

# WHAT IS YOUR FOUNDATION?

A Bible Fund publication

*Where do you stand in relationship to  
Jesus Christ? What is your foundation?*

Many times, one of the biggest problems people have is not knowing where they stand. With their lips they say that they believe Christ, that they believe God; and yet, when the trials and troubles come and the winds begin to blow, they crumble and go down with the storm.

Years ago, there was a hurricane in a small Texas coastal town. Huge waves were being tossed up. Finally, a tidal wave hit and rolled over the high bluff. It came right to a small house and shoved it off the foundation. The house wasn't bolted down

Some of us are like that house. We need to go back and check to see just how firmly fastened we are to our foundation, the foundation of Christ and His sayings.

## **The Basics – the Foundation in Christ**

Jesus Christ gave instructions in Matthew 5, 6 and 7 that explain what we ought to be doing in order to stand firmly on the proper foundation.

The first thing He emphasized was (Matt. 5:3): "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven." He started with the basic foundation of humility – recognizing the rights of others. Then, He continued in verse 4: "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."

People who are willing to serve other people by giving and sharing is what being a Christian is all about. That's the way Jesus Christ, our foundation, works. He is love, and His instructions are principles of love.

Verse 6: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." If you have ever fasted for several days you can really understand what He means by *hungering and thirsting*.

Jesus proceeds to talk about the "merciful" and the "pure in heart." Let's ask ourselves: How merciful are we? How pure in heart? Christ concluded that a man who hears these sayings and does them is a man who is like a house which was built upon a rock. Such a house will weather the storms that come up against it.

To be a peacemaker (vs. 9) is also a part of the plan God laid out, a part of being a person of love and service to others.

God said that we are going to suffer persecution. But if we suffer because we are doing what is right – because of this way of life that we are following for God's and Christ's sake – we are going to be rewarded. Verse 10: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for their's is the kingdom of heaven."

Verse 11: "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." You must be sure that your conduct and behavior are based upon the One True foundation so that no matter how harsh the persecutions may be, your foundation remains firm in Christ. "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

Verse 13: "You are the salt of the earth: but if the salt has lost its savour [if it's lost the ability to add flavor to food], wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under the foot of men." We can't afford to lose the saltiness of God's Way.

In verses 14-16, Christ said to all His disciples around the world, "Ye are the light of the world." Your way of life, your godliness, are to be seen and known by the world as a witness to them of God's greatness and goodness. "A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid." We can't go on living with our Christian deeds being hidden. "Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." It's not enough that they hear you say that you are a Christian, but they actually see that you are one by what you do, by your behavior, your conduct in the community, your Christ-centered conduct wherever you are.

### **The Magnification of the Law**

Continuing in Matthew 5, verses 17-19: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." The way He did that was to magnify the Law. He gave us the spirit of the Law and not just the letter. Christ explained the spirit or intent of the Law: ". . . whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (vs. 28). This shows that God even considers the very thoughts and intents of our hearts.

"For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men [other people to do] so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

Verse 20: In magnifying the Law, not abolishing it, Christ went so far as to say that ". . . except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees,

ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." They would teach and talk about the Law, but they didn't practice the things that they themselves taught.

Continuing in verses 21-24, Christ then magnified the Law another way: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

"Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee" (if you have wronged anyone in any way); "Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."

He is telling us that we can't come to Him while having hatred in our heart toward our brother. We have to learn how to forgive one another. Let's not destroy people. Let's try to help them.

### **True Love and Humility**

Christ also talked about being sued at law and how to work things out. "If any man . . . take away thy coat, [be willing to] let him have thy cloke also" (vs. 40).

In those days, the Roman Empire ruled over Judaea and the rest of the Western world. They were not living in a democracy. A soldier could walk into a home and demand whatever was there – bread, wine or whatever. Or, an official courier could compel someone to deliver mail to its destination or carry it for a certain distance. Christ instructed that if you are compelled to go one mile, be willing to go two (vs. 41). It is a principle that you and I should follow today.

In verse 42, Christ instructed: "Give [that is, loan] to him that asketh, [legitimately needing to borrow from you]," and, continuing through verses 43-48: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy . . ." That philosophy is very prominent today; love your brother, but it is all right to hate your enemy, to hold a grudge, because maybe someone has wronged you. But, Christ continued: "Love your enemies . . . pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven . . . For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others?" That sort of thing doesn't take much Christianity! But "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Matthew 6:1-2 continues Christ's teaching: Don't give for the purpose of making yourself known to men. Do it privately. "Otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven." The hypocrites sound a trumpet before themselves, and "Verily I say unto you, They [already] have their reward."

Don't go around parading your Christianity. Just live it. Verse 3: "But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly." Some people pray to be seen. Christianity seems to be only a vain show to them in which they are the star. And I've seen certain men get jealous because someone was called on to lead the congregation in prayer and they weren't.

### **Outline for Prayer**

Next, Christ turned to the subject of prayer. Here is His sample prayer, a pattern that we should follow.

He said for us to pray like this (vv. 9-15): "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name." He started by instructing us to address the Father and praise His Name – not to talk about ourselves first. Then we are to pray about the Kingdom of God: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

If you are founded upon the foundation of Christ, you are going to be taking this kind of attitude in prayer. These are not the exact words you will use in every prayer because Christ said not to use "vain repetitions" (vs. 7). But you will follow this basic outline and this basic approach, praying to the Father, in the Name of Christ, acknowledging that you want God's Kingdom to come upon this earth quickly and speedily. That is God's will – which can be summed up in the word "love" – and it is going to be done here on this earth.

Then we are to ask for our daily needs: protection, guidance, food, etc. And don't forget, we have a daily need for forgiveness – both to forgive and **to** be forgiven. "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses [sins], neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Love is again a vital factor.

Finally, we should close prayer with this form of acknowledgment: "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen." You see, God is the One who counts! God's Kingdom, His glory and power are what is important.

### **Fasting, and the Outward Appearance**

Verses 16-18: "Moreover when ye fast . . . [notice He didn't say "if ye fast"] appear not unto men to fast ... [Don't do it only to be seen of others. It's a matter between you and God.] Be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They [already] have their reward."

Verse 20: "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." What a key to keeping your heart wholly with God! If your intent, your motive, what you think and feel is evil, it will show up in your eyes (vv. 22-23). You can tell a tremendous amount about people by looking at their eyes. Have you men ever noticed when you were dating, how much you enjoyed looking into your bride-to-be's eyes? Can you remember how much they communicated? The

same holds true in the Christian way of life. If people are sour and bitter inside, it's going to show in their eyes. But if people are happy, and are dedicated to God and His Way, that too will show in their eyes. They can't hide it.

### **God or Mammon**

Verse 24: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Material things must not possess us, or be our driving desire— because if they are, sooner or later they will consume us and we will start compromising our convictions.

Verses 25-34: "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" God takes care of the "fowls of the air," and nurtures the beauty of the "lilies of the field." "Shall he not much more clothe you"!

"... for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things [God knows what we need even before we ask Him]. But seek ye first the kingdom of God [that's God's Government, God's rule in our **lives**], and his righteousness; [Psalms 119:172 says all God's commandments are righteousness] and all these things shall be added unto you."

### **Matthew 7**

Chapter 7 is more about love. Verses 1-2: "Judge [condemn] not, that ye be not judged [condemned]. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. " This is another way of saying, whatsoever you want men to do to you, that's what you should do to them.

Remember the famous example of the eye and the mote? Well, here it is (vv. 4-5): "How wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam [maybe a 2 x 4] is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite . . ." We should clean up our own heart and life first.

Verses 7-12: "Ask, and it shall be given you." You can depend on God's love. This is an important basic. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."

This is the way God is. This is the way true Christianity is.

Verses 21-23: "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" (the one who performs the deed, not the one who just says he is a Christian).

"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?" and done many wonderful things, casting our demons and whatever. But He is going to say,

"I never knew you: depart from me." Why did He say that? Because they worked "iniquity," "lawlessness."

### **The Importance of the Foundation of Christ and His sayings**

Finally, Christ concludes with this parable in Matthew 7:24-27: "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth [practices] them . . ." What sayings? Those we have been studying from Matthew 5, 6 and 7. ". . . I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock." (First Corinthians 10:4 says that Rock is Christ).

In these troubled times (and it is bound to get more difficult in the coming years), it is vitally important to build a close bond with Jesus Christ, so that when troubles assail us we can call upon Him for help. Notice what He said in Matthew 11:28-30. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Yes, Christ is dynamically alive at the right hand of the Father (Mark 16:19; Col. 3:1; 1 Pet. 3:22) and is able to comfort and strengthen those who are His and call upon Him for help.

So the choice is ours. Will we study and apply these sayings of Jesus, or will we ignore them and suffer the consequences that he warned about?

"And everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."

Let's avoid building our house upon a foundation of sand!

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