

Life's Foundation

Title

Mark 10:15

Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it."

Little children exist in a world of uncluttered simplicity. And it is that single characteristic that should be the hallmark of any Christian life.

To receive the Kingdom of God wholeheartedly. No strings attached. Taken just as it's given, and at face value.

And it's almost paradoxical that this is an especially important principle for those of us who have a few years under our belt.

The thing is, the older you get, the smaller the percentage of life that you have left to work with.

Thankfully, God does some of His best stuff during the sunset years of a person's life.

But if you want to keep growing as a Christian, you need to consciously set aside most thoughts of regret. Because regrets have a way of clouding the future.

That's not to say that regrets are always a bad thing. They can serve as a powerful motivator to correct your course.

But let's face it—at a certain point in our life on, regrets are harder to deal with, simply because your options for dealing with them keep getting narrower.

When you are younger, if plan A doesn't work out, there's always plan B. Or C. You

know, get a different job. Move to a new town. Go back to school. And so on.

But by middle age or later, there's a lot less time to fix certain things that need fixing. And the odds of seeing your hopes fulfilled get longer all the time.

Regrets will weigh so heavily upon some people that it immobilizes them.

So here are some thoughts to begin with. Just a few things to help you get past your regrets when they seem too big to deal with. Here are several things that it's never too late for.

- It's never too late to change your mind.
- It's never too late to obey God.
- It's never too late to do what you can.
- And it's never too late for God to do something substantial in you and through you.

And may I suggest that the only arena in which these things are always true is the arena of faith.

Because God can do a lot when people will set regrets aside in order to use their faith.

OK, let's get down to brass tacks. We want to approach life with a faith in God that is based solidly on His Word.

Matthew 7:24-27

24 Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:
25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

26 “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand:

27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”

It had never occurred to me until recently. But The builders in the parable? They did not build the foundations spoken of here.

The houses were built on already-existing foundations. That is a key component of the lesson being placed in front of us this morning.

None of us here this morning can really take credit for the actual foundation that our life is built on. Whatever credit or blame we merit has only to do with the choice of which foundation we build on.

That foundation of your life—whatever it might be—was handed off to you.

In general, the foundation of a person’s life begins with their parents or whoever it was that raised them. Their attitudes, their standards, and their way of doing life is what gets a person off to a start.

As they grow older, they may reject a great deal of their early foundation, depending on the circumstances of their life. But the foundation is constantly getting added to, through the attitudes and examples of our friends, acquaintances, and people they admire.

And we must never forget that the culture we live in contributes significantly to our foundation. Things are absorbed from the general social atmosphere of our community, at school and in the workplace.

And by simple observation we are able to tell that some people’s foundations are more functional than others. I’m speaking of Christians and non-Christians alike. Life just works better with a good, functional foundation.

You see, the fact of the matter is that when a person’s foundation is accidentally based on Biblical principles, those principles will work well, even if they are embraced by a non-believer. Things like a loving and stable home life. Coupled with a sense of accountability to the family unit, all of this is a huge advantage.

In addition, the embracing of some basic values will be immensely helpful: such as a commitment to behaving responsibly, to embrace a solid work ethic, and the setting of well-defined realistic goals.

Christian or not, these things go a long way towards making life work better.

That is all in the natural realm. But I must hasten to add that no matter how impressive a person’s foundation might be in the natural, without a working spiritual relationship with Christ and His Word, their foundation—even though it mimics many of the principles found in Scripture—their foundation is still one of sand.

Because ultimately such a foundation will fail in the area that matters most. The area of eternal salvation. And as Jesus said,

“What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?”

So for the most part, that’s what we will concern ourselves with this morning. We’ll examine the house built on the rock.

That house symbolizes that which is of ultimate importance in a Christian's life. So the big question is this:

“Is your life built on the rock of God's truth?”

I noticed something interesting about this parable. There is a distinct absence of details regarding the structure of the house. You know—one story or two? Built of wood or stone or bricks? Solar panels or not?

And the guys in particular would want to know: Did it come with a one chariot garage or two?

No details at all. Only the nature of the foundation was addressed.

But this is not an oversight. I think the lack of detail is on purpose.

When it comes to ***most*** of the details of your life, God leaves that up to you. That is how things are supposed to work. Of course, we always have it in the back of our mind that God is in ultimate control.

The Apostle James addressed the need for that mindset in no uncertain terms.

James 4:13-15

13 Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit”;

14 whereas you do not know what *will* happen tomorrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.

15 Instead you *ought* to say, “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.”

So we try and keep that attitude always running in the background. But along with that, God still expects us to make our own decisions, and usually without much interference on His part.

And not just the little decisions, like where to go to lunch after church. The big, important decisions with major ramifications for generations to come, fall under the heading of decisions we are personally responsible to figure out.

Now I understand that this is a view of God that differs dramatically from what some folks say. But from the Biblical record, when it comes to the details of our lives, God does not appear to be a micro-manager.

No doubt you have known some micro-managers in your life. It could be that you are a micro-manager yourself. If you are, just keep staring straight ahead, and no one will suspect.

Some people think that is what God is like. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Yes, He is sovereign. He is without question in absolute control of the whole universe.

But God did not create humans as a race of robots who just follow the programming he puts in them and nothing beyond that.

No. God placed a fountain of creativity within each one of us, something bubbling up from deep inside that is a reflection of His own wildly imaginative mind.

For instance, He brought all the animals to Adam at the beginning. And why was that?

“To see what he would call them.”
(Genesis 2:19)

Yes, God knows the end from the beginning. But He has the capacity to enjoy the moment as it unfolds, even with His omniscience. And He takes pleasure in watching us live in real time. In the moment.

Guess what? God has placed a life in front of you to see what you will do with it. That's a fact.

So this is very biblical. From God's perspective, you are absolutely free to build a life of your own choosing. Build it however you want. Follow your dreams, or sit like a lump, or something in between. You get to build your life however it suits you.

But if you want life to work the way it's supposed to, you have to get one simple detail right—you must build your life on the rock of God's truth.

And in that regard, the Lord is delighted to partner with you as your counselor and your guide. He will be these things to you, if you will follow the instructions that Jesus gives in this parable.

I know people who believe in Christ in a general way, but they resist committing their life to Him. They view His commands and His counsel for living as optional.

So for these folks, their conception of Jesus is something on the order of a cross between a warm teddy bear and an insurance policy.

They will always revert to their faith in times of crisis. But in between crises, Jesus fades into the background, and has very little practical effect on how they live.

And when it comes to the structure of their lives, it's clear that their foundation is nothing but sand.

Now let me say it again: we get to build our life any old way we want to. God gives us the freedom to do that.

So go for the gusto and chase your dreams. Climb the corporate ladder. Get married or stay single. Whatever works for you. Have lots of kids or no kids at all. Get a degree, or learn a trade. Start a business, or work for the government.

Live in California or Timbuktu, or catch a freighter to Panama.

God gives you the freedom to make your plans and do all of those things in the way that seems best to you. It's all up for grabs. The world is your oyster. You get to make all of those kinds of decisions.

And if you make a bad decision in that regard, God won't hold it against you. The Bible is full of people who made bad decisions and lived to tell the tale, and remained a man or woman of faith.

That's the way life is designed. You get to build the house. But you'd better be sure you are on the right foundation. That's all Jesus was saying.

The proper foundation will stand the test of time. It will hold up under the pressure.

There is trouble out there that each one of us has to go through. But if you've built your life on the Rock, you will weather those storms, endure those trials, and come through those seasons of testing.

And when the dust settles, you will be at peace, filled with a joy that this world can't take away.

It's a pretty simple life when you get down to it.

Matthew 7:24

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

Now let me address something that I mentioned at the beginning. Some of us have a larger percentage of our lives behind us than we do ahead of us.

And so for those who are in the latter stages of this earthly life, there can be an undercurrent of defeat or hopelessness when it comes to this topic.

Especially if you realize that for much of your life you were building on a foundation of sand.

And you could say, ***"I've done so many things the wrong way. If I could live my life over again, I'd make sure to not make the same mistakes. But there's just too much for fixing now. What's the use in trying?"***

And I'll tell you something: That attitude afflicts people at a much younger age these days than it used to. It's not just for us old folks anymore.

Well, I'm here to tell you that Jesus can take your life just as it is today, and give you a second chance at building your life on a solid foundation. Allow me to explain.

Even if you have built your life for decades on values and principles that don't line up with God's Word, all is not lost.

You see, there are two approaches that the Lord can take in dealing with this problem of the wrong foundation in a life.

The first approach is to move in the demolition crew. Sometimes, that's called for.

Because a life has gone so far off the rails that the only sensible thing to do is walk away and start over from scratch.

That's one approach. But truth be told, that approach is usually unnecessary. It is much more likely that an alternative approach will be employed.

Instead of tearing it all down and starting from scratch, Jesus will simply take a life off of a sandy foundation, and move it over to the solid Rock of His Word. Even if it's an older house.

This works if your house is relatively new, or if it is old. It's just getting relocated.

And here is how it works. You still live a normal life. You still get to make all kinds of decisions. You still have the freedom to say "yes" or "no" to whatever comes your way. Just like you always have.

But now there is a difference. You are beginning to see things from God's vantage point. That's what happens when all of the details of your life have been moved to rest on the solid foundation of the Word of God.

You have invited Christ to help you realign your life in this way. Nothing gets left on the sand.

So you will approach decisions differently. Now, it's not only, "***What do I want?***" Or, "***What do we want?***" Now it's also "***What lines up with the principles and commands of Your Word, Lord?***"

It's a very simple thing to initiate. It's basically the daily outworking of our initial commitment to Christ that involved both repentance and faith.

You see, the project of building your life on the proper foundation is an ongoing proposition. Even after the house has been moved onto the proper foundation, there will be need for adjustments in the house itself. Adjustments in our lives.

A solid foundation. And some good old-fashioned remodeling will always be going on. A fair amount of work is involved, but the payoff is tremendous.

So right now, let's take a few minutes to think this through. Can't think of a better time than this. After all, we are on the threshold of a new year.

If you haven't specifically made the commitment for your entire life to be set upon the Solid Rock of God's Word, consider this your invitation to take that step.

You can do it in your own way, with your own words, right where you sit. Or later today.

Just get it done.