

2. THE FOUNDATION

Some of you have been involved in construction of building. And the majority of us understand how important to have a good foundation for a building.

I had a chance to visit New Orleans a few years ago. I learned that the whole city is sitting on a gigantic water table that is located underneath of the ground. If you dig a hole deeper than 6 feet, you would find water coming out. Even a grave has to be made above ground. To build a high rise building, by the city building code, they have to put minimum 3 stories deep concrete foundation before they even start to have the first floor. Those people understand the meaning of the good foundation, yet in their spiritual sense, they would embrace just about any garbage that comes across including voodoo.

A. THE NECESSITY OF CHRISTIAN FOUNDATION

Knowing the foundation of Christianity is the most important lesson we can have as Christians.

Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.

Many of Mormon people were former Southern Baptists. Why? There are two reasons: First, they are the biggest denomination and there are a lot of them. Second, they didn't understand the foundation of Christianity. If they knew, they wouldn't be swayed by cults of any kinds.

Jude 3 Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

Jude had wanted to extol the wonders of the salvation he shared in common with his readers, but there was a more clear and present danger that made him to switch subjects.

The word "Contend" is a mouthful in Greek, "*epagonizomai*." It means: "to struggle for, to contend for, to exercise great effort and exertion for something. The word was used of athletic contests and the struggle and effort of the athletes in their games."

If you look at the word carefully, you'll see the root from which it is taken, "*agonizomai*." We get our word "agonize" from it. The picture of two formidable wrestlers grappling in an ancient dirt-floored gymnasium. The air is thick and humid with the smell of sweat. Their muscles strain to the point of bursting as they "agonize" against each other for the prize of victory. That is the idea of "contend." It is not la-la-land concept of whatever-you-believe-is-OK.

B. WHAT IS YOUR FAITH?

So what is this faith? The Scripture defines it for us.

Hebr. 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

We can analyze this faith in three points:

- 1) This faith is the body of Christian doctrine found in the Scriptures in content and practice. It is more than our individual, personal salvation

faith. It is all that we believe about God, the Bible, sins, Christ, human nature, etc.

- 2) The beliefs that make up the faith have been delivered "once for all" in the Scriptures. We cannot change one word to the Word of God. It is absolute and has the final authority.
- 3) God delivered this faith not to a privileged few but to everyone who wants to follow Him.

Tonight, we are going to learn the basic of Christianity. You might say, "I know all of those." I ask you then, can you defend Christianity you believe against Mormons, Jehovah's Witness, Moonies, and other cults? If not, listen up.

We Believe in: - I call it 9 Basic Principles

1) Accuracy and trustworthiness of the Scripture.

God gave inspiration to the authors of each Book of the Bible through the Holy Spirit.

2Tim. 3:16-17 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

- 2) **The absolute deity of Jesus Christ and there is only one God and three persons in Him.**
- 3) **The virgin birth of Jesus Christ. Without the relationship with a man, Mary conceived the Son of God.**
- 4) **History of creation of mankind.**
- 5) **Total depravity of man without Jesus.**
- 6) **Substitutionary death of Jesus for our sins. He is the only way to the Father in heaven.**
- 7) **The bodily resurrection of Jesus from death.**
- 8) **The literal return of Jesus.**
- 9) **The resurrection and assignment of everyone for eternal destiny.**

C. THE APOSTATES

- THE DEFECTORS, TRAITORS OF CHRISTIANITY

Jude 4 For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Who are these certain men? They are wolves with sheep clothing. They are the apostates we learned last Tuesday. These people didn't just drift away from God. They deliberately defected from Him. With defiance in their hearts, they purposefully opposed the foundation teaching of the Christian faith and planed seeds of division and dissension in the believing community.

Unlike the apostles, these apostates slipped in without being noticed. They are like water from leaky pipes behind the wall. They are like termites in the house. We

don't realize what is happening from the outside. Everything seems normal as usual. Pretty soon we have to overhaul the wall because of leaky water or we have the structural damage in our houses. They are lethal, poisoning the core of Christian truth in at least two ways:

1) They changed the grace of our God into a license for immorality

They transposed grace from a major key to minor key - from freedom to obey Christ to freedom to sin.

Rom. 6:15-23 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

These false teachers viewed grace not as the way to eternal life, but as their ticket to guilt-free, unrestrained license to do whatever their sinful nature desire. It is like you had a cocaine addict dealer who encouraged you to use cocaine just for a little high. They said, "You won't get caught, and you won't be hooked on it. You can quit any time you want."

2) They try to deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

As I have said this before, there is one common denominator in all the cults and occults. They all deny the deity of Jesus Christ and the only way of salvation. In the book *Habits of the Heart*, Robert Bellah and his colleagues interview a young nurse named Sheila Larson, whom they describe as representing many American's experience and views on religion. Speaking about her own faith and how it operates in her life, she says: "I believe in God. I'm not a religious fanatic. I can't remember the last time I went to church. My faith has carried me a long way. It is 'Sheilatism.' Just my own little voice."

It is the ultimate form of pride, and God despises pride.

D. APPLICATIONS

1) We need to be rooted and grounded in the Word of God.

We need our daily spiritual nutrition through daily devotion of the Word and prayer to our God as much as we need nutrition for our physical bodies.

2) When we encounter those who claimed to be Christians, yet they have completely different doctrines (that is false), we need to show them the truth through the Word of God in love.

Use the 9 basic principles.