all “ministers” do not even have the basic foundations as experiences. The result is this pitiful condition that we see.

When we read through James, 2 Peter, Jude and some of the other Epistles it is clear that these carnal problems have always been in the church. Even from the very first there has been infighting, complaints, criticism of leaders, disappointments and discouragements in both the believers and in the ministries. This is a fact of life, but it seems to be normal in the scriptures for the believers to grow up in ALL things into Christ and grow out of these carnal / fleshly conditions. What is the source of fleshly / carnal manifestations? They can all be attributed to the Adam / natural man. Why? Because, he is functioning in the earth / dirt realm and only has the life and wisdom from below.

James 3:13 Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. 15 **This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. 16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.** 17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. 18 And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

These things, and many more that are worse, are clearly identified as problems in the church. These things are re-occurring in every generation and in every assembly. Sometime we develop a fantasy image or ideal that we project on the visible church and assume that no bad things happen there. We, naturally, like to expect the VERY best from the believers because they are “Christian.” We soon learn that not everybody who attends the meetings are “Christians” but are just in the “process” of being saved. There are still liars, thieves, adulterers, and bad people in the church that men are building. He, of course, roots these people out of the church He is building! The Bible identifies some strange people who attend the meetings and some are of these are “leaders.”

Jude 1:10 But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed. 11 Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah. 12 **These men are those who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves;**

**clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; 13 wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.** 14 And about these also Enoch, *in* the seventh *generation* from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, 15 to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.” 16 **These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage.**

We may wonder why so many hurtful things happen in the church settings. These ugly things appear to be “more common” than we expected. Any minister that will not or can not deal with the carnality, the back biting, in fighting and criticism among the believers and leaders probably should Not be in the ministry. Then is there NO SOLUTION to these defects? I have concluded that God has established “foundations” as the means to remove Adam from the congregation and to put on Christ. This process is called “Christian Growth.” Trying to cause the believers to grow by education, by more knowledge, by preaching facts or doing Bible Studies has not been successful. Neither has discipleship been successful by this method. How do I know? That is what I did! Why was it this way? Because, growth is NOT knowledge based but Life based. Putting off the death of the old and putting on the LIFE of God is the proper way of judging growth. Even the mention of foundations or the necessity of FIRST laying foundations for the Christian Life is VERY controversial. This has rather amazed me because we have always “taught” the foundations are essential. For us this was never an option but sometimes it was difficult to create an answer to why they are essential. Because we often used the Tabernacle of Moses as a type and picture, we pointed to the Holy Place as the goal and the outer Court as the method. Nevertheless, when we closely examine the scriptures we find this concept of “foundations” used in several different contexts. This is certainly a New Testament theme and laying the proper foundations by every minister is surely assumed. Even if they are presented in some abstract form, they still must be accepted as Scriptural Truth and valid and essential to the Christian Life. The word “foundation” appears 24 times in the New Testament but some relate to the “foundation of the world.” We also find the foundations included in some parables that are related to the Kingdom.

When God first created the earth He began with “foundations.” Why? Because, “foundations” are essential to everything. These are not literal concrete or stone foundations that we think about in the earth realm. These are the underlying basis or principle to support the work and function. They become the justification or reason for its effectiveness. The foundations are the solid element upon which the Christian life is built.

Mat 25:34 “Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

Luke 6:46 “And **why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?** 47”Everyone who comes to Me, and hears My words, and acts upon them, I will show you whom he is like: 48 **he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation upon the rock; and when a flood rose, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it**

**had been well built.** 49 “But the one who has heard, and has not acted *accordingly*, is like a man who built a house upon the ground without any foundation; and the torrent burst against it **and immediately it collapsed,** and the ruin of that house was great.”

Luke 14:27 “Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. 28 “For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost, to see if he has enough to complete it? 29 “Otherwise, **when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, 30 saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’**”

Rom 15:18 For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed, 19 in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. 20 And thus I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was *already* named, **that I might not build upon another man’s foundation;**

1Cor 3:10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder **I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it.** But let each man be careful how he builds upon it. 11 For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is *to be* revealed with fire; and **the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work. 14 If any man’s work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward.** 15 If any man’s work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.

Eph 2:19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, 20 **having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone,** 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; 22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

Heb 6:1 Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, **not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 of instruction about baptisms, and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.** 3 And this we shall do, if God permits.

Rev 21:14 And **the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.** 15 And the one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall. 16 And the city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal. 17 And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards, *according to* human measurements, which are *also* angelic *measurements*. 18 And the material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. 19 **The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; 20 the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth,**

chrysoptase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst.

“Laying the proper foundations” is essential for whatever work or endeavor we are called to complete. This is a principle in God and is a requirement for anything He determines to be His Will and His Way. We may have a different idea but it will soon be proved to be irrelevant. This is why I keep repeating this Matra concerning the foundations. ALL the other “work” that is thought to be more important at the moment is just a stumbling block to the real work. Trying to solve the problems of carnality in the church by dealing with the problems created by the carnality will not work. It took me many years to learn that all that counseling was a big waste of time.

We MUST deal with the root problem which is Adam and we can ONLY deal with him by death and burial. Neglecting laying THIS FOUNDATION (as experience) will guarantee you will never solve the problem of flesh in the church. We can use the popular cliché in the church about the Spirit wars against the flesh but we wonder WHEN that will happen. Why? Because the flesh is epidemic and we wonder why the Holy Spirit is doing nothing. The reason is this; He is waiting for the ministries to do their job by laying the foundations. But why is that important? EVERYTHING in the New Covenant MUST solve ALL the problems that came to us through the Genesis 3 problem and onward. The New Covenant must solve ALL the problems that could NOT be solved by the Old Covenant. God pronounced the death sentence upon ALL men in Genesis 3. We can ignore that and proceed with “ministry” among the “dead” but I can testify that you will be wasting your time until each person in the assembly has experienced the death, the burial and the resurrection defined in scripture. If Romans 6 is irrelevant we wonder why it takes up space in the Bible. All the other foundations carry the same absolute requirement to either eliminate something from the outer / Adam man or to add something eternal / heavenly and spiritual to the inner man.

Well, brother, I understand what you say but I prefer to do it another way. I have met with my wife and we have decided to try it our way. We have fully agreed on **this new way of drifting toward maturity!** God has given us a verse upon which we are standing.

Isa 33:20 Look upon Zion, the city of our appointed feasts; Your eyes shall see Jerusalem an undisturbed habitation, A tent which shall not be folded, Its stakes shall never be pulled up Nor any of its cords be torn apart. 21 **But there the majestic One, the LORD, shall be for us A place of rivers and wide canals, On which no boat with oars shall go, And on which no mighty ship shall pass--**

Well, what is the result of your way? Has it dealt with the old nature or the flesh or the carnality in the church. Does your group act like Christians or do they act like heathens? If you still have all these problems in your group, why not try it God’s way now?

It is true that we cannot ascend to Zion through Human Effort but we can certainly lay the foundation for Zion without offending God!

Psalms 11:2 For, behold, the wicked bend the bow, They make ready their arrow upon the string, To shoot in darkness at the upright in heart. 3 **If the foundations are destroyed, What can the**

**righteous do?"**

Getting rid of Adam / the flesh and carnality may be more effective than getting rid of the people who are acting in an offensive way. I have been in a LOT of groups and it seems that every group has problem people who do NOT grow or change after many years. The ministers can blame the people **OR** they can take the blame themselves, admit they have failed, ask forgiveness, repent and begin again.

If the minister is honest and humble, the congregation may forgive him and they can begin to work together to build up the assembly into Christ! This time they can **BEGIN AGAIN** by laying the foundations as life experiences and not seek for some quicker and easier way that was learned in some pastor's meeting. There is **NO SHORTCUT** to maturity or spirituality. This "work" is very difficult, time consuming, unappreciated, misunderstood and discouraging.

However, when we stand before God and put "Pastor" in front of our name we are assuming a grave responsibility toward God **AND** toward the people we intend to shepherd. Everywhere I go I see men who have failed to develop a mature group. How do I recognize them. Because they are just doing what I did. Since I failed and freely admit it, I feel qualified to warn others not to do what I did. Don't waste you life preaching irrelevant messages that change **NOTHING**.

**Accept your responsibility and Lay the foundations that have been ordained! At very least, clear out the hindrances that prevent the church from completing the transition from the one men are building into the One He is Building!** Even if no one will help you, it seems apparent, that God will work with you to complete His plan. I believe that is better than having Him work against you because you have turned to your own way!