

# Founded on the Rock - Part 1

by Derek Prince

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of having a strong foundation in Jesus Christ and building on it by hearing and doing the words of Jesus.*

**Duration:** 26:12

**Scripture:** Matthew 7:24

**Topics:** "Faith Foundation", "Spiritual Growth"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of building our lives on the foundation of Jesus Christ, using the metaphor of constructing a building. It highlights the need for personal encounters with Jesus, acknowledging Him as the eternal Son of God, and making a public confession of faith. The sermon also discusses the significance of hearing and doing the teachings of Jesus to build a strong spiritual foundation that can withstand life's storms.

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## Transcript

The Bible is a model of good teaching and it follows various principles of teaching. One in particular is that you start from the known to lead people on to the unknown. You never start with the unknown, you start with what is known and you proceed from there to the unknown.

And one of the ways that the Bible does this is to take very simple familiar everyday experiences and activities and to give them a spiritual application. There are various examples. The Bible speaks about a farmer sowing his seed, about a fisherman catching fish in a drag net.

It speaks about a soldier putting on his armor. And then in a completely different kind of context, it speaks about a bride preparing herself for a wedding. These are just a few examples of this principle.

But the particular familiar activity that I want to focus on is that of constructing a building. And I think this picture of the Christian life is used at least as many times as any other picture in the Bible. So we're going to turn first of all to the epistle of Jude chapter verse 20 and 21.

Which is a word of exhortation to us as believers. But you beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God. So there the scripture says we must build ourselves up in our most holy faith.

That's one of the ways in which this metaphor of building applies. We are responsible to build ourselves up. And then in Ephesians chapter 2 and verses 21 and 22, it speaks about a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a habitation or a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

So that speaks about the collective Christian community, that we are to be built together in the Holy Spirit as a place for God to dwell in. And then in 1st Peter chapter 2 verses 4 and 5, speaking about Jesus as a living stone. Peter says this, coming to him, Jesus, as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious.

You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ. So there we are compared, each one of us, to living stones which are being built together into a holy temple which the Lord is going to occupy. And then one final example from Acts chapter 20, the farewell of Paul to the Ephesian elders whom he loved with a special love.

Because it was in Ephesus that his ministry had had perhaps the greatest impact of any place. And in this speech, in Acts 20, he's taking farewell and he's telling them they'll never see him again in this life. It was a very moving situation for all of them.

And this is really the final thing that he wanted to leave with them. In verse 32 of Acts 20, And now brethren I commend you to God and to the word of his grace which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. So there Paul says the main means that builds us up is the word of God's grace, the Bible.

And he says it is able to build us up and to give us an inheritance among all those who are set apart for Jesus Christ by faith in him. Now I'm not a builder but I know one thing. In any permanent building, whether it's built of brick or stone or concrete or even timber, the vital area is the foundation.

And the Bible deals specifically with this. And here is an issue of great importance for every one of us. It's having the right foundation.

Because the foundation sets limits to the building that can be built above it. Both in size and in weight. The foundation sets the limits.

And this is true in the Christian life. You cannot build more successful Christian life than your foundation will permit. This is the vital issue.

What is your foundation? Have you laid the right foundation? Now there is only one foundation that is adequate and sufficient and it's all sufficient. And it is a person. The person is Jesus Christ.

And Paul writing to the Corinthian Christians in 1st Corinthians chapter 3 uses two metaphors. He uses the agricultural metaphor but then he goes on to the building metaphor. And he says in verse 9, For we are God's fellow workers, we're working together with God.

You are God's field, that's the agricultural metaphor. And you are God's building, that's the construction metaphor. Then he goes on with the building metaphor.

According to the grace of God which was given to me as a wise master builder. And in Greek that word is architect. I have laid the foundation and another builds on it.

But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid which is Jesus Christ. So Paul says there's only one foundation for the Christian life.

And that is Jesus himself. And anything that is not built on that foundation will not stand the test of time and of trial. So it's very important for every one of us to assess what our life is built on.

Are we truly built on the Lord Jesus Christ? Do we have a personal relationship and a personal knowledge of Jesus? That makes us able to relate personally to him. The question of laying this foundation in Jesus is extremely important. And so I want to take some time to deal with the issue of how we can have this foundation.

That is the foundation of Jesus in our lives. And I would invite each one of you to examine your own life. Your spiritual condition and your spiritual experience.

And to check as to whether you are really right in your relationship with the foundation. I want to turn to Matthew chapter 16 for some basic teaching. In verses 13 and following Jesus is talking to his disciples.

And he says when Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi. He asked his disciples saying, Who do men say that I the Son of Man am? So they said some say John the Baptist, some Elijah and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets. Then he makes it very personal.

But he said to them, but who do you say that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, You are the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God. That was a crucial moment in the life of Peter. And in the whole history of Christianity.

You are the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God. And Jesus responded, blessed are you Simon Bar-Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you.

But my Father who is in heaven. And I say to you that you are Peter. And on this rock I will build my church.

And the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. So, Jesus uses this encounter with Peter. To establish the way in which we can lay a foundation in Jesus Christ Himself.

First of all, I need to comment on some of the words that are used. In verse 18 Peter says, You are Peter. And the Greek is Petros.

And on this rock, the Greek is Petra. I will build my church. It has often been suggested that Peter is the foundation of the church.

I'd have to say if it were so, it would be a very wobbly building. Because a little later Jesus rebuked him. Said get behind me Satan.

Later still, he denied the Lord three times. And even after the resurrection. Paul had to rebuke him for compromising with the truth of the gospel.

For fear of his fellow Jews. So, I'm just grateful that the church is not built on Peter. Nor am I. And what is actually emerges from this passage.

Which is very clear in the Greek Testament. Which is the original version that we have. You are Peter, Petros.

And on this rock, Petra. I will build my church. Now Petros in Greek means a stone.

Or at the most a boulder. Nothing bigger than that. Normally it would be the kind of stone that people would take up.

To stone someone with. On the other hand Petra means a jagged rock. That extends from the bedrock.

It's often used of a cliff. Or something on that scale. But the important thing to remember is.

It is part of the bedrock. And what is the bedrock? It's just what Peter had been going through. The recognition of Jesus.

For who he is, revealed only by the Holy Spirit. No one can know Jesus who he really is. Unless God the Father by the Holy Spirit.

Reveals him to you. And so this is the Petra. It's the bedrock on which our Christian faith must be based.

It's a personal encounter. And a personal revelation of Jesus. Not as the carpenter's son.

Not as a historical figure. But as the eternal uncreated Son of God. That's where we have to come.

If we are going to build on that rock. The experience through which Peter passed. Must be parallel in our experience.

And I've told people many times. You can join a church. You can go through a religious ceremony.

You can say a prayer and not be changed. But if you really encounter Jesus, you will be changed. No one encounters Jesus and remains the same.

So each of us needs to ask. Have I ever had this life-changing personal encounter. With the Lord Jesus Christ.

I would like to suggest to you four successive phases. Through which Peter passed in this encounter. First of all, confrontation.

Jesus and Peter met face to face. There was no mediator, no priest, no one in between them. It was a direct personal confrontation of Jesus.

And that's what we have to come to. Jesus said in another place, I am the door. By me if any man enters in, he will be saved.

There's only one way into the kingdom of God. That is through the door. And the door is not a church.

It's not a doctrine, it's Jesus. I am the door. Secondly, the confrontation was followed by a revelation.

A revelation granted by God the Father through the Holy Spirit. Jesus said flesh and blood has not shown you this. You cannot arrive at it by your natural senses.

There has to be a revelation. Again, this is essential. No one can know Jesus as he truly is in his eternal Sonship of God.

Without a personal revelation. You can study theology, you can go to a Bible college. You can even become a minister.

But without this personal revelation of Jesus. You cannot know him. And this revelation comes from God the Father.

Through Jesus Christ the Son. Let me ask you, don't respond. But have you had that personal encounter with Jesus? I have.

More than 50 years ago in the middle of the night in an army barrack room in World War II. I encountered Jesus. I didn't have any doctrinal knowledge.

I didn't have any evangelical language. I couldn't say I was saved or born again. I learned all that later.

But I want to tell you, I was changed. Radically and permanently changed. I wasn't made perfect.

In fact let me confess to you, I'm still not perfect. But I was changed for the better. Then there has to be an acknowledgment of what the Holy Spirit shows us.

We have to say yes, I believe, I receive. We have to make some kind of response. It's not automatic, it requires something happening in us.

And fourthly, there has to be a public confession of our faith in Jesus. That's what Jesus brought Peter to. You are the Christ, the Messiah.

He made it publicly. People speak about secret believers. And I acknowledge there are secret believers, especially in countries where to be, acknowledge yourself as a believer would be to be put to death.

But I don't think that anybody can permanently remain a secret believer. Let me read to you what Jesus said in Matthew chapter 10, verses 32 and 33. Matthew 10, 32 and 33.

Therefore whoever confesses me before men, him I will also confess before my Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies me before men, him I will also deny before my Father who is in heaven. So Jesus in his characteristic way, doesn't leave you three choices, only two.

You either confess or you deny. And if you fail to confess in an appropriate situation, you are in effect denying. So each one of us at some point has to come to the place where we openly acknowledge our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And this is, this is a critical moment for many. I discovered in the army, after I become a believer, that the best thing to do was to let everybody know the first moment you met them, where you stand. Then you never have to go back and say, well I didn't really tell you at the first but.

So I did something which is not a religious act. But every night in the barrack room, wherever I was, I would kneel down at my bed and pray. That just told them, that's the kind of person you're dealing with.

And it was much easier, I saw other Christians who waffled. And didn't come right out with saying what they believed. And it was much harder for them to go back afterwards and make the right confession.

So I want to recommend that to you. You don't have to stand on the street corner and preach. You don't have to be a preacher.

You can be a housewife, you can be a student. But wherever you are, let people know you believe in Jesus. He's the Son of God.

So let me just recapitulate those four successive phases of this encounter. Which is so basic, because this is how we lay the foundation of Jesus in our lives, personally. First of all, there was a confrontation.

Second, there was a revelation granted by God the Father through the Holy Spirit. Third, Peter responded with an acknowledgement. And fourth, he made a public confession.

Now you might ask, and people could ask, is such a revelation possible today? Is it possible for people like you and me, to know Jesus just as really. And just as personally as Peter did, and as the other disciples did. And we need to see two important things.

First of all, Jesus was not revealed to Peter as the Son of the Carpenter. He'd known him that way for quite a while. He was revealed to him as the eternal Son of God.

And the scripture says in Hebrews 13 verse 8, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. There has been no change in him, there never will be. So it's not a question of language, or culture, or clothing.

But it's a question of the eternal person of Jesus. That's what Peter encountered, maybe for the first time in his life. He really had a revelation of who Jesus is.

Secondly, the revelation was granted through the Holy Spirit. And the Bible calls the Holy Spirit, the eternal Spirit, the timeless Spirit. Time, fashion, history, customs, language.

They don't change the Holy Spirit. So for those two reasons, it is equally possible for you and me, to have this direct personal revelation of Jesus. Just as possible, as it was for Peter.

First of all, because it's the eternal Son of God who's revealed. And secondly, because it's the eternal Spirit who reveals him. Now we come to the next important practical issue.

If you have laid the foundation, how do you proceed to build on it? You remember that the metaphors we used at the beginning, all spoke about building. So here's the next vitally important and practical issue. How do you build on the foundation? And I want to go to a parable of Jesus.

That he spoke at the end of Matthew chapter 7. A well-known parable about the wise man and the foolish man. Each of whom built a house, but they built it different ways. Beginning in Matthew 7 verse 24.

Therefore whoever hears these sayings of mine and does them. I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock. The bedrock, Petra.

And the rain descended, the floods came and the winds blew and beat on that house. And it did not fall, for it was founded on the bedrock. Now everyone who hears these sayings of mine and does not do them.

Will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain descended, the floods came and the winds blew and beat on that house. And it fell and great was its fall.

First of all it's important to see that each house was subjected to the same test. There was no house that was free from being tested. The same storm that hit one house, hit the other.

And let me tell you that Christian life is not a storm free life. You will go through storms. God has never guaranteed that you won't.

But in fact, Paul and Barnabas said to an early church. We must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God. If you're on a road that has no tribulation.

It's questionable whether it leads to the kingdom of God. Because that's what Paul said. We must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God.

It's not in the scope of this talk to explain why we go through tribulation. But believe me God has a purpose in it. And if you're going through it now, don't give up.

God will bring you through. And you'll find at the end that he's dealt with you and taught you things you couldn't learn any other way. You know how I know that? From personal experience.

I very seldom preach theories. So, how does the wise man build? Very simply, two ways. By hearing and doing the words of Jesus, the words of the Bible.

So how can you build on that foundation? Just the same way. Hearing what the Bible says and doing it. Don't be just a hearer only, because the Bible has no promises for them.

But a hearer and a doer. It's practical. It's applying the teaching of the Bible and the teaching of Jesus, in your own life.

And you will find as you go on in this, that God will continually open up to you new areas. In which you need to apply the truth. I want to tell you I've been a Christian for more than 50 years.

But God is continually showing me new ways. In which to apply his word. New areas of my life, in which I need to apply it.

My building isn't complete. It's being built. But I thank God it's passed through a number of storms successfully.

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