

Building for God

by Walter Wilson

The sermon emphasizes the importance of building a strong foundation in faith through Jesus Christ and actively engaging in spiritual growth and worship.

Duration: 29:30

Scripture: 1 Samuel 8:14, 1 Kings 7:26, 2 Chronicles 4:5, Matthew 6:11

Topics: "Christian Ministry"

Description

In this sermon, Dr. Walter emphasizes the importance of education and studying the word of God. He encourages believers to learn about various aspects of the Bible, such as the seven great judgments, five kinds of forgiveness, and five kinds of kindness. Dr. Walter also highlights the significance of understanding the figures of speech used in the Bible, including comparisons made by Jesus himself. He shares a personal anecdote about a Scottish preacher who advised him to seek spiritual nourishment from heaven before going to bed each night. Additionally, Dr. Walter reflects on his past belief in earning salvation through good works and how he eventually realized the inadequacy of this approach.

Transcript

While our brother was singing that beautiful hymn, I thought of a problem. My sweet mother died 78 years ago, last 6th of July. I went over to see her grave.

She's buried down at Aurora, Indiana. And last week I was over in Cincinnati and a friend drove me over to see the grave. Of course, she isn't there, I know that.

But I wondered if she knew what I was doing. Haven't you often wondered whether the folks can see and know what we're doing? Whether those that have gone on can see and understand? I've often wondered about it. There are three cases that... This has nothing to do with my message, I'll give you that after a while.

But there are three very interesting cases in the scripture. One is the case of Samuel, who was buried in Ramah, but he came up at Endor, 42 miles away. The witch brought him up at Endor, but he was buried at Ramah, 42 miles away.

And when he came back, he knew what was going on on the earth. After four years of being buried, he knew that Saul was at this house where the witch of Endor was. He knew when he was there, he knew

what he was there for, and he told Saul that he was in a fight with the Philistines over at Mount Gilboa, which was 16 miles away from Endor, and he knew his sons were with him, and he knew they were in this barrel, and he knew they were going to die the next day.

How did Samuel know all that if he was sleeping in the grave? He wasn't in the grave anyway, he was 42 miles away from his grave. And he knew what was going on. Then the next case is Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Moses had prayed that he might go over into the Promised Land, and the Lord told him to wait. He waited 1,850 years, and then he got over. He was on this Mount of Transfiguration.

Now, he and Elijah, who didn't die at Saul, but went to heaven without dying, they knew where Jesus was, they knew he was on that mountain, they knew where he was on that mountain, and they talked with Jesus about the coming event at Calvary. How did they know if the dead don't know anything? If the dead don't know what's going on down here, how'd they know that he was there, and where he was on the mountain? For a mountain's a hard place to find anybody. And the third case, the case of Abraham, remember he talked to the rich man, and he said to the rich man in hell, they have Moses, your five brothers, have Moses and the prophets.

Now, how did Abraham know there was any Moses? Moses wasn't born till 500 years after Abraham died, and how did he know there were other prophets? They came along hundreds of years later, and how did he know that Moses had written some books, and that these five brothers had those books in their homes, and that they didn't read them and didn't believe what they said? How'd Abraham know that if the dead don't know anything about what's going on on the earth? I'll just leave you to figure it out for yourself. There are three cases, anyway, that'll give you something to think about. Now, my subject tonight is my favorite subject, about the Lord Jesus.

I love to talk about him. And we read in 1 Corinthians chapter 3, Other foundations can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now, let's remember, beloved, he's the foundation of everything connected with God's word, and God's work, and God's will.

He's the foundation. You have to get down to him. Then over in Jude, the first chapter, at verse 20, we read a very interesting thing.

Building up yourselves on your most holy faith. Building up yourselves on your most holy faith. It's an active work, a difficult work, a constant work, and a very good, rewarding work.

Building up yourselves on your most holy faith. Now, the building, of course, is the most interesting thing. The first thing to do is get rid of the rubbish.

That was my job. I was raised in a church where I was taught to try to do good. And if I did enough good, why, finally, I'd make heaven.

I was taught that. And I tried it. Every Sunday I tried to be good.

I didn't try much during the week. But on Sunday, I sure tried. I was sitting on the front seat of the church, and I put in, I had all my sins numbered.

The kind of sins I liked, I had them numbered. And a price put on them. I had a little notebook, and for a certain sin I only paid a penny, and then others I paid a nickel.

The most expensive sins I committed were thirty-five cent ones. And then, when Sunday would come, either Sunday morning, I'd add up how much I owed the Lord for these sins, and put them in the collection place. I was getting to heaven by my good works.

And then I found out that that didn't work very well. And I had to get rid of that rubbish, and it took me six months from the time I heard the gospel until I cried out, Oh God, if you send me to hell, that's what you ought to do. That's where I belong.

You do the right thing. You sent me to hell. And instantly, soon as I confessed it, the Holy Spirit revealed to me Colossians 2.14. I don't know where I heard it.

I have any idea where I ever heard that verse. Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, he took it out of the way, nailing it to Jesus' cross. And I can see myself now as way back in 1896.

I jumped up off that bench. I was sitting out on a street corner all alone on a bench. I jumped up and I said, God, did you do that for me? Did you blot out my sins and nail them to the cross? Oh, I love you for that.

I love you for that. And I tell you, I walked home on air. I had about two and a half miles to walk home.

For the first time in my life, I found that Christ did something for me. It was wonderful. Well, that was the foundation.

I had to get rid of the rubbish. That's what we do when we lay the foundation. And the foundation, beloved, is Christ Jesus.

Then on that foundation, we have to build something. And what a joy it is to do it. The first thing is, we put a heating plant down in there to keep ourselves warm for God.

Don't you love to see a Christian that's red hot for the Lord? And they call them fanatics. Well, that's right. Thank God for a fanatic.

Some people are fanatics about golf. Some are fanatics about baseball. Some are fanatics about liquor.

Some are fanatics about gossip. There are all kinds of fanatics. Some are fanatics about chess.

And some about cards. That's all right. It's worth going in for.

Whatever's worth doing is worth doing well. Beloved, if you're going to be a fanatic, be one about Jesus Christ. He's worth it.

And I love to see him. And dear Roberson, didn't he make you jump up and down, dear fellow? I tell you, I told him after his first sermon that I heard him many years ago, I said, I don't like you. You upset me.

You make me want to go home and do twice as much as I'm doing. It's a lovely thing to put in a heating plant in this building that you built for God. To keep yourself warm for the Lord.

Not just cold and dry and professional. Somebody said to you, say, yeah, I say 42 years old. Dead as the last year's virgin is.

Beloved, if you want to have a heating plant. And then in this building that we build, we have to have a place to eat. Dining room and a kitchen.

Remember, we send our children to the dining room to be fed, but we send them to the school room to be taught. And they're not the same thing at all. So in the word of God, we study it to get something to eat, and we study it to get something to learn.

So we need both. So in this house we're going to put a dining room. Something to feed on.

Now let me ask you, beloved, what did you get today out of the work for your own heart? I don't mean something to give to Ms. Jones. What did you get for your own heart? What kind of food? Give us this day our daily bread. Something to satisfy the craving of the heart.

Something to make you love the Lord more. You know, beloved, an old Scot preacher said to me one time, Donald Roy, he said, Walter, never lay your head down on your bed at night until you know you've gotten something from heaven for your heart and soul. He told me that when I was 17 years old, and that was a long time ago.

I never forgot it. And sometimes I'd have to go through five or six places in the Bible before I found something. I remember one night it took me an hour and a half going through my Bible to get something from my own heart.

I read this passage and that psalm and some in the New Testament, some in the Old, trying to find something that would satisfy my own heart. And finally, before I went to bed, I had it. Gee, I forget what it was he said to me that night, but it was something lovely.

Beloved, you built a dining room in this house you're building for God so that you can say to the folks, he told me this today. Quite Mary, when she went back to remember, said, I've seen the Lord and he said this to me. Beloved, you figure out now when you're building this house that you're going to have a good kitchen and a good dining room.

And then, of course, we had to have a library so we learned something. The Lord doesn't want us to be an ignoramus. I think I told you once about a friend working for us in our home.

I came home one night and my norman said, Dad, I'm going to get an examination. I'm going to take a civil service examination and get me a better job. And this friend said, what are you going to be examined in? And Norman told us.

And I said to this friend, I said, it's a good thing you and I aren't going to be examined on those subjects, don't you think so? And she said, yes, I don't think we did pass those subjects. No, I said, we never studied those, did we? She said, I didn't. I said, oh, you didn't.

No, I said we didn't. I think the public just knew the truth about you and me. They'd say we were two big ignoramuses, don't you think so? And she looked at me so strangely and said, well, I'll tell you, Dr. Wooler, you might be one of them, but I don't think I've had enough education to be one of them.

That's a good thing to have an education. Learn the Word. Learn about the seven great judgments that are in the Bible.

Learn about the five kinds of forgiveness that are in the Bible. Learn about the five kinds of kindness that are in the Bible. Learn why Israel is compared to dust and to stars and to sand.

Why the Lord Jesus compares himself to an owl and a pelican and a sparrow alone upon the housetop. Learn about these figures of speech that are in Ezekiel. Learn something.

Study your Bible, beloved, because in this house we build, the Lord doesn't want us to be ignorant. He wants us to know, and when we see Him face to face, we'll be so sorry we didn't learn all through eternity. I remember this same old Scot creature, what a man of God he was.

He said, Walter, when you get to heaven, you're going to be a little fusion, a little dwarf, going around about three feet high. And the angels come around and say, what's the matter, Walter? Why are you so little for? And you have to say, well, I didn't have time, Lord, to grow. You see, I was so busy at the Tencent store and shopping and talking over the telephone and washing the car and dusting off the bric-a-brac in the parlor, I didn't have time to grow up.

He said, all through eternity, the angels are going to look at you a little dwarf, and you should have been a great big man. Let's ask our hearts, am I learning something? Am I intelligent in the things of God? And then in this home, too, we want in our library some information. There are so many things to learn, and I'll say to you, if you want your Bible to be interesting, very interesting, look up everything you find.

If you read about a locust, get your book and find out what locusts are like, how they live, how they act, how they make that funny noise. If you read about a spider, why does it say the spider takes hold with her hands and is in King's palaces? Why does it say her hands? Why does it say his hands? Because you never see a male spider. I've never seen one.

I've been looking for one for 45 years. I've never found one yet. They're all female.

All these spiders that spin webs in your garages are females. Then the Bible says, go to the ant house, slugger, consider her ways and be wise. Why does it say her ways? Because you never see a male spider.

A male ant, I mean. You never see one. You see, male ants are uncles.

They're not ants anyway. But the male ants stay down in the ground and do the work, the housework, and take care of the babies. Look up everything you find in your Bible.

Paul said, shall I come give attention to reading? Reading. Not just your Bible, but dozens of things that will help you to be an intelligent Christian. Now, we see through a glass, darkly.

Look up and see how glass is made. How do the grind spectacles anyway? And how do they put the color in a dark glass? Look it up. Read it up.

You'll be surprised, beloved. You won't want to go to bed at all if you start studying your Bible. So in this house that we built, we want a place for learning.

Then we have to have a music room in this house, a place to be a happy Christian. My father, when I started practicing medicine, said, Walter, never take a sad face into the sick room. They've got enough sadness there without you bringing in some more.

And I can't tell you the value that was to me. Go in the sick room with a smile, with a sweet, happy face, if you've got one. Go in to bring some joy and gladness and peace to the folks that are there.

Sing. I remember a patient I had who was a great, big, heavy-set lady named Christine. I called her Teenie for short.

And she called me up one day and asked me to come out. So I came out. I said, Walter, I'm so sick.

Oh, I said, where do you hurt? She said, I don't hurt anywhere, but I just feel so sick. Oh, I've known her since she was a wee little girl. In fact, I had her father's one that brought me the gospel the first time.

And I used to go into their house and carry it around on my back, play piggyback with it. I couldn't do it, of course, then. But I examined her blood.

It was all right. I examined her respiration. It was all right.

I examined her lungs. They were all right. I checked her blood pressure.

It was all right. So I put my instruments back in my satchel, and I said to her, Teenie, when did you sing last? Oh, Walter, I haven't sung for many years. I said, that's the trouble with you.

That's what your sickness is. Now I'm going to give you a prescription, and I want you to carry it out for four days. That was Monday morning.

And Thursday, you phone me and tell me how you're getting on. And if you still feel sick or worse, I'll come out and help you. I said, I want you to take that song, there is sunshine in my soul today, more glorious and bright, than glows in any earthly sky, and sing it clear through right after breakfast, right after dinner, right after supper, and just before you go to bed.

Sing it clear through the chorus and all. She said, I can't sing. I haven't any voice.

I said, probe. God made bullfrogs as well as canary birds. Make some kind of a joyful noise, Lord.

And then, if you still need me on Thursday, I'll come out. Then I want you to gather the children in from the neighborhood. Get some--she didn't have any children herself--and get some scissors, and get these kitties on the parlor floor and cut out dogs and dogs and different things, and then you read them a verse in the Bible about those things, and teach them some little choruses.

Do that every afternoon for four afternoons. She called me up later and said, you don't need to come back. That song did the job.

Now, I'll tell you something. Whenever anybody hurts you, hurts your feelings, you start to sing, there is sunshine in my soul today, more glorious and bright, and you'll go and kiss them. There is springtime in my soul today.

It's a lovely song. I tell you, I don't know any medicine that does so much good for the soul and heart and body as that song. Or pick out another one.

He is so precious to me. But start to sing, and you'll sing the clouds away, as dear brother Brock wrote in that beautiful chorus. So, I have a music group.

Learn to sing. I had a man in business with me. He sat opposite side of the desk, and he didn't know a note of music from a radish.

And so, he would just humming away and humming away. He started out in key of G and ended up in X minor. And he was awful.

And one day I said to him, Milton, I don't know what makes you sing. You can't sing. He said, no, I know, Walter, I can't sing, but I sure can make a joyful noise, and I'm going to do it.

You want that in this house you're building. And then in this house you want a place to rest. You want a bedroom where you can go and lie down and rest.

And so many of God's dear people haven't learned how to rest. Rest while you're working. The dear old washerwoman said, when I sit down and relaxes, I sit down loose like.

Isn't that lovely? Isn't that good philosophy? And we had a dear old washerwoman working for us, a godly, lovely woman. I tell you, she was a real cream of the crop when it came to Christianity. And I said to her one day, how is it you're singing all the time, Jack? And she said, I'll tell you how it is.

I have a little furniture over at the house. I gave it to the Lord. So if it gets burned up, he burned up his own stuff.

He didn't earn up nothing that belonged to me. And then I don't have any money to lose, so I don't have to worry about losing any money. And I have a big, healthy body, and if I get sick, I go to see Jesus, and I ain't going to worry about that because I want to go and see him.

So since I don't have anything to worry about, she said, I just sing all the time. Isn't that philosophy for you? I wonder if we have learned how to rest. And let things happen if they want to.

I was talking to dear Dr. Schaefer one day, Lewis Perry Schaefer. I said, did you ever notice Psalm 46:10 in the Hebrew? No, he said, what is it, Walter? It says, be still and know that I am God, in our version. But the Hebrew version of it is, relax and know that I am God.

Relax and know that I am God. When I told that to dear Brother Schaefer, he said, well, when I relax, I let my shoulders down. Isn't that a sweet way to put it? I wonder how many of us have learned to relax, especially when someone else is driving the car.

And you suddenly wake up to the fact you're all on a quiver and your shoulders are stiff, and you're wondering if you're going to hit that dog or miss that red light. We do that anyway in life. Now, we want a bedroom in this house we're building where we can lie down and rest and let the storm blow.

Who cares? If the house is taken away by the bank, sit on the curbstone. Wait for somebody to come pick you up. If you're going to go blind with cataracts, just smile and say, well, I've seen everything there is to see anyway.

What else is there to see? And if you have to die of a cancer, say, hallelujah, I'm going to go a whole lot sooner than some of my neighbors. See the Lord, be with Him. And if you get an envelope with a little note

in it saying we don't need you anymore and you're 66 years old, you go home and say, well, now, Lord, you said you'd never leave me forsaken, and I'm going to see how you do it.

I'm going to watch and see you do it. It's a wonderful thing, beloved, to rest. Have a resting house.

Then, of course, in this house we're going to have to have a bath. You know there's a difference between a bath and a bath. In the bathroom there are 57 varieties.

All kinds of rags and empty bottles and toothpastings that are done up. And, oh, you know, I don't need to describe it. You have one, probably.

And it's a mess. But a bath, oh, say, I was in one once. There's nothing in there but a take-a-soap the same color as the ceiling and a towel the same color as the soap and nothing else but you.

That's a bath. And I must divert a mention to tell you how I went home to Christ with a bath. I was a guest in her home one night.

I was going to preach in the church there, and they sent me home to her house. She was an elderly lady, about 80, I imagine. And she showed me up to the bedroom and said, Now, this is your bedroom, and I'll show you where the bath is.

So she took me over to the bath. Now, before we went upstairs, we had quite a visit in the parlor, and she told me how good she was. She always entertained the preachers.

She didn't need a savior. The savior is for the women that live down in the North End. She didn't need one.

She told me how good she was, and, boy, she was good, now, I'm telling you. I couldn't get to first base with her. So when I got upstairs, she took me and showed me this bath.

She said, Now, this washcloth is yours, and this towel is yours. And I said, I don't want to use them, lady. You don't? Why not? I said, Well, I want to use whatever you use.

I said, You're so nice, it would be an honor for him to touch me that touches you. That's right. Then I said, I'll tell you what we should do.

You show me which toothbrush is yours, and I want to use that too. She said, Why do you tell me that? I said, Because you're so nice. I would be honored by using anything that you touch.

She said, Look here, you tell me what you're getting at. I said, Go on downstairs, and I'll tell you. We went back down to the parlor, and I showed her how bad she was.

And the Lord Jesus saved her before we went to bed. Sometimes you have to do crazy things. Now we have to have a bath, because there are things we have to get rid of out of our lives.

And we ought to be honest enough to want to get rid of them. We ought to want to get rid of them. We ought to take in the presence of God the things that we know keep us from being what we should be.

Things that hurt other people, and some of God's precious people, are terrible to live with. That's right, I'm telling you. I've been in homes all over this United States, and some of them I wish I never was in.

Christians, the way they talk to each other, the way they treat each other. I was in a home where there were five children, and there was a boy in there about four years old. He was very demanding, wanted to be third person.

But the father waited on me first as a guest. Then he waited on the mother. And then he let this kitty wait because the kitty was so mean.

Then finally, he gave this little boy a nice plate of food. You know what he did with it? He picked it up and threw it on the floor, and stomped on it, and said he wouldn't eat that stuff because he was waiting on last. She said, Now, dearie, you shouldn't act up that way in the presence of company.

Boy, he wouldn't have been able to sit down a week if he'd been in my home. I'm telling you, I believe in the Board of Education on the Seat of Learning. How many times, beloved, we let things come into our lives that we need to get to the bathroom box and have some Sapolio in there.

Oh, no, they don't have that anymore. What is it we have now? Gold dust? No. Well, anyway, something that'll take the hide off and fix ourselves up.

And we know what they are. Our friends tell us, or else our enemies do. And we ought to want to have a bathroom in our home that we're building for our lovely Lord to keep ourselves attractive and clean and lovable.

Then, of course, in this room we have to have an attic, because that's where we put everything that we don't know what else to do with. And so, every box that comes in we put in the attic, and we save the string and the Christmas packages for next Christmas. We put them up in the attic.

And clippings, you know, we save about our own variety. We put them up in the attic until we just have the attic full of trash. Well, it's all right.

We put things up there we're going to use sometime, too. In the summer, we put our winter clothes up there. Now, beloved, you store away things that you know someday you're going to use.

That's a lovely thing to do. When I was studying medicine, I studied leprosy. I never expected to see leprosy.

I never expected to, and I haven't yet seen but one case. This dear girl here has been working among lepers ever since she left our Kansas City Bible College, working among lepers over in Africa. I never expected to, but I learned it because someday the Lord might send me over there.

And if I go, I want to know what to do about it. I learned a lot of peculiar things in medicine that I've never used, but I might. And I've used some things I never thought I would use in the practice of medicine.

Now, the same thing is true in Christianity. Learn everything you can, and stick it away in the backside of your heart and mind, and look to the Holy Spirit to bring it out. Then, in this house we built, we want plenty of light, lots of light.

And, beloved, be a good listener, and notice what you read in your Bible. I was riding out one day from Los Angeles on to a school to give an address outside the city, and when we left, the principal of the high school who was driving, he said, Dr. Wilson, the Old Testament Christians didn't know much about mathematics. I said, give me a sample.

Well, he said, when Solomon built his labor, he said there's 10 cubits across, that's 180 inches, and a line of 30 cubits encompasses it. I said, you know 30 won't go around 10. I said, I know, it takes 3, 14, 16 to go around 10.

But I said, let's read what it said. So, I opened up the verse, he was driving the car, and I opened up the verse, and it said that this labor was 10 cubits across, 180 inches. But it also said there was a crown, a hand-breadth wide around the top of it.

That's 8 inches, 4 inches on each side. So, I took out a pencil and paper, and I wrote down 180 inches, took 8 from, 172, and divided that by 5, and it came out all right. I said, you see, you were measuring the outside, and God was measuring the inside.

Well, I declared, and he shook his hand off that wheel. He said, is that the way I read my Bible? I said, yeah. But he said, there's another thing about that you can't explain so easily.

In one place it says it held 3,000 baths, and in another place it held 2,000 baths. Now, which is right? Well, I said, you read what it says, because you can learn lots of things by reading. So, I turned over the passage and read it.

In Samuel, it said, in Kings, it said it held 3,000 baths. But, in Chronicles, it said it contained 2,000 baths. The first was the capacity, and the second was the content.

And, I thought, he's going to wreck that car. He just shook his hands off the wheel. He said, is that the way I read my Bible? Be careful, beloved, that you read what it says, and don't read something into it that it doesn't say.

And, I say to you, God will enable you to build a building for his glory, and you'll sing hallelujah at the end of the journey. Let it break.

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