

## PENTECOST 22 – 2007

### 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 3: 11-15

I suppose there are many ways in which one could try to briefly sum up what Martin Luther did. One way of putting it might be to say, 'Martin Luther made Jesus Christ the Foundation of Christianity again.'

So much straw, hay, and chaff had been piled on top of that foundation that one could hardly see the foundation any more.

The Apostle Paul, that is, the writings the Holy Spirit gave us through the Apostle Paul, greatly assisted Martin Luther and the Lutheran reformation of the earthly church. These verses, for example, make very clear that

### **Jesus Christ Is the Foundation of Christianity.**

We also learn that whatever is built on that foundation ought to be appropriately precious and durable.

We must understand that there is only one actual foundation for God's people. Paul says that foundation had already been laid. God the Father sent His only Son to be the Savior of the world. You could rightly say, then, that God Himself laid that foundation. God never promised more than One Savior from sin, death, the devil, and hell. God sent Jesus! He is the only foundation. There is no other foundation than Jesus Christ. And the Apostle says there never can be any other foundation. "No one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ."

If any other foundation than Jesus is suggested, we must reject it. Eventually anything and everything NOT built on Jesus, The Foundation, will crumble, will collapse. The Apostle Peter describes Jesus as the Precious Cornerstone. This is a very similar picture.

Because Jesus is a priceless, precious foundation, a Christian should want nothing to be built on that precious foundation except what is also precious. What is not appropriate to place on Christ, the foundation, will not survive The Day. Elsewhere (Chapter 1) it is named the Day of the Lord Jesus. The holy fire of Jesus' judgement will burn it up.

To understand and to want to build appropriately on Jesus Christ, surely we need to appreciate how Jesus is the only foundation.

Jesus is the foundation of the Holy Scriptures, the Bible. First, Jesus is the foundation of the whole Bible because Jesus is the One whose Word it is. The Bible is Jesus' Word, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit. The Bible, the whole book, every word of the Bible, is the Word of God, Father, Son (Jesus), and the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, Jesus is the Point of the entire Scriptures. It is all about Jesus. You see, the very reason God gave us the Holy Bible is so that we can be blessed and rescued by Jesus. The Bible, on the one hand, through the Commandments of God, lets us know that we need Jesus to rescue us from sin. We are sinners! Sin is destructive and deadly. Sin, death, the devil, and hell all go together. We daily sin often. Our attitude toward God and people is not what it should be. God gave us the Bible to give us Jesus so that Jesus can rescue us and then change us.

Scripture is not words provided by human beings. It is not the product of human intelligence, thinking, figuring out, interpretation, wisdom, understanding, or philosophy.

Scripture is God revealing God's mind, God's thinking, God's knowledge, God's wisdom to the world.

If you and I are going to build our life, our work, our service, our relationships on Jesus, then all this building must be in accord with the Holy Scripture. The same certainly goes for what is preached, taught, and told in the churches. It must be according to the Bible or it is straw and will be burned upon Judgement Day.

The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing. Scripture brings us Jesus and His blessings. And faith in Jesus opens Scripture to us. Without faith in Jesus, the Bible will be a closed book. It will seem like foolishness to us. This is why the scholars of today tear apart the Bible. It is because they do not know or trust in the Jesus of the Bible. And they do not know the Jesus of the Bible because they do not believe the Bible is God's own word for word revelation.

Jesus is the power of God. The message of the cross is the power of God. Christ's personal power is the power in His personal Word. It is all the same power. And it is power aimed at saving us sinners.

The Gospel brings us Jesus as our Rescuer, our Savior from sin, after the Law shows us our sin. Then, rejoicing in Jesus' forgiveness which He earned for us, we joyfully want to, love to, strive to follow what God shows us He wants by His Commandments. This is Christ motivated righteousness.

So, really Jesus is the foundation of our justification – a big word for forgiveness and He is the foundation of our sanctification, a big word for godly living.

"Jesus Christ is our righteousness, holiness, and redemption," says Saint Paul. Jesus redeemed us. That means He purchased us free from our sin, resulting guilt, and punishment. He did that by His cross. His life given for the world was the purchase price. He also earned our righteousness by living His perfect life for us. Christ is both our righteousness and our forgiveness.

On top of that, Jesus is the One who 'called us to be holy'. His forgiveness and His righteousness credited to us by faith in Him move us to want joyfully and thankfully to show our faith in Jesus and our love for Him by willing, living, doing, talking, thinking the way our Savior wants us to. Without Jesus, there can be not true selfless, humble, joyful, godly living.

So, Jesus is the foundation of our faith. It is faith in Him. He is the foundation of our salvation, even our eternal salvation consisting of eternal life, glory, and heaven. He rose; He ascended; He rules gloriously as our Lord and Savior.

It means grace alone because God did all the work of salvation. Jesus earned it. It means faith alone because faith, trust, alone connects us to Jesus. It is Scripture alone for it is God's Word, His tool which brings Jesus to us, unites us to Jesus by faith, keeps us in Jesus, and moves us joyfully to live to Jesus.

All quarrelling and jealousies, and hatreds, and focusing on people as the source of religious truth and 'selfism', and all sin, is nothing but straw in a believer's life. We do not want this. We want love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, humility, thinking of others, as more important than self, obedience, righteousness, purity, honesty as the fruits of our faith in Jesus. This is our delight and joy. When sin shows up we look to Jesus for forgiveness. When righteousness (humble) shows up we look to Jesus with thanksgiving for empowering and enabling, and motivating us to it. It is all His grace making us able. First it is His righteousness for us, then ours to Him

This shows that Jesus is certainly the Foundation of the whole of Christianity. Amen.