

026 - Built on the Foundation - Ephesians 2:20 - 2014-11-23

Call to Worship: Psalm 118:28-29

Scripture Reading: Psalm 118:19-26

Sermon: "Built on the Foundation" Ephesians 2:20

Benediction: Psalm 118:14

INTRODUCTION

Last week we learned together two ways to understand ourselves as one new man in Christ Jesus, considered corporately, as the body of Christ, God's church. The first was that no longer are some of us citizens and some of us aliens or foreigners, but now all who are in Christ are fellow citizens of the kingdom of God. The second was that no longer are some of us strangers and some of us members of the household, but now all who are in Christ are members of the household of faith.

Today we come to the third way to understand ourselves, God's church, as one new man in Christ Jesus, and it is this: **No longer are some of us allowed to worship in the temple of God, while others of us are shut out of the temple; now all of us who are in Christ are ourselves God's temple, built on the foundation of Jesus Christ Himself.**

TEXT

Ephesians 2:20-22

BODY

No longer are some of us allowed to worship in the temple of God, while others of us are shut out of the temple; now all of us who are in Christ are ourselves God's temple, built on the foundation of Jesus Christ Himself.

- I. Think of the old testament promise that forms the background for this; this material is not mentioned here in Ephesians, but it is prominent in the old testament scriptures and elsewhere in the new testament scriptures
 - A. the gentiles, foreigners to Israel, previously were shut out of the temple
 1. certain foreigners could never enter the temple even after being circumcised---*Deuteronomy 23:3 "An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of the LORD forever,*
 2. certain other foreigners could not enter the temple until the third generation after being circumcised---*Deuteronomy 23:7-8 "You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother. You shall not abhor an*

Egyptian, because you were an alien in his land. (8) The children of the third generation born to them may enter the assembly of the LORD.

3. foreigners who remained uncircumcised gentiles most certainly could not enter the temple under penalty of death
 - B. the gentiles, shut out of the temple in the years of the old covenant, had been promised that in new covenant days they could enter the temple *Isaiah 56:3a, 7 Do not let the son of the foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD speak, saying, "The LORD has utterly separated me from His people" . . . (7) Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer. . . . for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.*
 - C. so the apostle here tells us how that promise has been fulfilled in Christ Jesus, in a way better than we gentiles, we foreigners could possibly have know to hope for; not only have we been allowed to worship God in His temple, but we, joined with all the saints, are ourselves being built into a new temple for God
- II. Think also of the old covenant sentiment of the righteous that also forms the background for this:
- A. to us, a temple nothing important; it is just a curiosity to us to see the ruins of the ancient temples;
 - B. the tabernacle and the temple are important places in the bible, but we do not feel any real connection to them; we don't feel any sort of longing or desire to be in the tabernacle or the temple
 - C. but the righteous, the faithful, the saints of the old testament days loved to go to the tabernacle or the temple, and longed just to stay there, to remain there praising the Lord all the time
Psalm 84:1-2, 4 How lovely is Your tabernacle, O LORD of hosts! (2) My soul longs, yes, even faints For the courts of the LORD; My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. (4) Blessed are those who dwell in Your house; They will still be praising You.
 - D. so here the apostle tells us that those who love worshiping the Lord need not long for those days of pilgrimage when they may go up to the temple; they, along with all God's saints, may live in God's temple; but more than that, they are themselves being built into a new temple for God!
- III. See an overview of the elements that make up this metaphor; I hope we get to study each of these in more detail in the coming weeks
- A. a foundation has been laid, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself (20)
 - B. on that foundation, you are being built together into a building (21a, 22a)
 - C. you are being built together into a building that is the temple of God (21b, 22b)
- IV. See more closely the first part of the metaphor: the foundation that has been laid
- A. What it is
 1. the foundation is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself
 2. Paul says this two slightly different ways; comparing them helps us understand what is meant by each; one is here, and one is in 1 Corinthians; he uses the same words and he is describing the same

thing; but he is addressing two different issues, so he doesn't say exactly the same thing; think how much more helpful it is to understanding someone than just one statement, or one statement repeated;

a) here it is said in this way: Jesus Christ's apostles and prophets are the stones of the foundation, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone

(1) obj: it may not seem fitting for the foundation to have such a strong cornerstone, while the rest of the stones are such weak, cracked, crumbly stones as mere men must be

(2) ans: but the apostles are said to be the foundation not in reference to them personally, but only inasmuch as they were chosen by Christ and inspired by His Spirit to speak and write the glorious truths by which the Lord Jesus Christ is known

(3) there is no need to be shy about this idea of the apostles and prophets being part of the foundation of God's church, because it is described that way again in *Revelation Revelation 21:14 Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*

b) the other place Paul gives this same doctrine, he says it this way: there can be no other foundation than Jesus Christ; see with me 1 Corinthians 3:9-11

3. So, if you look at the foundation as a whole, you are seeing a foundation that is Jesus Christ Himself; if you look closely at it to see its parts, you see that the foundation is the apostles and prophets in their role as the preachers of Christ, with Jesus Christ Himself as the chief cornerstone

B. How it has been laid

1. In one sense, God, Jehovah has laid down Jesus Christ as this stone for the foundation

a) Mr. Sterzer read this earlier from Psalm 118; Jesus quoted it in reference to Himself, Matthew 21:42 'THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED HAS BECOME THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE. THIS WAS THE LORD'S DOING'

b) He laid Jesus Christ as the chief cornerstone of the foundation by raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in heaven (Henry on Acts 4:11)

(1) Acts 4:10-12 let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole.

(11) This is the 'STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED BY YOU BUILDERS, WHICH HAS BECOME THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE.' (12) Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

2. In another sense, the apostles and prophets have laid down Jesus Christ as this stone for the foundation
 - a) 1 Cor 3:9 Paul says of himself, (9) According to the grace of God which was given to me [meaning Jesus choosing him as an apostle], as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation . . . (11) no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ
3. These two senses are reconciled this way: God has, in fact, laid down Jesus Christ as the foundation; the apostles have, in message, in preaching, in doctrine laid down Jesus Christ as the foundation
 - a) 1 Corinthians 2:1-2 And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. (2) For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.
 - b) Galatians 3:1 O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?

C. Your relationship to it: you are built on it

1. This is a metaphorical way to say that you have been brought to believe in Jesus Christ; you have heard what Christ's apostles and prophets said about the Lord Jesus' death for sinners, His burial, and His resurrection, and you believe; you have faith in Jesus Christ
2. You read the bible; or you heard a preacher preaching from the bible; or you heard a friend telling you what he had read in the bible, or what he had heard a preacher preaching from the bible; in some way, the preaching of the apostles about Jesus Christ made its way to you
3. The Holy Spirit so worked inside your heart as to create in your faith in Jesus Christ according to the truth you had heard
4. And so it was that you have been built on the foundation of Jesus Christ's apostles and prophets, He Himself being the chief cornerstone

V. How can we apply this to ourselves; or, what uses can we make of this doctrine?

- A. We can use it to understand better the object of our faith, the Lord Jesus Christ
 1. His perfection
 2. His strength
- B. We can use it to understand better what saving faith is
 1. So often it is put to us as something it is not
 - a) making a choice
 - b) praying a prayer

- c) doing something in a church service
 - d) metaphorically: taking a step; taking a leap
 - 2. Here it is put to us by a metaphor that actually helps: faith is resting on Jesus Christ as a building rests on its foundation
- C. We can use it to conceive of how happy we are in Jesus Christ
 - 1. How secure: think of a 100-ton cube of granite, perfectly cut; perfectly laid down
 - a) is a thunderstorm going to move it?
 - b) is a fire going to move it?
 - c) is a hurricane or even tornado going to move it?
 - 2. How close: ponder how close we are to Jesus Christ: We are part of a building built on Him as the foundation
 - 3. How privileged
- D. We can use it to know what to preach and teach
 - 1. where to get our material
 - 2. what to emphasize
 - 3. what to command (and what not to command)
- E. We can use it to be sure of the validity of the reform movements of which we are a part; the doctrine of the apostles and prophets comes before the church
 - 1. the Reformation
 - 2. the Baptist churches
 - 3. the reformed baptist movement

CONCLUSION

No longer are some of us allowed to worship in the temple of God, while others of us are shut out of the temple; now all of us who are in Christ are ourselves God's temple, built on the foundation of Jesus Christ Himself.

Luke 6:47-48 Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: (48) He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock.

Ephesians 2:20-22 having been built on the **foundation [G2310]** of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, (21) in whom the whole **building [G3619]**, being fitted together, grows into a **holy [G40] temple [G3485]** in the Lord, (22) in whom you also are being built together for a **dwelling place [G2732 from G3611]** of **God in the Spirit**.

1 Corinthians 3:9-11, 16-17 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's **building. [G3619]** (10) According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the **foundation [G2310]**, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. (11) For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. . . (16) Do you not know that you are the **temple [G3485]** of God and that the **Spirit of God dwells [G3611]** in you? (17) If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is **holy [G40]**, which temple you are.

Psalms 118:22 The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone.

Matthew 21:42 Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED HAS BECOME THE CHIEF

CORNERSTONE. THIS WAS THE LORD'S DOING, AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES' ?

Acts 4:10-12 let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. (11) This is the 'STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED BY YOU BUILDERS, WHICH HAS BECOME THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE.' (12) Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

Isaiah 28:16 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; Whoever believes will not act hastily.

1 Peter 2:6 Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHIEF CORNERSTONE, ELECT, PRECIOUS, AND HE WHO BELIEVES ON HIM WILL BY NO MEANS BE PUT TO SHAME."

Revelation 21:14 Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

Matthew 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

Learn something about what faith is: to rest entirely on
Learn something about the object of our faith---the Lord Jesus Christ
He is perfect
He is strong

Bayne:

What is it to be builded upon Christ? To be brought to the faith, by which every believing soul leaneth on Christ, as every parcel of the house on the foundation. . . Again, if the multitude of believers coupled with Christ be the thing builded, as they are called in the next verse, and in the third to the Corinthians, then the bringing to the belief must be the building.

What is meant by foundation? Christ himself, whom the apostles and prophets preaching and writing did publish. see 1 Cor 3:10-11

What is meant by cornerstone? It is the self-same with the foundation, as Is 28:16. Christ is called the foundation, the cornerstone, one matter expressed by divers terms.

the effectual preaching of the gospel did bring you to faith, did lay you and build you on Christ, the only foundation, which the apostles and prophets' preaching and writing doth lay, Christ; for Christ alone is the corner-stone or foundation . . . Christ only being he who doth bear up all the building, which is a property of every foundation.

doth give us to consider of that property of faith which doth make us to lean on Christ, as the building leaneth on the foundation

doth let us see the stable condition of every believing soul. The firmness of the house is according to the sureness of the foundation

we may be shaken, but we have too good a ground-work to fall

whatsoever the church or house of God believeth, it must be the doctrine of the prophets and apostles.

Use: To shew us a note how to discern the true church, namely, if we hold close to prophetic and apostolic doctrine alone, with faith, love, and obedience.

Use: It proveth the authority of the word above the church.

Use: This teacheth us what we must preach . . . Do not trifle in the pulpit. . . fee them with the wholesome word

it is not the intent, by calling him a cornerstone, , to make him a principal or partial foundation, but a sole and entire foundation, as the next words teach.

a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; every way a sure stay; none shall be confounded that put their trust in him

the apostles were not, any of them, but ministers laying this foundation

Ellicott:

The apostles and prophets are the foundation; yet, of course, only as setting forth in word and grace Him, who is the corner-stone

Hodge:

whether . . . means the foundation which they constitute, or which they laid. To express the idea that the church rests on Christ, he is sometimes called the foundation and sometimes the cornerstone of the building

Poole:

the foundation which the apostles and prophets laid by their preaching, viz. Christ, whom they held forth

as both supporting the building by his strength, and uniting the several parts of it, Jew and Gentile

The same thing may have different denominations in different respects; Christ is called a foundation, 1Co_3:11, a corner-stone, 1Pe_2:6, a temple, Joh_2:19, a door, Joh_10:7, a builder, Mat_16:18; so here again a corner-stone, and yet laid for a foundation, Isa_28:16.

Ferguson:

the third similitude he compareth the church unto an edifice or stately building and showeth that those Ephesians were a part of it

nearness to and communion with God and his church . . . as the stones of an edifice are most strictly joined together, both with the foundation and amongst themselves

he doth, doubtless, allude to Solomon's temple, which did prefigure the church of the truly regenerate

their happy condition

he must be built upon Christ the foundation, taking band upon him by the cement of lively faith

there is no taking band upon Christ aright as a foundation-stone, or rock for salvation, except he be conceived and accepted of, as he is revealed and offered in the scriptures

Though God himself be the builder, yet he employeth his called ministers as instruments for carrying on this work, among whom he did make special use of the prophets and apostles for laying the foundation in so far as they first did reveal and preach Jesus Christ, and commit to writing such truths concerning him as are necessary for salvation, while other ordinary ministers are employed in the preaching of Jesus Christ, as he is revealed in Scripture, to build up the elect upon the foundation while was laid by them

he calleth Christ the "foundation of the prophets and apostles," that is, whom they placed in the church by their doctrine and writings

four parts of the description

1. foundation

- a. not the apostles and prophets in their own persons; they are lively stones with the rest of the elect
- b. but the doctrine of the prophets and apostles, or rather Jesus Christ as the sum and scope of their doctrine 1 Corinthians 3:10-11 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. (11) For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.
- c. he alludes to Isaiah 28:16 and Psalm 118:22
- d. so that the foundation and corner-stone must be both one in this place
- e. Christ is not only the lowest corner-stone (Is 28:16), but he is also the highest (Ps 118:22); the word in the original signifieth "extreme corner"

Ferguson

<https://archive.org/stream/briefexpositiono00ferg#page/n172/mode/1up>