

FOUNDATION LAYING
May 4, 2014 –Communion –I Corinthians 3: 10-15
The Church of the Covenant

The house next door to mine had not sold in a long time. Someone told me two years ago there had been a murder in the backyard –but that wasn't the reason it didn't sell. It had a kitchen that needed to be renovated and there was old wallpaper all over it –but that wasn't the reason it didn't sell. The problem was that the foundation was cracked and coming apart; the front wall was literally falling in upon itself; it had a bad foundation –and nobody wanted the house. If a church, or a community, or a nation, or a life doesn't have a firm foundation then it, too, will fall in upon itself. Bad foundation –bad life. Good foundation –good life. Bad foundation –no future. Good foundation –great future. FOUNDATION LAYING, evidently, is VERY important...

Our scripture from I Corinthians has the Apostle Paul speaking to the church at Corinth, which he began, and he says to them, *"I laid a foundation" (I Corinthians 3: 10)*; I am the one through whom God began a great work in you; I came to you and began building your church not made with hands in a particular way. *"I laid a foundation."*, says the Apostle. And then he notes, *"and another man is building upon it."* (v. 10) Like the succession of pastors and elders and leaders in a church, there are those who begin the church and then there are those who come after and build upon the foundation which others have laid in place beforehand. The Apostle Paul is then quite clear what he means about foundation laying. What or who is the firm and strong foundation? It is clear it is Jesus Christ who is the foundation of everything that will endure in the church. He notes: *"For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."* (I Corinthians 3: 11) Christ is made the sure foundation –Christ, the head and cornerstone. Nothing apart from HIM is an adequate foundation; nothing can substitute for a Living Lord Jesus Christ at the heart of the base of a church. The True and Real Savior revealed in scriptures, nailed to a tree, raised from the dead, just as HE promised is the foundation for any church. Without HIM the church falls. Without HIM nothing else will stand. Without HIM the church perishes and the people perish and the nation perishes. Bad foundation –no future. Good foundation –great future. We know this about houses, we had best know this about our lives, as well.

The Apostle Paul then counsels the church he founded in Corinth, *"Let each man take care how he builds upon it."* (v. 10) He is saying, "you started out well; you had the right foundation; I built you up into the Lord Jesus Christ; I built your faith upon the rock; I began you correctly on solid ground of faith in the One, true and living Lord and Savior." But now you need to reflect and ask yourself –are we taking care to build of the same material of our foundation; the foundation is firm and solid –am I building my life, am I building my church, on solid ground????

Because the Apostle Paul then notes that there is a day coming when what is built will be tested. He says, *"the fire will test what sort of work each one has done."* (v. 13) If we build upon the firm foundation with straw, it will be burned away. If we build upon the foundation with stubble or cheap wood, it will fall. But if we build upon it with precious stones, gold and silver, in that day it will stand. The test will come and our work will be revealed. Did we build it upon Christ or not? Did we use the most precious possessions of our heart and life or not? Did we build upon the firm foundation of Christ Jesus with the person and work of the same? Christ is the foundation. Christ is the head and cornerstone. Christ is the solid rock. Let each person take care how we have built upon our foundation because in everyone's life a day of testing and fire will come, our faith will be challenged, are we just a fair-weather Christian or are we also a steadfast Christian in the midst of the storms of life? When fire

comes have we built our lives and faith of that with which will endure? Have we built our lives and our church with the building blocks of the Lord Jesus Christ or not?

Here at The Church of the Covenant you can tell what kind of building blocks have been used. Look at the beautiful sanctuary and know that this congregation in 1929 built of gold and not straw. Look at the Covenant Center and know in 1999 this congregation built of precious silver and not of stubble. Read the past session minutes and you see the men and women of profound faith struggling with the issues of the day, seeking to be faithful to the One who is their firm foundation. Count the number of charter members of this church, people who were part of the “re-founding” of the church in 1960 when two congregations, Second Presbyterian Church and Third Presbyterian Church, were merged. 100 people of 850 members were here then and worshipping and being faithful and carefully building this church upon the solid rock in 1960. It is almost unheard of that this percentage of a membership of the church would have served and been so faithful and for so long. This rock solid faithfulness built the foundation on the Lord Jesus Christ. And this sort of faithfulness built with gold and silver and precious stones upon what they had received. They took care how they built and WHO they built into the fabric and stonework of the church –the Lord Jesus Christ. They are living sermons to us who follow. They are “living stones” as the Bible says. They are reminders of who we are to be and how we are to build. We would not be here but for them; we would not be here but for the fact that they chose to build through Christ Jesus; we would not be here because some storm or fire of the past would have consumed and destroyed anything built upon anything less; we would not be here but for the fact that the foundation of this church is, and may it ever be, the Lord Jesus Christ.

If the day should ever come when, as minister or people, we shall forget the source of our power; if we ever forget the road to Calvary is paved with sacrifice; if the story of Jesus ever becomes just some quaint tale of the past and not a living, vibrant reality today; if someone ever preaches a false gospel from this pulpit or lessens one iota from the message of TRUTH; if anything other than the Lordship of Jesus Christ is ever proclaimed from this church and from this people, beloved, our holy power will be gone. Our foundation will crumble. Oh, the temple may still stand, but the mysterious presence of the Lord God Almighty will have fled. The artistry of this church may still stand and delight the eye, but the light that shines through these windows and through these lives will be the light of earth and not of heaven. If Christ and HIM crucified is ever not proclaimed from this pulpit and from the lives of this people, then the storms of life will consume this church and great shall be the fall of it. **I thank God for our long time members and pray that we will build as they have built –for eternity and for Christ the Lord!!!!!!!!!!**

Jesus concludes the greatest sermon preached, The Sermon on the Mount, by recounting the story of the house built upon rock versus the house built upon sand. And Jesus notes: *“and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon the house...”* (and that’s what the vagaries and vicissitudes of life always do) *“but it did not fall”*, as Jesus notes, *“because it had been built upon the rock.”* (Matthew 7: 25) But then the Master storyteller contrasts this to the foolish man who built upon the sand. *“And the winds blew and the rains came...and great was the fall of it.”* (v. 27) So as we approach communion today the question I am asking you to ask yourself is this –“Is my life and is my church built upon the ROCK or is it built upon the SAND?” Let each person take care how he or she builds upon the solid rock of our foundation Jesus Christ. There is no other foundation that endures forever...and never will be. And Amen.

By: The Reverend Dr. Stuart D. Broberg, The Church of the Covenant, Washington, PA
IF THIS HAS BLESSED YOU, PLEASE PASS IT ALONG TO A FRIEND!