

Introduction

In 2014 Karen and I attended a business conference in Vienna, Austria. Afterwards, we took a Mediterranean cruise, and spent three days touring Italy. One of the places we visited was the Leaning Tower of Pisa in Pisa, Italy. The Tower of Pisa was built to be the bell tower for the Pisa Cathedral, which is right beside it. Construction began on August 9, 1173, and the foundations were laid that year. The foundation was only three meters in depth, and it was set in weak, unstable soil. Consequently, the tower began to sink in 1178, and the construction was stopped. After construction resumed, they compensated for the poor foundation, and built up one side higher than the other. The tower was completed in 1372, nearly two hundred years after construction began. Numerous attempts have been made to correct the foundation. The most recent one was finished in 2009. Currently, the Tower of Pisa has a 3.97-degree tilt.

Foundations are critical in construction, and also in our spiritual lives. Unfortunately, many people have not been properly taught and disciplined, and like the Tower of Pisa, the foundations in their lives are not stable. When foundations are bad, the consequences can be disastrous. In Surfside, Florida, a suburb of Miami, the Champlain Towers South collapsed on June 24, 2021. The columns used for the foundation were too small to bear the weight of the tower, and the twelve-story beachfront condominium collapsed, killing 98 people.

For many years Dr. George Barna has been involved in cultural research about the church. He is now the Director of Research at the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University. Their research can be downloaded for free from their website. I took time in December to look at what his most recent findings were, and here are some of the results.

In his most recent report (Report # 11-11-25-2025), he concluded that most Americans say eternal salvation demands a blend of works and grace. Of particular concern are the beliefs that “born-again Christians have regarding salvation. Forty-one percent of them believe that good people can earn their salvation. Thirty-five percent of them believe that there are many viable paths to salvation. They have obviously not read and believed what God spoke to us through Paul, who wrote that we have been saved by grace through faith, and not as a result of works. They have not heard and believed what Jesus said in John 14:6, that He is the way, the truth, and the life, and no one goes to the Father but through Him.

(Eph 2:8–9) “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; {9} not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

(Jn 14:6) “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”

Regarding moral absolutes, sixty-seven percent of Americans now reject moral absolutes. It is not just the general population; it is the predominant view of believers. Sixty-one percent of Protestants reject moral absolutes. Sixty-nine percent of Catholics reject moral absolutes. Fifty percent of those identifying as “born-again” reject moral absolutes. Only thirty-nine percent of regular church-going adults believe that the Bible is the primary moral guide in life. This is a twenty percent drop from 2023.

Since most Americans, including those in the church, have rejected moral absolutes, what are they relying on for moral guidance? Seventy-four percent of Americans rely on their feelings to make moral choices. “The only consideration that a majority of adults trust to discern moral truth

is their feelings.” Only half (54%) of churchgoers believe the Bible is the actual, true word of God, and that it is inspired by God, and has no errors.¹

In regard to abortion, only forty-three percent of church goers are “Pro-Life,” while fifty-seven percent of them believe that abortion is acceptable. Since 2023, the percent of Christians that oppose abortion has decreased from sixty-three percent to forty-three percent.

In regard to the trinity, only sixteen percent of people identifying as Christians believe in the trinity. Of those who are Protestants, the results are not much better, with only twenty percent believing in the trinity. Only nine percent of Catholics believe in the trinity. The highest percent was for those identifying as “born again,” and that was twenty-four percent. That means that seventy-six percent of people identifying as born-again Christians do not believe in the trinity. Consequently, only fifty-five percent of those who are born again say they worship the God of the Bible. Twenty-five percent of them admit to not worshipping Jesus. One third (31%) worship Jesus, but not God. Their beliefs and practices are “inconsistent and biblically untenable.”²

Barna stated, “The worldview known as Syncretism—the blending of elements from multiple worldviews into a customized individual philosophy of life—has dominated the worldview landscape of the United States for several decades.”³ The majority of Christians do not have a Biblical worldview. One of the conclusions that Dr. Barna stated was that “there really is a need to clarify terms and to return to basics to ensure that there is great clarity and mutuality in the beliefs among those who are thought of as the Church.”⁴

As engineers and structural experts examined the collapse of the Champlain Towers, they stated that careful and regular inspections of the foundations are important, especially in areas where buildings are exposed to salt spray, dampness, and other elements. Cracks in the walls, and uneven floors, are just two of the many signs that the foundation of a building is deteriorating and needs to be strengthened. In our spiritual lives, Dr. Barna’s research this past year clearly indicates that good foundations have not been laid in the church, and the foundations that were laid are now severely damaged and in need of remedial work.

Barna concluded, “We need to preach and teach the whole counsel of God, re-ground people in biblical doctrine (the nature of God, sin and salvation, the authority and reliability of Scripture), and then patiently apply that doctrine to contested questions—life, sexuality, marriage, religious liberty, justice, and civic responsibility. Churches that catechize well, model compassionate conviction, and equip parents to disciple at home will be best positioned to reverse these trends.”⁵

David Closson is the Director of the Center for Biblical Worldview at Family Research Council. He found these recent cultural surveys very troubling. Similar to Barna, he concluded, “Pastors and Christian educators must reclaim their calling to ‘equip the saints’ (Eph. 4:12) by teaching a full-orbed biblical worldview. This is not the time for silence or vagueness.”⁶ Pastors and leaders bear a great deal of responsibility in teaching the word of God, the whole counsel of God. They

¹ FRC_CRC_02_Churchgoers-Continue-to-Drift-Away-Biblical-Beliefs-and-Lifestyle_Final.pdf, page 6

² CRC-Release-AWVI-1-Feb-18-2025-Final.pdf, page 8.

³ CRC-Release-AWVI-1-Feb-18-2025-Final.pdf, page 1.

⁴ CRC-Release-AWVI-1-Feb-18-2025-Final.pdf, page 9.

⁵ EF25J65.pdf, page 25

⁶ FRC_CRC_Report-1-Churchgoers-Ambivalent-about-Family-and-Abortion_Barna.pdf, page 6

must help lay foundations, rebuild foundations, and help the church develop a biblical worldview. They need to address and confront the syncretism with the truth of God's word.

In Psalm 11:3, David wrote, "If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?" Barna and Closson are correct; we must teach the whole counsel of God. In particular, we need to strengthen the foundations in the church. In our message today, we are going to look at two of the most important foundations, the foundation of Christ, and the foundation of God's word.

(Ps 11:3) "If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

Strengthening the Foundations

1. The Foundation of Christ
2. The Foundation of God's Word

1. The Foundation of Christ

In 1 Corinthians 3:10-11, Paul tells them that he laid a foundation and another is building on it. The other person he is referring to is Apollos. He had said that he planted and Apollos watered. People in the church were taking sides and some identified with Apollos and some with Paul. He tells them that they are just servants to whom God gave an opportunity. It was God who was causing the growth. Next, Paul tells them that he laid a foundation, and another is building on that foundation. He cautions us to build carefully on the foundation. What is the foundation? Paul tells us, "For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. The foundation of the church is Jesus Christ. I cannot think of a single doctrine that is more essential than the foundation of Christ.

(1 Co 3:10-11) "According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. {11} For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

In Matthew 16, Jesus asked His disciples, "who do people say that the Son of Man is?" They answered that some say He was John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others said He was Jeremiah or one of the prophets.

(Mt 16:13-14) "Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" {14} And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets."

Then, Jesus gets more personal. He asks them who they think He is. Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus responds back to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church..."

(Mt 16:15-18) "He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" {16} Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." {17} And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. {18} I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it."

I had a neighbor next door in Orlando, Florida who was a pastor of a church. The foundation of their church was prophecy, and they emphasized prophecy. They used this verse in Matthew 16 to say that the church would be built on revelation. They missed the point. The church would be built on Christ. God the Father revealed to Peter that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God. Prophecy and revelation are not the foundation of the church. Christ is the foundation of the church and it is being built on the revelation of who Christ is. I believe in prophecy. I earnestly desire the greater gifts, and prophecy is one of those greater gifts. We welcome prophecy, but prophecy is not the foundation of the church. Christ is the foundation of the church.

The Catholic church uses this passage to say that the foundation was Peter, the first pope. The current Catholic Pope, Leo XIV, is their 267th pope. The Catholic church believes that the final authority on all matters of doctrine and practice is the pope. They have missed it; Peter was not the cornerstone, and the pope is not a cornerstone. Christ is the foundation of the church.

Isaiah prophesied about this rock and foundation. The Lord God said, "behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly place. He who believes in it will not be disturbed." The KJV says that he who believes shall not make haste, which means that those who have built their lives on the precious cornerstone will not be alarmed, shaken, and flee when trouble comes. They are secure because they have built their lives on this costly cornerstone. Christ is this precious, costly cornerstone, and we must place our faith and our trust in Him.

(Is 28:16) "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed."

(Is 28:16 KJV) "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, 'Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner *stone*, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.'"

Peter also quotes Isaiah and expounds on the application of the verse: we must believe and accept this rock.

(1 Pet 2:6-8) "For this is contained in Scripture: "BEHOLD I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER stone, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM SHALL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." {7} This precious value, then, is for you who believe. But for those who disbelieve, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER stone," {8} and, "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed."

Therefore, this rock that Jesus refers to is not revelation as my neighbor thought. And, this rock is not Peter, as the Catholic church believes. This rock or foundation is Jesus Christ. The revelation that Peter had was that Jesus was the Messiah or Christ. This is exactly what Paul is saying in 1 Corinthians 3, that the only foundation is Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is the foundation of our individual lives and He is the foundation of the church, the assembly of the individual believers. When the foundation of our faith is in Christ, we can stand up in all the storms. Jesus said that there is a foundation that He has laid that all the forces in hell

cannot come against. It is a solid foundation. It is a sure foundation. It is a tried stone, a precious cornerstone.

It is important to know who Jesus is, and who we are placing our faith in. Some of the forces that try to come against this foundation come in the way of false religions and cults. The early church in the New Testament had a problem with people attacking the identity of Christ. In Paul's letter to the Colossians, he warns them against being taken captive or deceived about Christ. He makes it very clear that Jesus is God. He says, "for in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority." While Barna's survey indicates that the majority of people reject the trinity, the Bible is very clear. The fullness of deity dwelt in Jesus in bodily form.

(Col 2:8-10) "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. {9} For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, {10} and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;"

Some, like the Muslims, say that Jesus was a good man, or a prophet. Christ is not just a prophet; He is God. He is not just a good man who came 2,000 years ago. Jesus is God in the flesh, Immanuel. Isaiah prophesied that Jesus would be born, and that "His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace." Jesus is the eternal Father, even though He was given to us as a Son. The deity of Christ is a foundational teaching. It is an essential doctrine of the Christian faith.

(Is 9:6) "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace."

Some of the cults, like the Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses, agree that Jesus is the Son of God, but do not accept that He is God, and that He and the Father are one. In this prophecy, Isaiah calls Jesus, "Eternal Father." He and the Father were one. As we looked at what Paul said in Colossians, "the fullness of deity dwelt in Him in bodily form." Jesus was fully God who had come in the flesh.

In John 14, Jesus tells His disciples that since they know Him, they know the Father. He said if you have seen Me, you have seen the Father. He said the He is in the Father, and the Father is in Him.

(Jn 14:7-10a) "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him." {8} Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." {9} Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? {10} "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me..."

In John 10, Jesus said that He and the Father were one. The Jews picked up stones to stone Him. He asked them for what good works were they stoning Him. They answered that it was not for His good works, but it was because He said that He was God. Jesus was very clear that He and the Father were one.

(Jn 10:30-33) "I and the Father are one." {31} The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him. {32} Jesus answered them, "I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?" {33} The Jews answered Him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God."

In John 1, John the Baptist tells us that Jesus existed before him, even though in the natural, John was born six months earlier. Jesus existed in the very beginning. He is the Eternal Father.

(Jn 1:30) "This is He on behalf of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'"

About fifteen years ago, we were planting a church in New Mexico. One of our regulars invited a tenant of his to come, and this very nice couple began attending. I sat next to them at our potluck supper, and as we dialogued, I discerned that they were involved in a cult called "The Way." So, I asked them if they were involved in The Way, and they affirmed what I had sensed in the Spirit. The Way is another cult, and they do not accept the deity of Christ or the deity of the Holy Spirit. They reject the trinitarian view of God. I explained to them that we believe in the trinity, and that any teaching to the contrary would not be tolerated. I told them they were welcome to come and learn, but not welcome to spread their false doctrine about the trinity.

John began his gospel account by stating that in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being."

(Jn 1:1-3) "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. {2} He was in the beginning with God. {3} All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being."

Paul also wrote that Jesus is the Creator. In Paul's defense of who Christ is, he wrote, for by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things have been created through Him and for Him."

(Col 1:16) "For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him."

In both of these accounts, John and Paul are writing about creation. We find in Genesis 1 that "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Well, who created it? Did God create it or did Jesus create everything, as John and Paul both write? The answer is that God did create everything that was created, and Christ created everything that was created. Jesus is God, and so both are true. The trinity is made up of God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit. All three are God. In this passage in Genesis, the word for God is Elohim, which is the plural of El, which means God. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were all involved in creation. As we read verse two, we find that "the Spirit of God is moving over the surface of the waters." All three were actively involved.

(Ge 1:1-2) "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. {2} The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters."

In the book of Acts we find the account of Ananias and Sapphira. Ananias lied about the amount of money that they received from the sale of their land. He and his wife kept back some of it for themselves, but said they gave the whole amount. Peter, under the leading of the Holy Spirit, asked why he had lied to the Holy Spirit. Then, in the next verse, he says, “you have not lied to men, but to God.” When you lie to the Holy Spirit, you lie to God, because they are one and the same. The trinity is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

(Ac 5:1-4) “But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, {2} and kept back some of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet. {3} But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land? {4} "While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.”

I have given you some examples of what some false religions and cults say about Jesus. Notice what John says in 1 John 2:22. He says the liar is the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ. This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. One of the ways that John gives us to discern the true from the false is what they say about Jesus.

(1 Jn 2:22) “Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.”

Later on in 1 John 4, he tells us to test the spirits to see whether they are from God. We are not to believe every Spirit; we must test them. What is the test? The test is what they say about Jesus. If they confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is true.

(1 Jn 4:1-3) “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. {2} By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; {3} and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; and this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.”

Jesus is the Cornerstone. He is the foundation stone that we must build our lives upon. It is important that we know that Jesus is Immanuel, God in the flesh. It is important to know that He is the Creator and all things came into being through Him. It is important to know that Jesus is the third member of the trinity. These are foundational truths that we need to know.

2. The Foundation of God's Word

The second essential that I want us to look at this morning is the foundation of God's Word. In Matthew 7, we have the very familiar story of the wise man who built his house on the rock and the foolish man that built his house upon the sand. When the rains came down and the floods came, the house on the sand fell flat, but the house built on the solid foundation of the rock stood firm.

What was that solid foundation? Jesus said that His words are the solid rock that we must hear and act upon. The foolish did not listen to God's words and act upon them. We must build our lives on the Word of God. We must build our church on the Word of God. The foundation of God's word is an essential doctrine.

(Mt 7:24-27) “Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. {25} And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. {26} Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. {27} The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.”

Several years ago, I had to confront a couple of families that were coming to our church. They wanted to join, but they disagreed with our church doctrinal statement, which states: “The Bible, both the Old and New Testaments, is God’s verbally inspired (God-breathed) word to all. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. The scriptures are inspired by God, and are the revelation of God to man. They are infallible and inerrant in the original manuscripts. They are the unique, full and final authority on all matters of theology, morality, faith and practice, and there are no other writings similarly inspired by God.” These two families said that we are in error by saying that God’s word is the final authority in matters of faith and practice. They said that Yahweh is the final authority. We must obey the voice of Yahweh and not the Scriptures. If Yahweh tells you to do something, you must obey Yahweh. There are numerous problems with that theology. First and foremost, it contradicts what God says about the Scriptures. Let’s take a look at what the Scriptures say.

In Peter’s second letter, which he wrote to combat false teachers, he wrote that “no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” God revealed His Word to us through men, who were moved and inspired by the Holy Spirit.

(2 Pe 1:20-21) “But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, {21} for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”

In 2 Timothy Paul writes that “all Scripture is inspired by God...” The Greek word for inspired is theopneustos. Theo is the Greek word for God and pneo means to blow. Pneuma is the word for Spirit or breath. Theopneustos means God-breathed or inspired. Men were moved by the Holy Spirit and wrote the Scriptures.

(2 Ti 3:16-17) “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; {17} so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

Paul goes on to say that “all Scripture is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.” We base our teaching or doctrine on the Scriptures. It is profitable for teaching. We base all reproof on the Scriptures. How do we know when we have gone astray? We know by looking at the Word of God. We use it for reproof. Scripture is profitable for correction. The Scriptures help us find our way back God and His ways; they correct our attitudes and behavior. The Scriptures are to be used for all training in righteousness so that we are adequate and equipped for every good work. That is why we say that the Scriptures are our final authority for all matters of doctrine and practice. This is an essential doctrine in the church.

The two families that we met with would not accept this essential doctrine. If they had been open to changing their position, they could have stayed. However, they said that Yahweh had sent

them to us to bring correction to our theology. They were going to teach their false doctrine to as many people as possible in our congregation, which we could not allow. As overseers that God had charged with watching over the flock, we had to ask them to leave since they were not open to changing their position on the Word of God, and intended to teach others their view.

In 1 Thessalonians 2:13, Paul wrote, “For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.” The Scriptures are not just words of men. The Scriptures are the word of God, and it performs its work in our lives. At our church, we accept the Scriptures for what it really is, the Word of God. It is an essential doctrine.

(1 Th 2:13) “For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.”

The Word of God performs its work in us because it is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword. It is piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. When we meditate on His word, it becomes active in our lives. It helps us separate our thoughts from God’s thoughts. It helps us discern God’s will from our own will. It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

(He 4:12) “For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

Conclusion and Applications

This morning we have looked at two essential and foundational teachings. The first foundation is that Jesus is the Cornerstone. He is the stone that we must accept and build our lives upon. It is essential that we know who Jesus is. He is the Son of God, the third member of the trinity, and that the fullness of deity dwelt in Him in bodily form. He is the Word and the Creator, and all things were created by Him.

We saw in 1 Peter 2:6-8 that there are two decisions that can be made about this corner stone. Those who receive and accept this stone will not be disappointed. They receive salvation and become living stones. However, those who reject the stone stumble and are disobedient to the word and are appointed to doom. Believing in Christ and receiving Him is our only hope of salvation. The first application is that we must believe in Jesus for salvation. We must place our trust in Jesus, and build our lives upon Him, the cornerstone. He is the only way for salvation; there are not many ways to heaven.

(1 Pe 2:6–8) “For *this* is contained in Scripture: “Behold, I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner *stone*, and he who believes in Him will not be disappointed.” {7} This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, “the stone which the builders rejected, this became the very corner *stone*,” {8} and, “a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense”; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this *doom* they were also appointed.”

Luke writes in Acts 4:12 that “there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”

(As 4:12) “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”

Jesus said in John 14:6, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” Jesus is the only way to have a relationship with God. He is the only way to have eternal life. There are not multiple paths to salvation as most people in the church believe. Jesus is the only way; there is salvation in no other.

(Jn 14:6) “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”

We also see in Ephesians 2:8-9 that our salvation is by the grace of God through faith, not as a result of works. We cannot earn our way to heaven; we must believe in Jesus and receive Him as our Lord and Savior. We must receive His finished work on the cross, where He paid the debt for our sins. There is nothing that we can do to take away our sins; we must be forgiven by God, and that forgiveness is only available through Jesus, who paid for our sins on the cross.

(Eph 2:8–9) “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; {9} not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

This morning, where do you stand with the cornerstone? Have you accepted Jesus as the Corner stone? If you have never received Christ into your life, and you would like to do that, I want to give you a chance this morning. If you believe that Jesus came and died for our sins, and was raised from the dead, you can receive Him by faith by simply praying something like this.

Jesus, I believe that You are the Son of God. I believe that You came, born of a virgin, lived a perfect life, and died to pay for our sins. I believe that on the third day You were raised from the dead. I want to receive You as my Lord and Savior. I ask You to come into my life today. I confess You as my Lord, and I yield my life to You. I ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

The second foundation that we looked at this morning is the authority of the Scriptures. We must build our lives upon the word of God. Those that build their lives on the word of God are likened to the wise man that built his house on the rock. When the storms of life come against us, those that have built their lives on the word are stable and secure; they can withstand the storms.

Barna has shown that most people in the church, including leaders, do not have a Biblical Worldview, but a Syncretic Worldview. We must accept the Bible as the source of all of our doctrine, decisions, and practices. We need to know the word of God. Jesus said that if we continue in His word, then we are truly His disciples. We must abide, dwell, and continue in God’s word.

(Jn 8:31–32) “So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; {32} and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”

Our second application is to make a commitment to consistently spend time in God’s word. I challenge you to spend time every day reading and meditating on God’s word. Choose a daily

Bible reading plan. There are lots of plans available. At our church website, www.connectionchurch.org, there are a number of reading plans under Connection Tools. Find one, and make a commitment to fill your heart and mind with God's word this year. This will help you develop a Biblical Worldview.

Our third application is to be part of a community of believers, i.e., the church. In Hebrews 3:13, saints are exhorted to encourage one another daily so that we do not fall away from the living God. Our foundations can become weakened when we are not in regular fellowship.

(Heb 3:12–13) “Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. {13} But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is *still* called “Today,” so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”

In a community of believers, you also have pastors or elders to regularly teach and admonish you. As Barna and Closson both concluded, we need pastors to preach the whole counsel of God. Spiritual leaders need to lay good foundations, and strengthen the foundations that are weak. We need teaching to lay good foundations and admonishment when those foundations are exposed to potentially damaging conditions. Paul worked hard, striving and agonizing to present every man complete, and we need leaders like Paul, who strive to help people grow and become mature in Christ.

(Col 1:28–29) “We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. {29} For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.”

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for sending Jesus to die for our sins. Jesus, thank You for coming in the flesh and dying for our sins. Thank You for providing a way for our sins to be forgiven, and reconciling us to the Father. Thank You for giving us Your word. I pray that we will abide in Your word. I pray that we will stand on Your word, and build our lives upon Your word. Help us not to be conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Help us to accept Your word for what it really is, the word of God. I pray for Your word to perform its work in us that believe this year. I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Discussion Questions

- When is the best time to lay foundations in a person's life?
- What are some of the best ways to lay foundations in people? Is the preaching on Sunday enough on its own? Is a combination of methods the most effective way?
- Why is the preaching of the whole counsel of God so vitally important?
- Statistically, nearly 95% of sermons today are topical messages. Is it more or less likely for the whole counsel of God to be preached through topical messages?

- The Southern Baptist Association has stated that one of the signs of a healthy church is expository preaching. Do you agree with this metric?
- Why do you think that so many people believe that there are many ways to reach heaven? Has the church been negligent to preach a biblically sound gospel message? How do correct this false notion about salvation?
- Feelings are important, and God gave us feelings. Why are feelings not a good way to make decisions about moral absolutes?
- What are some safeguards that we should have in our life and church to help us stay on solid ground?

Strengthening the Foundations

Introduction (Eph 2:8–9, Jn 14:6, Ps 11:3)

1. The Foundation of Christ (1 Co 3:10-11, Mt 16:13-18, Is 28:16, 1 Pe 2:6-8, Col 2:8-10, Is 9:6, Jn 14:7-10, 10:30-33, 1:30, 1:1-3, Col 1:16, Ge 1:1-2, Ac 5:1-4, 1 Jn 2:22, 4:1-3)

2. The Foundation of God's Word (Mt 7:24-27, 2 Pe 1:20-21, 2 Ti 3:16-17, 1 Th 2:13, He 4:12)

Conclusion and Applications (1 Pe 2:6–8, Ac 4:12, Jn 14:6, Eph 2:8–9, Jn 8:31–32, He 3:12-13, Col 1:28-29)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.