

Firm Foundation; Ephesians 2:18-22

I. New Testament Letters

- A. In this age of “acceptance” sometimes the church gets ridiculed for preaching uniqueness
- B. We are unique
 - 1. We have a unique structure — Christ, Elders, congregation
 - 2. We have a unique teaching — to follow the New Testament writings as our charge on how to live a life that is pleasing to God
- C. Some say that we are divisive, not including all who profess Christ as Christians
- D. There are teachings out there in Christendom that are false
 - 1. Just about every letter in the New Testament combats some kind of strange or false teaching
 - 2. Romans 6:1–2 (ESV); ¹ What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? ² By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?
 - 3. 1 Corinthians has 9 verses of welcome and 15 1/2 chapters dealing with error — divisions, impurity, marriage, spiritual gifts, and more
 - 4. 2 Corinthians 11:3–4 (ESV); ³ But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. ⁴ For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough.
 - 5. Galatians 1:6–7 (ESV); ⁶ I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— ⁷ not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.
 - 6. I could go on with each letter, but I would take up all our time
- E. The Gospels give us the cornerstone — Jesus
- F. The New Testament Letters give us the foundation — The apostles and prophets

II. The Cornerstone

- A. A unique building structure that has been replaced by technology
- B. Unique because each building only had one cornerstone
 - 1. It was meticulously shaped and placed
 - 2. The foundation was built from the cornerstone
 - 3. If the cornerstone was off, the whole foundation was off
 - 4. If the foundation was off, the entire building was off
 - 5. The cornerstone was extremely important
- C. Psalm 118:20–24 (ESV); ²⁰ This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it. ²¹ I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation. ²² The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. ²³ This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. ²⁴ This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.
- D. Matthew, Mark, and Luke quote Jesus using this Scripture to refer to Himself as the cornerstone
- E. Acts 4:11 (ESV); This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone.
- F. Ephesians 2:20 (ESV); built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,
- G. Matthew 28:16–20 (ESV); ¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them

to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

- H. The apostles, through the direction of the Holy Spirit, taught those in the 1st century (and us through Scripture) to observe all that Jesus (the Cornerstone) commanded them.

III. The Foundation

A. Only Jesus saves

1. John 14:6 (ESV); Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.
2. Acts 4:11–12 (ESV); ¹¹ This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. ¹² And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”
3. Without this fundamental belief there is no salvation — Hebrews 11:6

B. The Gospel shows us Jesus

1. Romans 1:16 (ESV); For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
2. Romans 10:13–15 (ESV); ¹³ For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” ¹⁴ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ¹⁵ And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”

C. Jesus’ blood washes our sins away

1. 1 John 1:7 (ESV); But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.
2. Hebrews 9:12–14 (ESV); ¹² he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. ¹³ For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.
3. Acts 22:16 (ESV); And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.’

D. The “one’s”

1. Ephesians 4:1–6 (ESV); ¹ I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.
2. These “one’s” are the unity of the Spirit — the uniqueness of our faith in Christ

- E. If we build on the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets, then we can be assured of our Cornerstone

IV. Stand or Fall

A. “If you don’t stand for something, you’ll fall for anything”

- B. This phrase originated in a Methodist church announcement in an Iowa newspaper in 1926, “It is easier to fall for anything than to stand for something.”

- C. It is still true today — we must know what we stand for, or we will be taken by anything that sounds good

D. The church started to “fall for anything” the very same century it came into existence

1. The apostles and prophets had to constantly remind the church of its foundation
2. Ephesians 2:18–22 (ESV); ¹⁸ For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow

citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²² In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

- E. Where do you stand?
- F. Is Jesus your cornerstone?
- G. Are the apostles and prophets your foundation?
- H. Are you building a dwelling place for God?