

A Foundation that is Sure

II Timothy 2:19

It happened at the noonday luncheon of the local Rotary. The dishes had been cleared away, and the meeting had been called to order. After the reception of new members and the introduction of visitors, the chairman asked who of those present represented the oldest company in the community.

A young man in the back of the room hesitated a moment, then arose and said: "I believe I do, sir. I am a minister of the gospel. The company I represent was founded some 1,900 years ago. And I am happy to say that it is still flourishing." His announcement was greeted with applause, for none of those present was inclined to contradict him. He did, indeed, represent "the oldest company" in the community.¹

In our text Paul is writing to the young pastor, Timothy. He had been called upon to pastor the church at Ephesus at the conclusion of Paul's three year ministry there. The work at Ephesus was difficult to say the least. Timothy faced false teachers, false doctrine, disorder during worship, and much materialism.

In the face of such adversity, Paul reminds Timothy of the sure foundation upon which he stands. He has been called to pastor the church of the living God. While the world around him may have been crumbling at its foundations, the church was built upon the Rock, the Chief Cornerstone.

As the illustration reminded us, we are part of something that has endured for some 2,000 years and yet it continues to flourish because it was built upon a solid foundation. I want to examine the aspects of this foundation as we consider the thought: [A Foundation that is Sure](#).

I. The Stability of this Foundation – [Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.](#) First of all we need to understand the foundation itself. We all know that a foundation consists of the base of a structure, the footings and materials that provide support and stability. In our text it also has the idea of "*beginnings, first principles, an institution or system of faith.*" It is quite literally the support structure for our Christian faith. So, what makes our foundation special and different from other foundations? Notice:

A. Its Sovereignty – [This foundation is of God.](#) We are privileged to build upon a foundation that was formed and created by the God of the universe. Ours is not a system of faith and belief that was formed out of trial and error. God possesses all wisdom, seeking direction or consulting with no one.

- The plan of God for humanity has progressed as He planned, culminating with Christ bearing our sins upon the cross. Mankind was born in sin and stood in need of reconciliation. God provided that in the sacrifice of His Son. Christ is the Cornerstone of the foundation. He is the key element upon which the church of God was built.
- Many times over the years foundations crumble and decay. There is eventually need for repair. The foundation of God was not built with corruptible materials. There has never been a need for repair. The foundation and the building it supports are as strong today as they have ever been.
- It may not appear that way at times in such a dark day, but the church of God is alive and well. She is not in danger of crumbling or falling apart. She is built upon a sure foundation that will never fail.

B. Its Substance – What makes our foundation so special and unique? What makes it different and so enduring over time? The answer is in the substance of the foundation, the elements of its makeup. This is answered for us in [Mat.16:18](#) – **And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.** Jesus reveals that He will build His church upon a Rock. This foundation will be so solid that the gates of hell will not be able to prevail against it.

- Now let me clear up something right here. Jesus is not referring to Peter as the rock upon which His church shall be built. This is the common view of Roman Catholics, but that is contrary to Scripture. Jesus is the Rock upon which the church is built. He is that firm foundation that will stand when all else is gone.
- There is an element of faith that must be considered when looking at this passage however. Just prior to this statement by Jesus, Peter had confessed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus is the ultimate foundation, but genuine faith, consisting of truth and biblical doctrine also stand as the foundation of the church.
- The church will stand, that is certain. Jesus is the substance of its foundation. But, when individual congregations begin to err from truth, that particular body of believers is heading toward a fall. If we want to ensure our stability, we must build upon the gospel truth of Christ our Lord! [1 Cor. 3:10-11](#) – **According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.**

C. Its Surety – [The foundation of God standeth sure.](#) This is an interesting and comforting aspect concerning our foundation. It standeth sure! The word [standeth](#) means “*to cause or make to stand; to establish, uphold, and sustain.*” The word [sure](#) means “*strong, firm, immovable, and steadfast.*” So, the foundation of God is established, upheld, and sustained by God Himself. It is strong and immovable. As Christ our Lord said, **“The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”**

- Consider the words of John Phillips: “*To a casual observer, it might have seemed that Paul had labored in vain. The mightiest empire on earth had mobilized its might to destroy the church; an assault that would last three hundred years had commenced. Paul himself was a prisoner under sentence of death. Many of his friends, converts, and disciples were abandoning him. Entire provinces where he had planted numerous churches were turning against him. Even trusted Timothy seemed to need constant prodding. Yet, Paul was unperturbed because he was looking ahead to the end times. He knew that God was still on the throne and that the foundation was secure. It was secure because it was founded on Scripture.*”²

- May I remind you that the foundation of God standeth sure? It has been established by Him and it shall never fail. We are facing an onslaught of opposition in our day. It seems as if our world and society are attacking the very foundations of our faith, but we are not the first to face such opposition. Our foundation is sure in Christ. We are built upon the Rock and we are going to make it to the other side!

I. The Stability of this Foundation

II. The Seal of this Foundation – Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, **having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.** And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. Here we find that our foundation has been sealed of God. This is another interesting concept that runs throughout Scripture. The word **seal** reveals “*the means by which things are confirmed, proven, or authenticated.*” In biblical times it was often marked by a signet ring upon a document.

- Paul declares that the foundation of God is sealed. This seal consists of God knowing those who are His. We have been marked as belonging to God. He has put His seal of approval and ownership upon the redeemed!

- It is believed that Paul was referring to an Old Testament illustration found in **Numbers 16**. Turn with me there and we will look at **Vv. 2; 5; 28-33; 41-42; 44-50**. Clearly God knew those who were His in Moses’ day and He continues to know all who are His today.

- **Jn.10:3 – To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. Jn.10:14 – I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. Ephes.1:13-14 – In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.** The saved are sealed and secure in the Lord. Those who build upon this sure foundation are forever kept by the God who knows them.

I. The Stability of this Foundation

II. The Seal of this Foundation

III. The Sacredness of this Foundation – [And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity](#). Keep in mind that Paul was writing to Timothy as he pastored at Ephesus. The church was facing opposition and false doctrine. Many were not living lives that honored the Lord. Paul urged Timothy of the believer's responsibility to live holy and upright. They had been placed upon the sure foundation of Christ and were obligated to uphold the righteous standard of that foundation.

- We too must understand and embrace this godly principle. We belong to the Lord and bear His name among the world. We are called to depart from iniquity so as not to bring shame or reproach to His blessed name.
- Far too many in our day have lost sight of this profound truth. We have been bought with a price. We belong to the Lord and are His ambassadors to the world. We don't have the right to live as we please among the world. All that we do in word and deed ought to glorify and honor the Lord. I pray that we will realize the great importance of living a godly life.
- We may be the only Bible that folks around us ever read. If our lives are lived no different than theirs, why would they want to give up what they have for what we have received? We have been placed upon this firm foundation and entrusted with its care. God's work and His will are not dependent upon our lives; He will accomplish His will with or without us, but we need to do our part to ensure a firm foundation within this church and our community for those who have never met the Lord.

I am glad to know that I have been placed upon this sure foundation. The world around us may change. Our faith is likely to be challenged in ways that we could never have imagined, but we are secure in Christ our Lord. The church will prevail.

Only you know where you stand with the Lord today. Maybe your life has not reflected the Lord as it should. Maybe you just need to come and ask the Lord to forgive you and restore you. Maybe you have never trusted the Lord in salvation and are trying to build upon the foundation of this world. Maybe you just want to come and praise Him for His blessing and provision in your life. Whatever the need, the Lord is able to help you.

¹ Bible Illustrations – A Treasury of Bible Illustrations.

² Phillips, John (2004). The John Phillips Commentary Series – The Pastoral Epistles, pg. 384. Grand Rapids: Kregel.