

# Getting the Right Foundation

by Fred Whitmore

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of trusting in Christ as the only sure foundation for eternity, and the consequences of being without Christ.*

**Duration:** 38:57

**Scripture:** Ephesians 2:1-5, Ephesians 2:8-15, Ephesians 2:19

**Topics:** "Foundation"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the desperate condition of a person without Christ. He describes them as being without strength and impotent in the face of temptation. The preacher shares a story of a woman who sincerely desired to change her life but lacked the ability to do so. He warns that living and dying without Christ leads to spending eternity under God's judgment. The sermon highlights the importance of valuing the word of God and the privilege of having access to it.

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## Transcript

I want to read with you a short portion of scripture in the New Testament, the epistle to the Ephesians and the second chapter. The epistle to the Ephesians and the second chapter. And you have he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein in time past he walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

But God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by grace ye are saved, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith, that not of yourselves it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Wherefore remember that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands, that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off, are made

nigh by the blood of Christ. The Lord will bless to us this portion of his world.

A short time this evening there are two phrases that I want to set in contrast from the portion of the Word of God that we have been privileged to read together. You know it is a privilege to read the Word of God. We have been recently learning that in some countries even the reading of the scriptures has been prohibited to many.

And yet we have the Word of God, and we have freedom to read the scriptures privately and publicly. What a privilege that is. I trust that we shall ever value the Word of God.

In this portion tonight there are two phrases, and I want to set them in contrast. The first is in verse 12. Ye were without Christ.

There the apostle is describing the past condition of those to whom he was writing. He tells them what they were before the grace of God in salvation reached them. Christ was outside of their lives, and they knew nothing of peace with God.

They were in their sins and sands. Lamentable was their condition indeed. The apostle sums it up.

He says ye were without Christ. But in verse 5 you find at the end of the verse a parenthesis. By grace ye are saved.

Now that was true of course at the time of the apostles writing. Once they had been without Christ. But now the apostle addresses them and he says by grace ye are saved.

No doubt about it, this isn't a matter of speculation. This isn't a matter of argument. Ye are saved.

They had come into the blessedness of God's salvation. What they were by nature, what they became as the result of receiving the grace of God. It's certainly not an unusual thing for men and women to be without Christ.

We find it is the natural condition of all men. Man by nature he has no real knowledge of God. And as to the person of the Lord Jesus, the Lord Jesus Christ is outside of his life.

How sad it is that men should go on without the knowledge of God. That men should go on without the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. For all that God can offer to men he presents to them in our Lord and Savior.

Everything that God bestows in love is comprehended in Christ Jesus our Lord. To receive the Lord Jesus Christ then is to receive all, all that God can give. No wonder the apostle as he contemplated the gift of God, he said thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.

There was gratitude in his heart as he thought of the worth of his Savior. And his words suggest of course that there is worth in the Lord Jesus that human lips can never give full expression to. There is inexhaustible wealth and worth in Christ Jesus our Lord.

How impoverished the man must be who knows nothing of the Lord Jesus. He is impoverished spiritually. He is impoverished morally.

He is impoverished for time. And if he continues in that ignorance he will be impoverished for eternity. God desires above everything else that men should come to the knowledge of himself in the person of his Son, in our Lord and Savior.

I would tonight pray that I could tell you what Christ means for me. I've been endeavouring to tell you these past nights. I can say that he's the source of my life.

He is the fount of all goods. He is the wellspring of every blessing. I have discovered that there is life, eternal life, exuberant life, and abundant satisfaction in Christ Jesus the Lord.

He satisfies the longing soul. He filleth the hungry soul with goodness. And my friend, whatever your problem, whatever your burden, whatever your desire, I would point you tonight to the person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

You'll find that he's God's remedy for human ills. And if you come to the person of Christ, you can obtain eternal blessedness in him, but a blessedness that will be experienced now so that your heart will overflow, and you'll praise God for his present goodness that abounds to you in Christ. Without Christ, such were these men by nature, and such are many today without Christ.

My friend, I wonder if this condition is yours. If you're going on through life without the Lord Jesus Christ, Christ outside of your life, you know it's very lamentable. There's no need why you should keep the Lord Jesus Christ outside.

He has sought entrance into your life. He has pleaded with you, and having purchased for you with his own blood the blessing that you stand so much in need of, he condescends in grace to present it, and he pleads with you to accept it. And yet you spurn the Lord Jesus Christ.

You close your life to the Lord Jesus, and by so doing, my friend, you expose your soul to God's judgments, to eternal condemnation. You see, if you have no room for the person of Christ, and you pass out of time into eternity without the knowledge of the Lord Jesus, you'll discover that God has no place for you in his heaven. If you close the door of your life to the Lord Jesus, then inevitably God will close the door of heaven to you, and you'll be outside, without Christ in time, without Christ in eternity.

To die without Christ, have you counted the cost? To die without Christ, and your souls will last, for that is the implication. You're going on without Christ, and friend, you know not how soon. The icy hand of physical death will be lowered upon you.

You know not how soon you'll hear the summons to leave time behind, and to pass into eternity. And my friend, how tragic will be if you pass into eternity without Christ. Living without Christ, dying without Christ, to spend eternity without Christ under the judgment of God.

Will you follow me for a little while, while we consider the condition of the man who is without Christ, and all that is involved? The man without Christ is without strength in the hour of temptation. He is a weakling. He is impotent.

And when the powers of darkness are arrayed against him, and temptation falls upon him in its fury, he's unable to resist. He goes down before it. He has no strength of his own, for he's without Christ.

And the man without Christ is in that condition. He's without strength. Very sad, isn't it? There are men lamenting tonight practices they have allowed in their lives.

Evil practices. To begin with, they found pleasure in these practices. But now they're held in a cruel bondage.

They're endeavouring to liberate themselves, but they cannot. They haven't the ability. They haven't the strength.

And I'm not referring necessarily, you know, to old people. It's a sad thing to go through life in a bondage like that, isn't it? And many do. Right until life's last hour, suffering that fearful bondage of sin, dominated by the forces of evil.

But it's tragic to know there are many young people today. And if they could rid themselves of their bondage, they would do it. They cannot do it.

They've played with certain forms of sin and violence. Until now, by these same things, they are dominated. And they cannot liberate themselves.

And they're discovering that in this matter, they are without strength. You know, a man may have tremendous willpower, but there's nothing will destroy a man's willpower quicker than indulging in sin. Some people are proving that today.

Some young people are proving that today. Self-indulgence, giving themselves over to varied forms of vice. That sin has weakened them morally and it has brought them down.

Whatever strength they had, it has departed. They're impotent. Poor weaklings, in the face of temptation.

Years ago, a woman told me in Birmingham, at the close of a watchman service. She said, you know, on occasions similar to this, I have resolved to live a different life. I've looked into the past with disappointment and regret.

And I have said, the things that I have allowed hitherto, I mustn't allow them anymore. These things must be banished from my life. She said, you know, my resolutions were made with the utmost sincerity.

But I soon discovered they were valueless. For while I was sincere, I hadn't the ability to put into effect the very things that I desired. She said, you know, these things, they dominate my life.

I cannot rid myself of them. I go down before them. She inquired, is there any hope for me? We had to tell her, of course, that while she leaned upon her own arm, there was no help at all.

But her great mistake was in the fact that she was keeping Christ outside of her life. It is Christ who makes the weak to stand. It's Christ who imparts to the man, the woman, victory over sin.

My friend, you trust Christ, and you'll get a new life. And the power of that new life, why it's the power of the risen Christ, it's the power, the omnipotent power of the blessed Christ, worked out in the life of the believer by the Holy Spirit. And there is victory for the trusting soul, the soul who leans implicitly upon the Lord Jesus, recognizing that his strength is not in himself, but in the Lord, whom he trusts.

If you're without Christ, you'll continue a poor weakling, overcome by temptation, brought low. You know, the Christian who ceases to look to Christ, the Christian who thinks himself sufficient for these things, is soon tripped up, he's soon laid low. Even a Simon Peter could say, though all these forsake thee, yet will not I. It wasn't long after that Simon Peter learned his frailty and his weakness.

And when temptation assailed him, and opportunity was given to him to confess his Lord before ungodly sinners, alas, he denied him with oaths and curses. But my Christian friend, it's not always necessary to open your lips, you know, to deny the Lord. Sometimes the Lord is denied by silence.

The moment demands utterance, the occasion demands that we show our colors, that we confess our Lord. The fear, the fear of man that bringeth a snare, it results in our lips remaining closed, and our silence is nothing better than a denial of the Lord. How sad.

You see, God teaches each one of us, whether we believed or whether we believed not, God would teach each one of us, that if we're going to exhibit any strength at all in the hour of temptation, that strength can only come from himself. It can only be found in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's why we're pointing you, friend, to the Lord Jesus Christ.

He is sufficient, and he alone, but at the moment he's outside of your life, and you know it. You're going on without Christ, and so you're going on in your weakness, and the devil gets the victory, and temptation lays you low, and oftentimes your life is filled with regret and disappointment. You see, you are without Christ.

Can we go further? Oh, I think so. The person who is without Christ is not only without strength, but is without foundation, nothing to build upon in the light of eternity, without foundation. The Lord points out the wise man.

He says, He that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man that built his house upon the rock. He is a man whose hearing is the hearing of faith. He recognizes that this is the Lord's word to his soul, and he grasps it, and it becomes to him a sure foundation.

He acts upon the word of the Lord. No wonder James said, Faith without works is dead. It's one thing to say, I believe, to give a mental assent to the utterances of the Lord Jesus.

It's another thing to give expression to our faith in the terms of everyday living, taking the word of the Lord as our foundation, building upon it, taking it as our assurance, rejoicing in it, the obedience of faith. My friend, if you believe the word of God tonight, that belief will move you to action. Can I prove it? I think so.

My friend, if in that heart of yours tonight you really believe there is fearful, unending judgment for the Christ rejecter, that that judgment descends the moment a person leaves this life without Christ, my friend, that very belief, it will move you to action. You will say, Why, I cannot tarry any longer. This is a matter of the utmost urgency.

I'm placing my soul in jeopardy forever. I can't afford to do that. And believing what the Lord says with regard to eternal judgment, you'll plead to him for refuge.

It moves you to action. My friend, do you believe in such a way that God's word moves you to action? And it leads you to trust in Christ alone. What are you building upon for eternity? Going round, you know, with booklets as we have done for many, many years from door to door, we have many conversations with

individuals.

And it really is surprising what intelligent people tell you sometimes they are resting upon for eternity. In the day of testing, of course, these false foundations are going to be swept away. And the superstructure will form, no doubt about it.

You know the Lord did not criticize the superstructure of the man who built upon the sand? Oh, no. You see, it might have been all right. And no doubt when all was completed, the man who built it would stand back and admire it.

He'd say, Why, the design's my own. It's all my own. And the labor that has been put into it, it's all my own.

It does me credit. You see, that is the attitude of the man who trusts to himself. It's the attitude of the man who trusts to his own endeavors, to his respectability, to his particular brand of religion.

That's his attitude. Why, he says, My work, it does me credit. But my friends, the testing time is coming.

Now, what have you rested it upon? What about the foundation? The foundation will be tested. And if the foundation is insecure, then remember, it will give way. It will be swept from beneath, and down will come all that you've built upon it.

How disastrous. How disastrous. There is only one sure foundation, and that's the person of Christ.

How often we sing on Christ, the solid rock I stand. All other ground is sinking sand. In December 1932, we were having our first meetings in Clitheroe.

There was no assembly there then. We were in a public hall that had been hired. The Lord came in in a wonderful way.

Many were saved. One of the first was a spiritual medium, 72 years of age. Before the meeting commenced one night, she said to my wife, she said, I want to tell you that since coming to these meetings, I've made a dreadful discovery.

She said, You know, I'm a medium. But at these meetings, I've learned that I've nothing to rest my soul upon. Nothing to rest my soul upon.

She said, Whatever am I going to do? And together we sought to help her. And before the gospel meeting commenced, she confessed Christ. That there was reality in her confession was proved.

For the Lord left her with us for 10 years. She was 82 when she died. She was mentally alert to the very end.

And an hour before she died, I sat by her bedside. And she said, When you commit this poor body to the ground, I want you to tell those who gather there that 10 years ago, I had nothing to rest my soul upon. But now I've gone in with assurance to see the King.

Oh yes. There was a wonderful transformation in her life. She used to rejoice my heart to see that dear old soul on the Lord's Day morning.

Standing, quite oblivious. As far as everyone else was concerned, they were not in her thoughts. She was occupied with the Lord and her book was in her hand.

And her face was radiant as she sought to sing the praises of the Lord Jesus. It was wonderful. And my friend, how we rejoice to know that though late in life, she had discovered that she was building on shifting sand.

And she was able to transfer to the right foundation, to the only foundation, and to make Christ Jesus her trust for all eternity. Have you done that? I tell you friend, if I'd been preaching a creed or a cold dogma, a code of ethics, if I'd been presenting the policies of men, I would have tired of it years ago. These things provide men with no sure foundation for eternity.

You need the personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour. You need to put your trust in Him and nothing can be a substitute for that. The only sure foundation is the person of the Lord Jesus.

We're not going round the country making proselytes, seeking additions to certain companies of Christians. But my friend, we're seeking to present the simple gospel message and to tell men, and to tell women too, that their only hope is in the person of Christ. You need Christ as your Saviour.

You need to know the cleansing that His blood affords. You need the seal of the Holy Spirit and the witness of the Spirit of God through the Word of God to assure you that you're a child of God. You need to know that you've been born into the family of God, that all is right with your soul in the light of eternity.

What are you building upon? If you're without Christ, you're without strength and you're without foundation. But my friend, isn't it tragic to think there are men tonight without hope? Without hope. Paul wrote to certain sorrowing Christians, their loved ones have been taken from them.

He said, we sorrow not as others, but have no hope. There are some who in the face of physical death, who in the face of eternity, they're hopeless. They're without God, and they're without hope in the world.

Would you like to be in their company? Without God, without hope, isn't it tragic? Without hope. You know when a man loses hope, he doesn't last very long. Oh no.

Once hope goes, everything goes, everything's shattered. But we can tell men who hitherto have felt themselves hopeless, that there is hope, and there is hope in the person of Christ. However far you've gone, my friend, however deep died your sins might appear, however many times you have rejected God's offer of mercy and grace, I believe the very fact that God has brought you here again, shows that God is willing to be merciful to you.

He's willing to save you. He's willing to save you tonight. So here is the hope that God would have you to seize.

There's hope for the hopeless in the person of Christ. The dear man who dwelt amongst the tombs, he lived amongst the dead, he was the devil's captive, he was driven by the devil. His very countenance was abused by sin.

Men tried to bind him and tame him, but they said, no, it's no use at all, we can't do anything with him. If you'd asked those men regarding him, they would have said, he's hopeless, nothing can be done for him, until the Lord arrives. What a transformation.

The men who would have described him hopeless, they saw him clothed and in his right mind, sitting at the feet of Jesus. Jesus did it. You see, there's hope for the hopeless in the person of Christ.

You go on without Christ, without strength, without foundation, without hope. He's not that very fearful, without hope. I received a telegram years ago, asking me to go over to Yorkshire, to conduct the funeral service of a young woman whose parents I knew well.

I wired back to say, coming, and I went. I couldn't understand, as I journeyed along in the train that day, I couldn't get any clear thought or guidance with regard to the service. When I got to the house, I understood it.

The first thing the father told me, as his eyes filled with tears, he said, I'm afraid, you know, we have no hope. I said, what do you mean? He said, well, my daughter never confessed Christ. In fact, she went as far in her strength to openly deny him.

He said, while she was ill, I would sit at her bedside and plead with her. He said, I was pleading with her right up to the time that she left lost consciousness. He said, what happened after that, I can't tell you.

He said, but I do know. If she died as she was then, she died in her sins. I never felt so helpless in my life.

It's not always easy, you know, to be faithful on occasions like that. No. We like to find some glimmer of hope for broken hearts.

But I want to draw this from it tonight, friend. However you're brought up, however many times you might hear the gospel, if you die without Christ, you die without hope. And there'll be no hope forever.

It will not matter what people say, as they stand at the open grave. That will make no difference. Place it, friend.

You might have Christian parents who prayed for you and shed tears over you. But if you reject the Lord Jesus Christ, you will die without hope. And throughout eternity, they'll not be the slightest glimmer of hope to dispel your darkness, to be without hope.

And that forever. Why? Because you're without Christ. That's what it means.

Without Christ. Without strength, without foundation, without hope. Without hope.

Why? Why are men without Christ? Why do they go on without Christ? How can they come to the knowledge of Him? My friend, men who are without Christ, they're lacking in this one respect. And it's this that makes all the difference. They're without faith.

Without a faith in God, in the Son of God, in the Word of God, in the work of the Lord Jesus. Without faith in His precious blood. Without faith.

In other words, friend, they're unbelievers. The man without Christ is an unbeliever. Christ is received by faith.

He came unto His own. His own received Him not, but to as many as received Him. That's the point.

To as many as received Him. To them gave He power to become the children of God. Listen, even unto them that believe on His name.

You see, it's faith in the Son of God that makes all the difference. And by faith you can accept Him tonight. And you can know Him as your Savior if you trust Him tonight.

If by faith you open your life tonight and say, Lord Jesus, I'm willing to receive you, then the transformation will take place. And what was said latterly about these people will be true of you. These people, they gave attention to the gospel, they believed it.

By faith they received the one whom the gospel presents, the person of the Lord Jesus. And the apostle was able to say, by grace ye are saved. By grace ye are saved.

He doesn't say, now God has had mercy upon you because you know, you weren't so bad after all. He doesn't say that, does He? How many people have told me recently, you know, I'm not very bad, I'm not really a bad woman, I'm not a bad man, you know. My friends, you're a sinner in the sight of God.

We do not like that, do we? But it's true, you know. It's true. Every one of us, we have turned without exception, we have turned every one to his own way.

By nature we're on the wrong way. You see, friend, if you're going to be saved, you'll shut up to the salvation God has provided. The work was completed by the Lord Jesus at Calvary.

This salvation was purchased by His precious blood. It's offered without money, without price. What grace has provided, you by faith can appropriate, and you can say it's mine.

That's what it means here, when the apostle says, by grace are ye saved. God has come out in grace and has provided this wonderful salvation, and those who experience it, they're saved by grace. By grace are ye saved, through faith, through faith, through faith.

And that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. And if you've rested, friend, in your own works, think of these words. It says, not of works, lest any man should boast.

Isn't that clear enough? Not of works, lest any man should boast. I spoke of the man who built his house upon sin, and he could stand back and admire it and say, yes, I designed it. The label has been put into it all my own.

It does me credit. But my friend, you can't go into the presence of God like that, you know. Not of works, lest any man should boast.

The only man who's going to get the glory is the man whose hands, feet, and side were pierced at Calvary. We who believe, we know that he bore our sins in his own body on the tree. And having borne our sins, he's going to bear the glory.

It's going to be his. And all glory is going to have paid to him by grace. Are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves? It is the gift of God.

You see, the apostle knew they were saved. There was no argument about it. He doesn't say, perhaps you're saved.

He says, you are saved. Where was the evidence? In their transformed lives, of course. These people at one time had been idolaters.

No doubt they had joined many a time with the throng who could cry, greatest Diana of the Ephesians. The light of the glorious gospel of Christ shining unto them, and they were saved. There was no doubt about it.

Their transformed lives was the evidence. By grace, ye are saved. My friend, you can have this assurance tonight.

What the grace of God did for those at Ephesus, the grace of God can do for you. It's still the same. And on the same ground, salvation is offered.

Now, will you accept it? Will you take Christ? Will you trust him now?

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