

## When Foundations Crumble Part 2

We began last Sunday asking the question from Psalm 11, **“When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?” Psalm 11:3** We are going to explore that a bit further this morning. Turn to 2 Timothy. As you do, let me share a bit of context. The Apostle Paul is the author of this letter and is writing to Timothy, his young protégé. Paul had led Timothy to the Lord and Timothy then traveled with Paul on his missionary journeys. He had likely been with Paul when he was under house arrest in Rome. After Paul’s release, Timothy traveled with him again and finally Paul left Timothy in Ephesus where he installed him as pastor and gave him oversight over the churches. Eventually, Paul is arrested again and taken to Rome where he is imprisoned for the final time before his execution. It is at this time he writes this second letter to Timothy. Let me read from John Stott’s commentary on 2 Timothy. “[Paul] describes himself as ‘our Lord’s prisoner’ (1:8), and this was his second Roman imprisonment. He was not now enjoying the comparative freedom and comfort of his own hired house, in which Luke takes leave of him at the end of the Acts and from which he seems to have been set free, as he expected. Instead, he was incarcerated in some ‘dismal underground dungeon with a hole in the ceiling for light and air.’ Perhaps it was the Mamertine prison, as tradition says. But wherever he was, Onesiphorus succeeded in finding him only after a painstaking search (1:17). He was certainly in chains (1:16), ‘wearing fetters like a criminal’ (2:9). He was also suffering acutely from the loneliness, the boredom and the cold of prison life (4:9-13). The preliminary hearing of his case had already taken place (4:16-17). Now he was awaiting the full trial, but was not expecting to be acquitted. Death appeared to him inevitable (4:6-8).”

This is the circumstance from which Paul is writing. Nero had burned Rome and blamed the Christians and now persecution had spread. Paul and Peter would both soon be executed in Rome. Paul is writing to Timothy to encourage him because like it or not, leadership was about to be passed to him and like it or not, hard, difficult times were coming – persecution was spreading, false teachers and heresies were gaining influence and people were departing from the true faith. It would become increasingly dangerous to be a Christian, to be part of the church. On top of all of this, Timothy was a young man who struggled with some health problems, frail, timid, something of an introvert. Paul tells him he is going to have to be strong, he is going to have to stir up the gift of God that has been given to him by the laying on of hands at his ordination. He reminds him God has not given a spirit of timidity or fear but of power, love and

self-discipline. He tells him he must persevere in trouble, to endure hardship along with Paul like a good soldier. He is telling him this isn't going to be easy. You are likely in for hard times. The foundations are crumbling. Things are changing and I'm not going to be around to encourage you. I think it's very likely a word the church in America needs to hear, but here is the rest of the word. Paul tells Timothy **"Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm..."**

## **2 Timothy 2:19**

I could stop right here. Nevertheless. Whatever else is happening, whatever else comes your way, whatever trouble might come, persecution might come, the faith may come under attack, heresies and false teaching may lead people astray, government restrictions may come, nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm! That ought to encourage us the way it encouraged Timothy and the church at Ephesus when they first heard those words. God's foundation stands firm! Don't be shaken by anything going on in the world, God's foundation stands solid and firm. What makes up that solid foundation? I think Paul gives Timothy and us an idea of some of the foundation stones when he writes, **"Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David."** 2 Timothy 2:8

**Foundation Stone #1. Jesus – Risen and Reigning** Foundations are crumbling but instead of being overwhelmed with fear or focusing on all the trouble, remember Jesus Christ. Keep Jesus Christ at the forefront of your mind and your life. Keep looking to him and as you do, remember these two things: remember Jesus raised from the dead and descended from David. Why these two things in particular?

If Jesus is raised from the dead, if he conquered death by his resurrection, then he is everything he says he was and is. He is risen and He is Son of God and Savior and he is able to grant us forgiveness of sin and eternal life. He is alive and he lives forevermore and he is coming again. He is risen, alive and ascended to the Father, sitting at his right hand and ruling and reigning with power. Why remember Jesus raised from the dead?

If he is raised from the dead, then death is no longer something to fear. Let Nero or the armies of Rome bring their persecution and threats of death. Jesus is risen and because he lives we shall live also. Death can't scare a child of God, not with the promise and hope of heaven and eternal life ahead of us. Bring it on, heaven is waiting on us!

Why remember Jesus, raised from the dead? Paul says in Romans 8, that if the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead is living in you, then "he who raised Christ from the dead

will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who lives in you.” Romans 8:11 Timothy, don’t be afraid; church, don’t be afraid. The same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead lives in you and is giving power to you. Even if they kill your body, you will live on in his presence. Remember Jesus, raised from the dead.

Why remember Jesus descended from David? Because that means Jesus is the Messiah of the Jews. That means his resurrection was not only about conquering death, it was also about the fulfillment of a promise and prophecy that this King, this Messiah, this Jesus, this descendant of David would be an everlasting king. Gabriel told Mary, **“And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom there will be no end.” Luke 1:31-33.** Timothy, remember Jesus the offspring of David. Church, remember this risen Savior is also the ruling king. He is ruling and reigning forever and of his kingdom there will be no end. When all the earthly foundations are crumbling, nevertheless, God’s solid foundation stands firm. When all other kingdoms give way, when other rulers are deposed or defeated, Jesus will rule and reign and of his kingdom and authority there will be no end. Don’t be afraid, God’s solid foundation stands firm and the king is on his heavenly throne!

The second foundation stone we need to consider. Paul writes, **“This is my gospel, for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God’s word is not chained.” 2 Timothy 2:9**

**Foundation Stone #2. The Word of God – Living and Unchained.** Remember Jesus raised from the dead, ruling on the throne of David forever and remember this, while the foundations may be crumbling, while persecution may come, God’s word is not chained! It can’t be silenced. Preachers can be locked up, like Paul, falsely accused and put in chains, but you can’t lock up the gospel. This is the word of God. This is bedrock. Peter says the word of God is “living and enduring” that “the word of the Lord stands forever” (1 Peter 1:23). Paul says the word of God is sharper than a two edged sword, it is powerful, active, alive and if we preach it, not opinion or conspiracy theories, but if we proclaim the word of God, the kingdom will be advanced and lives changed, in spite of persecution or pandemic or crumbling foundations! Jesus said, **“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations and then the end will come.” Matthew 24:14** Let’s keep proclaiming this gospel.

Paul told Timothy to study to show himself approved unto God, a workman who doesn't need to be ashamed but who can correctly handle the word of truth. (2:15). Know God's word, read, study, hide it in your heart, live by it and share it with others. This is the solid foundation you can build your life on and don't forget, God's word cannot be chained. It stands forever! Here is a third foundation stone.

**“Here is a trustworthy saying; If we died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us; if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.” 2 Timothy 2:11-13**  
**Foundation Stone #3. The Nature of God – Faithful and True.**

Paul is letting Timothy know the plain truth. This is a trustworthy saying. It is a foundation stone. God will not disown himself. He won't deny his nature. He will remain faithful and true to himself, to his word and his promise and that means we can trust and rest in his nature and character. He will remain faithful even when the foundations are crumbling.

Specifically he says, “If we die with him we will live with him.” He is talking about dying to ourselves and taking up our cross and following Jesus. We don't hear that preached much anymore. Instead it's cheap grace and the gospel of ease. “God wants you to be happy, healthy, wealthy and no worries, He'll overlook your sins.” Somewhere we stopped preaching the gospel of Jesus. Jesus said, **“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it.” Mark 8:34-35** We are called to take up our cross and follow Jesus. It is the call to discipleship that every Christ follower must answer. Facing persecution and hard times, Paul tells Timothy, “face it like this, take up your cross and follow Jesus. Die to yourself and live in Christ and if you physically die for Jesus, it's okay for he gives life. If you endure suffering for him, you will also reign with him. But remember Timothy, keep trusting in the unchanging, faithful nature of God.”

Paul reminds Timothy that for the faithful, the unchanging character of God is good news. But bear in mind, God keeps his word to the faithful and to the unfaithful. Here is another trustworthy saying. “If you disown the Lord, like some would do in the face of persecution and trials, he will disown you.” That's his promise as well. Jesus said, **“But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.” Matthew 10:33** It's a foundation stone for us. God will be faithful to do what he said he would do because he cannot

disown himself. Good news and bad news: God will be faithful to carry out his judgment just as surely as he will be faithful to carry out his promise! He isn't bluffing and he isn't playing games.

The faithful nature of God is bedrock. Regardless of who comes or goes, who remains or who rejects the faith and disowns him, regardless of our choices or if we fail, He will remain faithful! He will keep his promise. He will honor his word. Every word. Everything else is changing, foundations are crumbling but God remains the same yesterday, today and forever. He does not change. He will remain faithful for he cannot disown himself.

**“Nevertheless God’s solid foundation stands firm...”** Anchor your life to this! There is a foundation that remains even when other foundations crumble. Jesus, risen and reigning. The word of God, living and unchained, the nature of God, faithful and true. Are you building your life on this solid, firm foundation? Are you living for him, abiding in him, trusting in him or have you built your life and your hopes on something else? Something less? Trust me when I tell you, you are going to need a solid foundation. If you build on anything else, you and your house will fall. Isn't it about time you surrendered your life, totally and completely to Jesus? How about making a commitment to build your life on God's solid foundation? Let's pray...

The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you, the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. Amen.